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**75<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
Administrative & Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee)**

**Item 143. Improving the Financial Situation of the United Nations  
Statement by H.E. Mohan Pieris, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United  
Nations**

**14 May 2021**

Mr. Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Guinea, on behalf of the G77 & China.

We thank Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance for comprehensively briefing the Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May of the current fiscal situation of the organization.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation shares the concerns raised by other speakers regarding the deepening liquidity crisis which seriously impacts the regular budget. There have been cash deficits earlier in the year and liquidity reserves we are told have been exhausted, which phenomenon does not auger well for financial systems stability in the UN and a far cry from what is envisaged as a sustainable budgetary practice.

Needless to say it is crucial that the Secretariat appropriates the available resources, contributions from the Member States in a more effective, impartial and transparent manner, within the prescribed mandates. Strict adherence to budgetary discipline is greatly required at all time, more particularly in the present environment when the global economy has been severely impacted due to the pandemic and when member States consequently are required to adopt austerity measures of a compelling nature to keep their country fires burning. As the Secretary General so aptly puts it, we are all in it together, we are trustees of an onerous obligation bestowed on us by the people's of the farthest

corners of our planet to ensure that we get our priorities right in the appropriation of their contributions to this august assembly. This fundamentally requires the appropriation of finances in a manner consonant and as envisaged by the rules of this assembly. It must always be strictly intra-vires. We must scrupulously give life to our power of regulatory oversight into ensuring that we do not abdicate that great trust to administrative functionaries in the maze of a sophisticated administrative structure who have the potential to undermine the very spirit of the charter of this great Assembly. Our Committees bestowed with that power of oversight cannot be reduced to mere rubber stamps. Consultation, consensus, respect for the sovereignty of member States must be an overarching consideration before we embark on the appropriation of UN funds which must be for the common good for the peoples of the world and not to satisfy the peculiar agendas of member States, groupings of member States and sometimes of our own agencies that hold briefs for other entities who have cleverly inveigled themselves into this system for the purposes of prosecuting their own agendas which are not for the public good.

The upshot of all this is the impact amongst others on the 'development pillar' of our structure. It is deeply distressing and evokes serious concern as it has a direct impact on the implementation of such programs in developing countries and countries in special situations who are managing to keep their heads above water in a world that is experiencing a pandemic to which none of us yet have an effective remedy. Although I do not agree with some of our critics they say that we carry on our political business as usual as if though nothing has happened other than the cosmetic procedures and rhetorical manifestations of the illusionary ideals that we consistently keep reminding ourselves. So consistent that some of us ask ourselves the question of whether we need to remind ourselves so often lest we forget them as we leave the premises of this hallowed institution. Mr Chair, this perhaps is a time for introspection. A time, to put it in financial terms for an audit, not really of the numbers but of the propriety of the procedures that we have been hitherto following in the appropriation of our resources which presents to us a dismal picture.

At a time where the UN needs to focus more on 'uniting our strengths to maintain international peace and security, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples' the resources of the UN should be used only for actual requirements. We cannot leave room for the engagement in forays into extra-jurisdictional activity.

Sri Lanka is concerned on the proposals to use these limited resources from the UN regular budget for the implementation of politically motivated agendas. It is the utmost responsibility of this Committee and that of the Advisory Committee on the Administrative and Budgetary Questions to impartially consider such requests vis a vis the actual requirements.

Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka appreciates the Member States who have paid their assessed contributions to the regular budget in full for the year 2021. While acknowledging the solution to the liquidity crisis is for all Member States to pay their contributions in full, on time, without condition, it is also significant to recognize the challenging economic situations in the Member States, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, it is important that Member States with the capacity to pay their outstanding assessed contributions do so, while recognizing the efforts made by many Member States to pay their outstanding contributions as well as their genuine inability to perform financial obligations for reasons beyond their control.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka calls on the Secretariat to submit itself to more stringent regulatory oversight as a tool in achieving greater efficiencies in the appropriation of financial resources having in mind the objectives of the Charter of the UN.

I thank you!