

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. MOHAMED TRAORE, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI, ON AGENDA ITEM 154: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF FINANCING UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**(New York, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021)**

**Mr. Chair,**

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 154: Administrative and budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations, with key emphasis on cross-cutting issues.
2. The Group wishes to thank the Secretariat represented by Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Assistant-Secretary General and Controller; and the Chair of the Advisory Committee Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, for the submission of their respective reports. The Group also wishes to express its appreciation for the respective reports of the Board of Auditors (BoA), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

**Mr Chairman,**

3. Let me at the outset indicate that the African Group aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and would like to add a few remarks.
4. The Group also takes this opportunity to recall that the General Assembly has repeatedly indicated that the budget proposal of United Nations peacekeeping operations must be based on existing mandates of the Security Council. Therefore, it is the position of the African Group that the overall budget of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations must be commensurate with all UN Peacekeeping mandates.

5. The Group will carefully consider the cross-cutting budget performance and implementation of peacekeeping operations, bearing in mind the continued reductions in the budget we see annually. We will also examine keenly the areas that these reductions are impacting, taking into account that for the 2018/2019, the 2019/2020 budget periods, and the 2020/2021 budget requirements, reductions have continued to be made, potentially leaving other more essential and closer to the ground activities in peacekeeping operations without the necessary support.

**Mr. Chairman,**

6. We continue to note with grave concern the threat to life, health, safety and security caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and would like to see the measures including the allocation of additional resources across all Peacekeeping operations so as to ensure the safety and well-being of Uniformed and civilian personnel. The Group would like to also emphasize as requested from the previous year, the need for the Secretary General to explore partnerships on how he intends to prepare for future pandemics and epidemics to ensure the readiness of the world and the UN in any future catastrophes.
7. Another important issue that is crucial for the Group is our longstanding position on the role of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Programmatic Activities for successful mandate implementation. We underscore the importance of QIPs in building confidence in missions, and paving the way for their mandate delivery. These projects also contribute to Force protection by generating support for the military and police components of missions. The lack of support for these projects has become a growing concern for all missions, as well as troop and police contributing countries.  
Equally perplexing is the fact that the budgetary allocations for QIPs where they exist has either remained the same remained the same year-in-year or either been reduced without taking into consideration the commensurate grown in the number of projects being implemented.
8. Although constituting a small share of the peacekeeping operations' budget, programmatic activities have long been used by peacekeeping

operations as a tool to effectively pursue political processes and wider mandate delivery. The Security Council has in recent years expanded the number of programmatic activities it tasks peacekeeping operations with, with a view to preventing and resolving conflicts and building a lasting peace. Against this backdrop, we request that the General Assembly do likewise and support programmatic activities with adequate financial resources.

**Mr. Chairman**

9. On the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Group reaffirms its strong commitment to the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse. The Group, however, notes that the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be reported in increased numbers. The Group calls on the Secretary General to ensure that the Zero-tolerance policy applies equally to all alleged perpetrators, whether they are uniformed personnel or civilians, either UN personnel or humanitarian and developmental partners.
  
10. With respect to reducing the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations, the Group acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the multiyear environmental strategy. During informal discussions, we will however take keen interest to appreciate and better understand how the Secretary General has enhanced measures in line with the five pillars of the strategy and ensured full compliance with agreed rules and regulations. As part of our discussions, the Group would seek to gain a better understanding of the Organisation's collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme as the lead technical body responsible for setting and coordinating global environmental agenda within the United Nations system.
  
11. On the issue of procurement, the African Group has continually argued that as a matter of policy, the Secretary General should strictly incorporate host country content in the procurement of construction projects of all peacekeeping operations through the utilization of local materials and contractors. The Group will take the opportunity to request an update on the concrete measures taken by the Secretary General in this regard, as well as the utilization of local knowledge and expertise.

**Mr. Chairman,**

- 12.** Considering that 7 out of the 12 active peacekeeping Missions are in Africa and that the Secretary General has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on UN-African Union partnership in peacebuilding, the African Group recognizes the important role played by regional and sub-regional actors in peacekeeping operations and would take the opportunity to appreciate measures taken by the Secretary General to deepen the partnership, cooperation and coordination of the United Nations with regional and Sub-regional actors in accordance with relevant mandates.
- 13.** Allow me in closing, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate the importance of providing all PKO's with adequate resources to ensure that they fully implement their mandates. The African Group will therefore not subscribe to any approach of prejudging the mandate of any peacekeeping operation, but is ready to constructively engage on these important issues with a view to concluding this agenda item in a timely manner.

**I Thank You**