



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. NADA TARBUSH,  
FIRST SECRETARY AT THE MISSION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 136: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019  
“STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS  
TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS” DURING THE FIRST RESUMED PART  
OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(New York, 11 March 2019)**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 136: programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019: Status of implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations. The Group thanks Ms. Atefeh Riazi, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Information and Communications Technology, for introducing the fourth progress report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the ICT Strategy, as well as Mr. Peter Korn, Director of External Audit (Germany) and Chair, Audit Operations Committee, and Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their related reports.

Madam Chair,

2. The Group of 77 and China continues to appreciate the importance of information and communications technology (ICT) in strengthening oversight and accountability within the Organization, especially in line and in the spirit of ongoing reforms.

3. The Group also continues to recognize the important role played by ICT in facilitating efficient and effective deliberations within intergovernmental bodies.

4. In appreciation of the Organization's five-year plan to simplify and optimize the benefits of technology as a transformational tool whose use would enable a successful delivery of mandates, the Group welcomes improvements made to the ICT landscape throughout the Secretariat in the first four years of implementation of the ICT Strategy.

5. In the context of the fourth annual progress report on the Implementation of the ICT Strategy, the Group welcomes improvements made in the areas of ICT infrastructure and architecture; ICT operations and service delivery; support for the deployment of Umoja; the security of other enterprise systems; reductions in the number of legacy applications; the global wide area network; and the deployment of solutions to support the substantive work of the United Nations Organization and critical systems to support peacekeeping operations.

Madam Chair,

6. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/238 B and in provision of an examination of the implementation of the strategy, the Board of Auditors has conducted an audit and submitted a report, its second annual report on the implementation of the ICT strategy. The Group, as always, is appreciative of the Board's hard work and diligence in preparing such detailed reports.

7. On recommendations contained in the Board's reports, the Group notes a lack of complementarity between these recommendations and their implementation by the Secretariat. Of the 35 pending recommendations, only 23% have been fully implemented while others are at various stages of the implementation process.

8. The Group underscores the need for the Secretariat to implement the Board's recommendations urgently and in full. It is expected that the same urgency will be applied to implementing the 6 new recommendations of the Board as weaknesses and delays were identified in the areas of governance, performance management, policy gaps, global sourcing, technology innovation labs and Umoja mainstreaming.

9. Any deviation from the five-year roadmap in terms of scope and timelines should be addressed and proactive steps taken to forestall wastage and inefficiency.

10. Also expected to be addressed is the lack of progress in reducing fragmentation in the ICT environment, especially given that this was one of the key objectives of the ICT Strategy. As this continues to affect interoperability, simplicity and resilience and as a result brings on inefficiencies and increased costs, the Group anticipates that the Secretary-General will leverage experiences of past challenges and lessons learned to deal with fragmentation within the ICT environment as a matter of priority. A successful reduction of fragmentation will in turn equip OICT with the tools to address information security issues in a comprehensive manner.

Madam Chair,

11. By General Assembly resolution 71/272 B, specific requests were made by the membership for information, inter alia, the following:

- (a) Specified objectives, benchmarks, and indicators to assess progress and qualitative and quantitative benefits for each project;
- (b) A detailed update on strengthening coordination of ICT activities among all Secretariat entities; and
- (c) Possible harmonization and sharing of services, as well as the related costs of ICT, as appropriate, in particular at field locations.

12. It is disappointing that, to say the least, there has been a failure to provide information on the aforementioned requests. Detailed information on these requests should be provided in the context of the fifth annual progress report of the Secretary-General, particularly given that the fifth report will mark the end of the five-year implementation period of the ICT strategy.

13. Pending the report however, the Group will seek to understand during informal consultations why reaction to this and other pertinent issues has been slow in some cases and in other instances, not forthcoming altogether.

Madam Chair,

14. The Group of 77 and China cannot overemphasize the need to harness the potential of ICT to support the work of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, development, including sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, human rights, and international law, thus our continuous commitment to the implementation of the Strategy.

15. In the spirit of this demonstrated commitment, the Group wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively on this agenda item.

I thank you.