



PHILIPPINES

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

to be delivered by Marivil Villa Valles

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines
to the United Nations in New York

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement of the G77 and China on the Organization of Work. We thank the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee Secretariat for their valuable contributions to the work of the Committee

At the outset, our delegation expresses its deep appreciation for the sacrifices of UN peacekeeping personnel to maintain global peace and security particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In view of the improvements on the health situation, the Philippines looks forward to hearing updates on methods of work to continue the work of the Committee upon the advice of the appropriate UN departments and relevant authorities.

Mr. Chair, the pandemic has seriously challenged UN peacekeeping missions in various ways, including through suspended troop patrols, restrictions on movements of personnel and equipment and the need for quarantine facilities. For certain missions, these challenges have reduced the effectiveness of their forces and impaired mandate implementation.

Nevertheless, peacekeeping missions have continued to carry out their mandates and even assisted countries in their pandemic response. As highlighted in the 2021 Report of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations or C-34, peacekeeping missions have taken swift measures, within their mandates and capacities, to adapt and adjust their working practices to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, by facilitating humanitarian access, combating disinformation and using the Comprehensive Performance and Assessment system to track and mitigate impacts on mandate delivery.

Over the past year, UN officials have highlighted UN missions' response to COVID-19 guided by their objectives: to protect UN personnel and bolster their capacities to deliver on their key mandates, and support national authorities in their pandemic response.

Our delegation notes that mandated operations allow the likelihood of contact among UN staff and troop and police contingents and with local populations. Their vaccination therefore would mitigate the adverse effects of potential outbreaks and protect the civilians. Thus, we would

like to hear updates from the Secretariat on its COVID-19 vaccination programmes in various UN peacekeeping operations.

Particularly during these times of uncertainty, we also recognize the importance of accountability of both uniformed and civilian personnel. Accountability contributes to the safety and security of both our peacekeepers and the civilians they protect. Therefore, it should be continuously evaluated and improved.

Mr. Chair,

A perpetual issue for all of us is the budget. Appropriate funding must be made available to meet the needs and requirements of personnel. The approved peacekeeping budget for the financial year 2020-2021 was \$6.58 billion, representing a decrease of 3.4% compared with the previous year's (2019-2020) budget of \$6.81 billion, which also represented a decrease of 4.9% compared with 2018-2019 budget of \$7.16 billion. Reductions have continued over the past recent years, and the reduced budget may not be commensurate with the mandated tasks as well as the needs and requirements in the operational environment.

It may be recalled that several peacekeeping missions have had a limited budget, owing mainly to member state budget cuts, late payments by some, and certain structural weaknesses in budget methodologies. These have led to cash shortages and delays in reimbursements.

This financial strain has been alleviated in part with the management of cash balances of all active PKOs in pool since the latter part of 2019 and the issuance of assessment letters for the full budget period, as indicated in GA Res 73/307. However, the UN continues to experience liquidity crisis and increasing financial pressure, which has been exacerbated by the economic consequences of COVID-19.

These budgetary constraints raise concerns on the strengthening of protection not only of civilians but of peacekeepers as well, and on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

Mr. Chair,

Our delegation believes that we should not lose sight of the role of peacekeeping operations in protecting civilians, actively preventing conflict, reducing violence, strengthening security and empowering national authorities. Therefore, the allocation of sufficient budget to address the needs of peacekeeping missions and ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers must be safeguarded at all times.

We look forward to concluding our deliberations on time to ensure that necessary resources are provided for peacekeeping operations to fulfil their mandates. The Philippines will remain engaged in this discussion and contribute towards a positive outcome for this agenda item.

I thank you.