



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
NATIONS BY H.E. MR BURHAN GAFOOR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON  
AGENDA ITEM 135: PROPOSED  
PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2020, 8  
OCTOBER 2019**

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8 Oct 2019

Thank you, Mr 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 136: Proposed Programme Budget for 2020. 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 for his introduction of the proposed programme budget for 2020. We also extend our appreciation to Mr Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the report of the ACABQ.

Mr Chair,

3 At a time when multilateralism is under threat, we need a dynamic United Nations more than ever. ASEAN supports the Secretary-General's efforts to make the United Nations nimbler and more responsive to improve the delivery of its mandates. One of the prerequisites for an effective organisation is strong and sensible programme planning and budgeting procedures.

4 In this regard, the transition from a biennial to annual budget presents an opportunity for the UN to improve its budgeting processes. But at the same time, we should not lose sight of established and proven procedures that have facilitated rigorous and healthy discussions on the budget over the past years. ASEAN has taken note of the ACABQ's comments on the new format for the presentation of

the budget, and we agree that there is room for improvement. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that the transition is extremely complex, and we encourage the Secretariat to continuously build upon the best practices.

Mr Chair,

5 Even though the regular budget has not been growing in real terms, the mandates of the United Nations continue to increase steadily. We must be realistic – we cannot demand the Organisation to do more, while giving it less. ASEAN reiterates its firm belief that the Organisation’s resources must be commensurate with the mandates it has been tasked to deliver. Arbitrary cuts to the proposed budget or the deliberate withholding of resources should have no place in the UN, but it is a reality that we have been dealing with for years. If left unchecked, these artificial constraints are only setting up the UN for failure. The Secretary-General has expressed his commitment to delivering results on the ground. Member States should do their part to support his drive to produce results, with both our words, and our actions.

Mr Chair,

6 ASEAN notes that initial estimates to finance Special Political Missions in the proposed budget amount to over US\$640 million. This accounts for over 22 percent of the proposed budget for 2020. ASEAN appreciates the role of Special Political Missions in the United Nations’ work on peace and security. However, we also believe that it is time this Assembly had a serious discussion on the funding arrangements for Special Political Missions vis-à-vis other development priorities, which is all the more pertinent in view of the ongoing reform of the United Nations’ peace and security architecture. We look forward to having further discussions on this topic when the specific agenda item of SPMs is considered during this session.

Mr Chair,

7 ASEAN will take an active interest in the forthcoming discussions. We look forward to a constructive and productive dialogue with all stakeholders.

8 I thank you.

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