



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. NADA TARBUSH, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 150: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF FINANCING UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 8 May 2019)**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 150: Administrative and budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly on cross-cutting issues.

2. The Group thanks Mr. David Kanja, Assistant Secretary General for Internal Oversight Services; Mrs. Aruna Thanabalasi, Director of the Administrative Law Unit Division, Office of Human Resources, for introducing the various reports on this agenda item. The Group would also like to thank Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the ACABQ, for introducing the related report of the Committee.

Madam Chair,

3. At the outset, the Group would like to pay tribute to all United Nations peacekeepers who have been wounded in the line of duty or who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of peace. We believe that by creating a better policy framework for administrative and budgetary governance of peacekeeping operations, we can also help prevent the loss of our peacekeepers and civilian personnel.

4. The Group looks forward to discussing how management reform has impacted peacekeeping operations, a year since these changes were adopted. In this regard, it becomes a concern that the proposed level of resources continues to diminish, now up to a 5,4 per cent decrease. Taking into consideration that many delegations continue to insist on further depriving peacekeeping operations of resources, it brings the question of whether reforms can continue to be implemented in the absence of proper funding.

Madam Chair,

5. The Group wishes to express its appreciation for the Board of Auditors' report and recommendations. As usual, these will be taken into account in the analysis of this agenda item. However, we would like to recall paragraph 3 of resolution 72/8 B in which the General Assembly called for the ACABQ's analysis of the Board of Auditors' recommendations to be included under the

relevant agenda item. We recognize the relation between the Board's recommendations and the current agenda item, yet we reiterate our concern that the lack of a more substantive report from the ACABQ under agenda item 134, will limit the effectiveness of the Committee's decisions regarding the Board's recommendations and therefore their impact on improving peacekeeping operations.

6. The Group will look into the recommendations that have not been implemented in key areas such as air operations as well as gaps in information that might prevent the Committee from making helpful decisions for the benefit of peacekeeping operations.

7. The Group will consider carefully the cross-cutting budget performance and implementation of peacekeeping operations, bearing in mind the continued reductions in budget requirements. A robust peacekeeping budget is fundamental for the full implementation of agreed mandates. It is a long-standing position of the G77 and China, and indeed, of all Member States, that mandates must be funded. Cuts for the sake of cuts are unacceptable. The Group will examine closely the areas most impacted by shortfalls in financing, and how this has affected mandate implementation. The Group continues to call for responsible implementation by the Secretariat through financial discipline and adherence to the mandates laid down in the relevant resolutions. It is not for the Secretariat to decide which mandates are implemented and which are not. Mandates are the prerogative of Member States.

8. The Group will also give close attention to how reform has helped to improve budgetary supervision so that budgetary performance can be improved. At the same time, the Group reiterates once again a basic lack of resources can only be solved through all Member States paying their assessments in full, on time, and without conditions.

9. The Group holds a longstanding position on the crucial role of Quick Impact Projects and Programmatic Activities for successful mandate implementation. We underscore the importance of QIPs in building confidence in missions, their mandate and political and peace processes. These projects also contribute to force protection by generating support for the military and police components of missions - a growing concern for all troop and police contributing countries.

10. Although constituting a small share of the peacekeeping missions' budget, programmatic activities are used by peacekeeping missions as a tool to more effectively pursue political processes and wider mandate delivery. The Security Council has in recent years expanded the number of programmatic activities it tasks peacekeeping missions with, with a view to preventing and resolving conflicts and building a lasting peace.

11. The Group is of the view that the Secretariat must continue its work to increase the effectiveness of programmatic activities. In this regard, the Group rejects imposing artificial criteria for the governance of these activities, such as discrimination between so-called "types" of Programmatic Activities.

Madam Chair,

12. On the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Group reaffirms its strong commitment to the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse. The Group however notes that the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be reported in increased numbers. Alleged perpetrators include United Nations and non-United Nations personnel, such as staff members of NGOs that implement UN programmes on the ground. The Group stresses that the zero-tolerance policy must apply equally to all, whether they are uniformed personnel or civilians, or forces under UN mandate or civilians from the UN's humanitarian and developmental partners.

13. We note that the number of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse reported for peacekeeping has decreased, with 54 allegations reported in 2018, compared with 62 and 104 reported in 2017 and 2016, respectively. In 2018, 217 alleged perpetrators were UN civilian personnel or personnel of UN implementing partners compared to 78 uniformed personnel. Perhaps it is time we complement the victim-centered approach with a system-wide reprisal framework for the perpetrators, as has been the case with uniformed personnel.

14. The Group welcomes the strong resolve of the United Nations towards ensuring that it will not remain silent or passive in the face of reported incidents, as well as towards protecting and supporting victims of SEA through adopting a victim-centered approach addressing this problem and putting in place effective preventive policies and effective response measures.

15. The Group looks forward to examining progress towards adopting a more unified, system-wide approach to SEA. In particular, the Group will seek further information on mechanisms that aim to address SEA cases involving civilians and UN personnel both at Headquarters and in the field, and will also be interested to examine how existing mechanisms can ensure accountability for personnel found guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse or whether there is a need for new response mechanisms.

16. The Group notes that the report before us addresses measures needed to deal with cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the Group believes that more could have been done, especially in taking concrete action to identify and mitigate the risk factors identified by the Secretary-General in his previous reports.

17. The Group is pleased to know that the Secretary-General is actively enforcing whistle-blower protection policies on the protection of staff that report misconduct or cooperate with an investigation. Strict and full implementation of this policy is essential for empowering staff and encouraging them to report misconduct, including in cases involving senior officials.

18. Turning to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Group notes that a total of 252 oversight reports relating to peace operations were issued in 2018, including 595 recommendations. We take this opportunity to recognize the hard work of the OIOS, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Heidi Mendoza.

Finally, Madam Chair,

19. The Group of 77 and China reiterates that the cross-cutting resolution is intended to provide overarching policy guidelines on administrative and budgetary issues relating to peacekeeping

operations. The cross-cutting resolution should by no means be treated as a channel for delegations to pursue arbitrary overarching cuts in the budgets of peacekeeping operations.

20. In conclusion, the Group assures you, Madam Chair, of our constructive engagement on these issues in the ensuing discussions during informal consultations, with a view to conclude this important agenda item in a timely manner.

I thank you.