



**74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
Fifth Committee  
Agenda Item 137: Improving the Financial Situation of the United Nations**

**Statement by  
Sithara Khan, Delegate, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations**

**18<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of G77 and China and notes with appreciation the presentation by Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance on the Financial Situation of the United Nations which provided a comprehensive overview of the current fiscal situation of the Organization, which we believe is dire.

While acknowledging the Secretary-General's communications to all Member States on the depleting finances of the Organization and the austerity measures to be implemented in view of the prevailing liquidity crisis, it is imperative for the Secretariat to explore other ways and means in seeking out the payments of the unsettled assessed contributions. It is with disdain that Sri Lanka notes that as of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the unpaid assessed contributions stand at a total of nearly \$1.4 billion which is \$299 million higher than last year. Such a trend must be arrested forthwith. Timely payment of contributions would ensure predictability in the organization's implementation of its mandates. Sri Lanka for its part has discharged its obligations in paying its assessments to date, despite many domestic priorities.

At a time when the UN is transitioning from a biennial to an annual budget, it is also equally important for the Secretariat to utilize the available resources received from the Member States in a more effective, impartial and transparent manner.

While this transition opens new vistas for the Organization to improve its budgeting processes, it is also equally important to keep in mind the established and proven procedures that have facilitated healthy dialogues on the budget in the past in taking this new process forward.

In this context, not only the budgets, but extensive rationalization of staff requirements also needs to be undertaken across all categories. This process should also include aspects on the delivery of expected service from Secretariat staff towards Member States. To this end, following flawed processes, violation of legal frameworks, ensuring basic accepted norms of replying communications in a timely manner for efficient processing of issues raised, are some areas to be considered.

My delegation is bringing these issues to light having been unfairly subjected to a procedure of a dubious nature by the Secretariat with the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The DPO in its process of unilaterally deciding punitive action violated a MoU with a sovereign country, while challenging the decision of a Head of State. Further, it is also extremely regrettable that the Secretariat to date has failed to formally reply the written communications addressed on the relevant aspects of the matter for over a month. It is basic and important to have formal communications in order to avert confusion and misunderstanding on information provided verbally. We must ensure that such a misplaced process should not be allowed to be systematized, in order for professional ethics of the organization to be secured.

Further, despite being a regular contributor to the UN Peacekeeping Operations budget since 1960, Sri Lanka wishes to seek clarity on the possibility of a Member State scaling down the related financial contribution commensurate to the curtailment of its deployment, that too which has been initiated by the Secretariat in violation of the related MoU.

Chair,

At this financially critical time, we seek your views on the manner in which the Organization would set about in meeting all the commitments undertaken and how they would be operationalized without adversely affecting the delivery of the mandates. My delegation looks forward to the clarifications on the issues raised and a response to the communications addressed to DOP. While appreciating the Secretary General's assurance to meet obligations to Member States providing troops and equipment as promptly as possible based on the availability of funds, Sri Lanka also urges the Secretariat to fulfill its financial obligations vis a vis the peace keepers identified to be replaced, at the point of repatriation. Further, it is important to ensure a predictive system of payment on all dues concerning peacekeeping operations.

Thank you.