

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

**BY H.E AMBASSADOR CHEIKH NIANG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON THE ORGANISATION OF WORK OF THE FIFTH
COMMITTEE, DURING THE SECOND RESUMED
PART OF THE SEVENTY THIRD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK, 6 MAY 2019

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on the organization of work of the Fifth Committee during the second resumed part of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. The African Group would like to thank the Bureau under your able leadership for the tireless efforts aimed at facilitating the delivery of the Committee's responsibilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and would like to add a few remarks.

At the outset, the Group acknowledges the presence of Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Assistant-Secretary General and Controller, and Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

The African Group, once again, expresses its commitment and admiration for the invaluable work dedicated to the attainment and maintenance of international peace and security, and of which the United Nations peacekeeping operations are a key component.

The African Group also expresses its sincere gratitude to all uniformed and civilian personnel who have dedicated their lives to serving the United Nations, as well as, those at Headquarters supporting the work of peacekeepers in the field. We wish to pay special tribute to all United Nations and African Union personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of global peace and security.

Madam Chair,

The agenda of the Fifth Committee during the second resumed session is laden with a large number of reports which will be considered during the next four weeks.

It is unfortunate, as usually is, that the African Group once again has to lament over the late issuance of reports. This unwelcome situation directly impacts on the ability of Member States to consider the reports in advance so as to adequately prepare for the session. Having to deal with reports that have not been translated into all the official languages of the United Nations also presents serious challenges for a number of delegations.

The Group reiterates that the timely issuance of documents should be a critical part of improving the Fifth Committee's working methods. We urge the Secretariat to make every effort to uphold the six weeks' rule for the distribution of documents.

Going forward, the Group anticipates that, in the future, documents will be issued in a timely manner to enable delegations and the Advisory Committee to have adequate time to study and analyze them.

Madam Chair,

On the programme of work, the African Group acknowledges that it is tentative and that the Bureau will continue to amend and update it throughout the session to reflect progress made.

The Group wishes to note that an extension of this session beyond the allotted timeframe will impact negatively on the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) especially as some of its members double as Fifth Committee members. In this regard, the Group discourages the general notion of working beyond the stipulated period and looks forward to collaborating with the Bureau in ensuring that the Fifth Committee's work will be concluded in a timely and effective manner.

Regarding other agenda items, the Group is convinced that no agenda item ever presented is neither more nor less important. However, we wish to advise that introducing non-traditional second resumed agenda items may not have the benefit of the Committee's proper consideration and as a consequence, that precludes unfortunately an adequate treatment of those items which can be of the utmost importance to our Committee. It is the Group's view that there would be a more appropriate session where adequate attention and time could be given to non peacekeeping agenda items.

Madam Chair,

Turning to substantive issues, the African Group is strongly of the view that the integrity of this Organization depends, among others, on the ability to deliver on its mandates successfully. In an environment where resources are increasingly becoming scarce, it is required of us to explore ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness and greater accountability. We are also cognizant of the dynamics of peacekeeping operations where execution of mandates requires the protection of civilians, human rights and the environment. It is our hope, therefore, that the new challenges are appreciated, to maintain the balance between the provision of appropriate resources and expected results.

For the current period, the Group notes that the total resource requirements for peacekeeping operations is \$6.637 billion, \$382.2 million lower than the level approved for the 2018/19 period and \$859.2 million lower than that approved for the 2017/18 period.

The Group further notes that the figures contained in the overview report A/73/776 are subject to change due to ongoing developments on the ground in certain missions and the consideration of different situations in the Security Council. The Group trusts that further information will be provided to the Committee on the impact of these changes.

Madam Chair,

On the allocation of resources to individual missions, the Group would like to reiterate the great importance it attaches to this, in particular those on the African continent, taking into account the complexity of mandates and the unique challenges on the ground. In this regard, the Group underscores that all mandates authorized by the Security Council are to be fully resourced.

On the issue of TCCs/PCCs, it is worrying to note that the Organization was only able to reimburse approximately one half of the amount owed to troop- and police-contributing countries in the first quarter of 2019. Reimbursement by the United Nations for the contributions of TCCs/PCCs is important for effective mandate implementation. The longstanding delays in reimbursing TCCs/PCCs expose them to financial challenges as they endeavor to execute assigned tasks. Consequently, these delays adversely impact on operations and the delivery of their mandates

It is well known and widely conceded that most challenges faced by missions as well as troop- and police-contributing countries are occasioned by the late and non-payment of assessed contributions by Member States for some missions, including closed ones. The negative implications this has for peacekeeping operations at times prove to be very damaging and in some cases irrevocable.

To enable the Organization carry out its mandate effectively, and to avoid imperilling the lives of staff and personnel, the African Group once again urges all Member States to pay their assessments on time, in full and without conditions.

Madam Chair,

The African Group wishes to emphasize that the consideration of peacekeeping budgets should not be taken as a simple cost reduction exercise, but rather a responsible mandate resource allocation and policy-driven exercise. The Group will scrutinize each budget proposal, as well as the findings of oversight bodies such as the Board of Auditors and the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

The African Group will also carefully look at the performance of, and proposals for, all closed and active peacekeeping operations, as well as the United Nations Support to the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Regional Service Center in Entebbe and the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi.

Other issues to be closely followed will be cross cutting issues directly linked to individual mandates, including those related to mission support, Umoja implementation and its benefits, facilities and infrastructure, oversight, supply chain management as well as environmental and waste management. The Group notes that Quick Impact Projects and programmatic activities are critical elements in supporting sustainable peace in line with the 2030 Agenda, and should therefore play a more prominent role in peacekeeping operations.

As the business of the Committee ought to be transparent and inclusive in nature, the Group wishes to reiterate that it does not endorse closed door and small room configurations.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, the Group wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively, with a view to achieving a consensual outcome on all agenda items in a timely manner.

I thank you.