



**STATEMENT BY MR LUCIEN HONG,
DELEGATE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON AGENDA ITEM 136: PROGRAMME BUDGET
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019:
ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING PROJECT, UMOJA,
AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE, MAIN PART OF THE
73RD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON 6 DECEMBER 2018**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2 My delegation thanks Ms Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management; Ms Parama Sen, Director of External Audit (India) and Chair of the Audit Operations Committee, Board of Auditors; and Mr Babou Sene, Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for introducing their respective reports.

Madam Chair,

3 Singapore has supported the application of the Umoja project at the United Nations from its inception. Our delegation sees merit in using digital solutions to improve efficiency, harmonise processes, and increase transparency. To this end, we are encouraged that the Umoja user base has grown to 46,500 users spread across 420 locations, and that a majority of users see value and benefits in utilising Umoja. We note as well the role the Umoja project is anticipated to play in the Secretary-General's reforms, including ensuring chain of accountability, facilitating workflow, and streamlining processes and policies.

4 However, inasmuch as the Umoja project is expected to deliver greater accountability and efficiency, my delegation is of the view that the Umoja project itself must be accountable and efficient. Singapore remains deeply concerned at the repeated delays in the timeline for completion, and the significant cost escalation of the Umoja project. It is baffling that a project that touts savings and speed will, by the time of estimated completion, have taken three times as

long as originally projected, and cost over twice its original estimation. In fact, the expected total cost of ownership at \$1.4 billion begs the question as to whether the General Assembly should consider treating future such projects on par with major capital projects, including in their financing arrangements. We call on the Secretary-General to take urgent remedial measures to ensure that the Umoja project is completed without further delay and additional cost by the end of 2019. We look forward to a thorough examination of the justifications for additional requested resources. In particular, we will look closely at how efficiencies arising from Umoja can be applied to both the project and its team.

Madam Chair,

5 Let me briefly highlight two other concerns for my delegation, and take the opportunity to thank the Board of Auditors for flagging them.

6 First, given the sensitivity of information in this single, global solution coupled with Umoja's growing user base, it is crucial for the Organisation to ensure that digital identities and access controls are managed effectively, and that unauthorised access to Umoja's critical information assets are prevented. My delegation urges better coordination among the Office for Human Resources Management, the Office of Information and Communications Technology, and the Umoja Office to tighten access control.

7 Second, in light of the growing pervasiveness of and reliance on Umoja across the United Nations, it is important that the Secretary-General ensure that the system is able to withstand shocks and disasters. Regular exercises and plans must be conducted and drawn up respectively to ensure the readiness of the Umoja disaster recovery infrastructure, and to minimise the recovery time and maximum application downtime in a failover or failback situation. In our view, these are two areas where quick action can be taken, with no requirement for additional resources.

Madam Chair,

8 Singapore remains committed to supporting initiatives that enhance the Organisation's effectiveness, accountability, and transparency. We look forward to discussing this agenda item with colleagues, and will work constructively to find the best and most efficient way forward for the Umoja project.

I thank you, Madam Chair.