



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
NATIONS BY AMBASSADOR BURHAN  
GAFOOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, ON AGENDA  
ITEM 138: IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL  
SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, FIFTH  
COMMITTEE, 4 JUNE 2019**

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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 delivered by the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2 ASEAN thanks the Secretary-General and his team for their regular outreach on this important item. ASEAN also acknowledges the Secretariat's efforts to achieve greater efficiency and efficacy through innovative processes and reforms. Nevertheless, more efforts are required from both the Secretariat and Member States to enable the United Nations to secure the resources it needs to deliver its mandates more effectively.

Madam Chair,

3 ASEAN remains deeply concerned over the deteriorating financial situation of the United Nations. The regular budget has experienced negative cash balances every year since 2012, including a negative cash balance of US\$323 million at the end of 2018, the most profound deficit in a decade. For the peacekeeping budget, more than US\$1 billion continues to be owed to 85 member states, most of which are developing countries. The financial positions of individual peacekeeping missions also continue to vary greatly. At the end of 2018, only two peacekeeping missions had cash reserves of more than three months of operating costs. These trends are not sustainable.

Madam Chair,

4 The main financial challenge that the Organisation faces is a lack of liquidity. ASEAN sympathises with countries that face difficulties in paying their contributions due to factors beyond their control. At the same time, we reiterate our call for countries that can do so to pay their assessments in full, on time, and without conditions. This would greatly contribute toward the financial stability of the United Nations. All Member States have a legal responsibility to fulfil their financial obligations, and a moral responsibility to ensure that the United Nations has adequate resources to implement its mandates.

5 In this regard, ASEAN notes that the Secretary-General's proposals include, among others, measures to encourage payment, and adjustments to the budget methodology. We stress that any measures must uphold the principles of accountability, transparency, and sustainability, while giving due recognition to every Member States' capacity to pay. That being said, ASEAN will carefully study all proposals. ASEAN in particular notes that the proposal for managing cash balances of peacekeeping operations as a pool has merits, and looks forward to more details on how this could address the issue of delayed payment to Troop and Police Contributing Countries. While the Secretariat should not be micro-managed, any increased managerial flexibility must be matched with increased levels of accountability and transparency.

Madam Chair,

6 In conclusion, ASEAN stresses that 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 on member states. Member states that have consistently paid their contributions in full should not be subsidising those that have continued to withhold payments. We look forward to a constructive and robust discussion on this.

7 I thank you, Madam Chair.

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