

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. MOHAMED TRAORE, SECOND COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF MALI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 153: PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDUAL MECHANISM FOR CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS FOR 2021 AT THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY- FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIFTH COMMITTEE

14th December 2020

Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset allow me to thank Mr. Chandramuli Ramanathan, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller for presenting the proposed budget for the Mechanism for year 2021 as contained in document A/75/383. Our appreciation is also extended to Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the ACABQ for introducing the Advisory Committee related report as contained in document A/75/632.
2. Allow me also to thank the governments of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for hosting and supporting the work of the Mechanism.
3. The African Group aligns itself with remarks by the distinguished delegate of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and ~~we~~ wishes to emphasize a few additional elements.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group has taken note of the progress made by the Mechanism in delivering the given mandate ~~under challenging situations~~ in this difficult time of COVID -19 pandemic. We ~~have learned~~ witnessed the high level of technology deployed to ensure business continuity including on the judicial activities and other court proceedings.

5. Coming to the activities of the mechanism, the Group commends the efforts of the Mechanism and the key stakeholders that facilitated the arrest of Mr. Felicien Kabuga who has been on the run for more than 20 years.
6. The African Group is pleased to note that the Mechanism continues to maintain a sound financial and cash position. The Group also notes that the proposed budget for 2021 amounts to 97.2 million US dollars, reflecting the same level of resources approved in 2020 .
7. The Group is concerned that resources allocation in relation of the Kabuga case is not duly reflected in the proposed budget for 2021. Moreover, The Group is concerned by the Secretary General's proposal to allocate some resources in the Hague for functions that are mandated for Arusha. The group will seek to understand the rationale behind such budgetary allocations.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The African Group would like to stress that Mr. Kabuga presence in The Hague was supposed to be a temporary arrangement and, we therefore expect that he will be soon transferred to Arusha to face his trial accordingly, as this would enable parties and stakeholders, including witnesses, the opportunity to participate in the judicial proceedings.
9. As reiterated by the chair of the G77 and China, the Group also notes the proposed changes related to the narration of the Objective on Registry component. The Group will seek clarification for changes in paragraph 25 of the proposed budget, in line with commends and recommendations of ACABQ on this matter.

10. The group also stands to understand the issue on delegation of authority, the Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Mechanism being in our understanding of the Secretary General's bulletin ST/SGB/2019/2 Titled *“Delegation of authority in the administration of the staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules, the incumbent of the said delegation of authority.*
11. Turning to the long-standing matter on the Mechanisms support to the Residual Special Court of Sierra Leone, as per our previous remarks, the African Group continues to be of strong view that, as part of the sustainable solution is to house the Court in Arusha facilities while ensuring the independence of each of the entities and therefore, we look forward to updates on the matter in the context of our informal consultations.
12. With regard to the comments and observations of the Advisory Committee, the African Group strongly supports the need for presentation of the sound nationalizations of posts and position in all branches, while keeping the Mechanism a small and an efficient entity. We will be examining to what extent this can be achieved and will present a proposal for the first step in the nationalization of post and position in the context of our informal consultations.
13. The group will also examine in details the implementation of previous decisions of the General Assembly related to staffing and recruitment, including the adherence to the principles of gender balance and equitable geographical representation.

Mr. Chairman,

14. In conclusion, allow me also to join others in thanking Mr. Olufemi Elias, the outgoing Registrar for his excellent service to Mechanism. We also take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Abubacarr Tambadou the new Registrar and we look forward to extending our support in delivering his given mandate.

15. The African Group stands ready to engage constructively in the deliberation of this item with a view to reaching consensus in a timely manner.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.