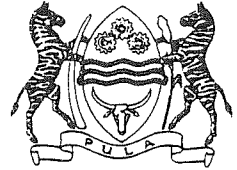


REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY MR. KATLEGO MMALANE,**

**FIRST SECRETARY
PERMANENT MISSION OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM: 135, PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET
FOR 2020: SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSIONS
(SPMs) CHAPEAU, Cluster III, UNAMI**

**AT THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY-FIFTH COMMITTEE**

**18 OCTOBER 2019
New York**

Please check against delivery

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 135 proposed programme budget for 2020, estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, Thematic Cluster III: Regional Offices, Offices in support of political processes and other missions.
2. At the outset, the Group wishes to thank Mr. Chandru Ramanathan, ASG/Controller and Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.

Mr. Chair,

3. The Group wishes to reiterate the importance it attaches to the vital role special political missions(SPMs) continue to play in fostering international peace and security through early warning, mediation, preventive diplomacy, support to electoral process, good office and peacebuilding efforts.
4. The varied and complex mandates of SPMs are often delivered in situations of active conflicts and in fragile post-conflicts environments.
5. In this regard, the African Group strongly believes that the allocation of adequate resources to SPMs is a critical element for the efficient and effective discharge of their given mandates.

Mr. Chair,

6. For 2020, the Group notes the proposed resource requirements for the nine SPMs under cluster III amount to \$291,182,600 representing a decrease of \$5,608,000 (1.9 per cent) compared with the resources approved for 2019.
7. The Group also notes that the proposed resources for military and police personnel for the nine special political missions under this thematic cluster for 2020 amount to \$26,695,500, which is an

increase of \$2,096,900, or 8.5 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2019.

8. For staffing, we note that the Secretary-General has proposed 1,457 positions for 2020 for the missions under cluster III representing a net increase of 23 positions.
9. We further note that staffing changes for 2020 are proposed for five of the nine missions under cluster III, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC). We will seek to understand the rationale behind these changes and their impact on mandate delivery during informal consultations.

Mr. Chair

10. For vacancies, the Group notes that that 20 positions were vacant under thematic cluster III as at 31 July 2019. Though the Group appreciates the efforts of missions as well as difficulties encountered in filling up these vacancies, we would urge that action on this be taken more expeditiously and urgently.
11. The aforementioned brings us to the question of positions that have been occupied by staff on special post allowance, especially for those that are for more than one year, and the need to avoid such delayed action on filling vacancies of critical posts.
12. On the issue of cooperation with other entities, the Group notes that this is a significant factor in the activities of the nine special political missions under thematic cluster III, including with the United Nations resident coordinators, agencies, funds and programmes and external partners. The Group will particularly take a closer look at the services and staffing of the resident coordinator system, including the division of labour and core support capacity provided under the new resident coordinator system.

Mr. Chair

13. Turning to crosscutting issues, the African Group notes the overall proposed resource requirements of SPMs amount to \$643,875,000 net and in line with General Assembly resolution 69/307, include \$1,427,100 to provide for the share of SPMs for the financing of the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, in.
14. Equally of interest to the African Group are other crosscutting issues which include the nationalization of posts and positions, the methodology for the calculation of standard salaries for SPMs, vehicles ratios, information technology equipment, air operations, security services, travel as well as backstopping support to SPMs at Headquarters. The Group intends to delve into these issues with an aim to having outcomes that would be most representative of the Organization's interests.

Mr. Chair,

15. The African Group, as always, looks forward to engaging constructively and concluding in a timely manner

I thank you.