

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR.
KATLEGO BOASE MMALANE, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT
MISSION OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE
CLOSING SESSION OF THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY
FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 27 December 2019)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Members States of the African Group during the closing part of the main part of the seventy-fourth session of the UN General Assembly.
2. The Group acknowledges the presence of Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under Secretary General for Management as well as Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller.
3. At the outset allow me to thank you for your excellent work as chair of the Fifth Committee during the 74th session of the General Assembly.
4. We greatly value and appreciate your skillful guidance in leading us to a successful conclusion of this session of the Fifth Committee. The Committee would not have been able to conclude this session without the constant engagement of your team on all levels.
5. Our deepest appreciation also goes to Mr. Lionel Berridge and his tireless team at the Fifth Committee Secretariat who stayed with us day, night and long after we had exited the building. We as well thank the Conference Officers, Interpreters, Sound Engineers, and all others who supported and facilitated our work and helped create a positive and conducive atmosphere in which we could complete relatively our work in time.
6. The African Group aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the Distinguished Representative of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman

7. Let me begin by reflecting on some challenges and achievements of the Committee during this session.

8. 2019 was quite a unique year in that it reflected the first phase in the implementation of resolution **72/266** from a biennial to an annual year. This session was the first time that the entirety of the Programme Plan was submitted for the consideration and decision of the General Assembly without any specific recommendations. Also it was the first time that the sequential nature of the review processes of the proposed programme budget conducted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee was not preserved.
9. The Group is pleased that we have successfully concluded deliberations on the above agenda items including other important agenda items, among them the Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations common system, construction and property management, Administration of Justice, the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund and Umoja just to mention but a few.
10. Despite the challenges associated with moving to the first annual programme plan and budget, the General Assembly has succeeded in adopting a programme budget that ensures an adequate level of resources for the United Nations to be able to fully deliver on all mandated programmes and activities.
11. Against this background, we hope that notwithstanding having adopted a resolution on programme planning, the sequential nature of the review processes for the programme budget is preserved and further strengthened.
12. During the session, the African Group placed greater attention on protecting the development pillar of the United Nations in all its aspects, including endeavoring to allocate adequate resources to areas such as OHRLLS; DESA, NEPAD including OSAA, DPPA, UNCTAD, UNEP, ICT, Counter Terrorism, the Elimination of Ebola in the SADC region, trainings in the implementation of the reforms, capacity building initiatives for developing countries, Special Political Missions, administration at Nairobi and the Regional Economic Commissions, so that the Organization can perform its role as an enabler of the development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

13. It is quite evident that the session has not been without its challenges. As usual however, the Fifth Committee's strength of character, the cordiality that dwelt among the membership and the consensus that strove all through, have been the driving force that has brought the session to a successful conclusion. The African Group is proud to be a part of this achievement.

14. The Group will also take this opportunity to thank delegates for their participation, engagement and most importantly their flexibility.
15. We are encouraged by the positive spirit exhibited during the session and may this continue in sessions to come.
16. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, let me take the opportunity to congratulate the Observer State of Palestine as Chair of the Group of 77 and China for their able stewardship in leading the Group throughout a uniquely challenging year.
17. Finally, allow me to also express my personal gratitude to the 54 members of our Group and my Bureau Members in the African Group for the drafting of statements and for leading the negotiations of resolution, for the expertise, the unity, the solidarity and their friendship. It is a privilege to be able to continue to serve this Group and the principles it represents.
18. We look forward to returning to Conference Room 5 after the recess, and to continue working alongside you all in order to support our United Nations in leaving "**NO ONE BEHIND.**"

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Happy Holidays to all!