

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS BY MR TERRENCE TEO, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 138: IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, FIFTH COMMITTEE, 16 MAY 2019

Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on agenda item 138: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations. ASEAN aligns itself with the statement by the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2 ASEAN thanks Ms Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management, for her detailed presentation last week, and for her updates today.

Madam Chair,

3 ASEAN expresses our serious concern at the financial uncertainty experienced by the United Nations in recent years. We reiterate that assessed contributions are Charter obligations, which each Member State is legally bound to honour, and apportioned broadly according to the capacity to pay.

4 ASEAN is encouraged by the upward trend in recent years of more Member States paying their assessments in full and on time. We commend the 40 Member States that have fully paid all of their assessments as of 7 May 2019. Notwithstanding this, we are concerned that despite the greater number of Member States paying their assessments in full and on time, the Organisation still continues to face serious liquidity challenges. Deficits have also become larger, and occur earlier in the year. The reason for our cashflow challenges is abundantly clear. ASEAN acknowledges that some countries face genuine difficulties in paying their assessments. However, the majority of major contributors have no lack of capacity to pay. It is also unfortunate that some who have ample capacity to pay do not pay on time, nor in full. The UN would be on a firmer financial footing if the major contributors lived up to their basic responsibilities. The sovereign equality of nations is a

concept that also includes the equal responsibility to pay all assessments in full, on time, and without conditions.

Madam Chair,

4 The share of the UN's budget borne by ASEAN Member States has increased in recent years. Nevertheless, the ASEAN Member States remain committed to paying our assessments. We call on our fellow Member States to also renew their commitment to supporting the Secretary-General and the work of the United Nations. More flexibility for the Secretary-General to manage financial resources will be of little use if there are insufficient resources to begin with. To this end, ASEAN notes that the Secretary-General has put forth several proposals to improve the financial situation of the UN. ASEAN will study these proposals carefully. Any measures intended to address the current challenges of the Organisation should be aimed at achieving a sustainable solution and addressing root causes, without resulting in unfair additional burdens and negative consequences on Member States. We look forward to a constructive and robust discussion on how we can best help the Secretary-General to implement the mandates we have laid out for him.

5 I thank you, Madam Chair.

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