

Statement by the delegation of Brazil on agenda item 138: Improving the financial situation of the UN, at the second resumed part of the seventy-third session of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

New York, 4 May 2019.

Madam Chair,

My delegation would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for presenting report A/73/809.

My delegation would also like to thank Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for presenting report A/73/891.

Brazil associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chair,

Brazil has been an early and steady supporter of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. We concur with the view that the United Nations is not fully fit for purpose and needs fundamental change.

During debates about management reform, my delegation has supported the establishment of an annual regular budget, which we trust will lead to greater budgetary discipline. We have also endorsed the proposals that contemplated improvements on the structure and procedures of the Secretariat, recognizing their ability to yield tangible results on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization.

The General Assembly shared this vision and has by now delivered on a number of very important reforms. While supporting the Secretary-General's agenda, the Assembly has also conveyed the message that administrative and budgetary reforms are welcomed and necessary as long as they do not impinge on Member States prerogatives.

In resolution 72/266, paragraph 14, the General Assembly categorically decided not to change the mechanisms and levels of discretionary managerial authorities of the Secretary-General. It also called, in paragraph 15, for an assessment of these levels and mechanisms to be presented in the

current session, on the understanding that certain mechanisms are already in place to contemplate the Secretary-General's need for limited budgetary discretion.

Madam Chair,

The report introduced today both disregards and greatly exceeds the mandate contained in paragraph 15 of resolution 72/266. Instead of assessing existing mechanisms, it reiterates the previous proposal for Secretariat autonomy in budgetary matters. Actually, it takes the issue to a radical new level of ambition.

Whereas the old report (A/72/492/Add.1) contained a proposal for limited redeployment of resources between and within sections of the regular budget, the current report (A/73/809) seeks to transfer all budgetary discretion to the Secretariat. Member States would be left with the sole task of establishing a global budget number, or "ceiling" – that is, without any say in the level of resources for each and every budget line.

This would amount to replacing the time-honored oversight system enshrined in Art. 17 of the Charter with virtual budgetary autonomy for the Secretariat. Authority would be transferred to a bureaucracy that remains beset by insufficient transparency and geographical representation.

Brazil does not endorse, in this connection, the report's statement to the effect that the budget methodology and regulatory framework of this Organization are "outdated". My delegation would like to stress that the Charter is a source of strength to the United Nations, not – as the report puts it – of "structural weaknesses".

Madam Chair,

The parts of the founding treaty of this Organization that do merit reform are well known. Brazil regrets that the Secretariat should see it fit to adopt a selective approach to Charter reform. My delegation will seek further clarification from the Secretariat as to whether and to how it considers that other articles, including Art. 23 and Art. 53, should be reformed.

We will also seek clarification as to why the report failed to address one of the root causes of the challenges to the financial situation of the United Nations, the funding and backstopping of special political missions, which in the past 20 years have grown to over 20% of total regular budget resources.

Madam Chair,

The shortcomings my delegation has pointed out mean that this report may bring more harm than good to this Organization. In any case, Brazil remains committed to a constructive dialogue on measures to improve the financial situation of the United Nations, including in the area of peacekeeping operations. We look forward to engaging with all Member States, in particular with fellow troop and police contributing countries, on this issue.

Thank you, Madam Chair.