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STATEMENT BY
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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP

**AGENDA ITEM 139: PROGRAMME PLANNING, PROPOSED
PROGRAMME PLAN 2022 AND 138: PROPOSED PROGRAMME
BUDGET 2022, OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE, DURING THE MAIN
PART OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

13 October 2021
United Nations HQ,
New York

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Africa Group on agenda item 139 (Programme Planning, Proposed Programme plan for 2022) and 138 (Proposed Programme Budget for 2022).
2. At the outset, the Africa Group would like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, for the presentation of his proposed programme budget for 2022; as well as Mr. Giovanni Buttigieg, Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, for the introduction of the related reports.
3. The Africa Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 & China. We wish to make the following additional remarks.

Mr. Chairman

4. The COVID-19 pandemic has had unexpected and dramatic consequences on all economies especially those of developing countries. The response and recovery effort in many countries in Africa remain mixed on account of the lack of solidarity, especially due to inequities in access to vaccines.
5. As we call on the United Nations to do more for vulnerable Member States, we cannot fail but recall the words of the Secretary-General when he outlined his priorities and noted that the great moral test of the year 2021 is to make vaccines available and affordable to all, treating them as a global public good. We encourage the Secretary-General to enhance the organization's support to vulnerable countries, including at the regional, sub-regional and national level.

Mr. Chairman

6. The Africa Group in this regard reaffirms its position that the Secretary-General should be allocated the resources required to execute the mandate prescribed by the General Assembly; more so in these exceptional times when the United Nations is being called upon to do more.

Mr. Chairman

7. The Africa Group will actively participate in the Committee's deliberations on the budget and we shall exert all efforts to appropriate the required funding for all relevant items, including: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Economic and Social development in Africa, and Construction and property management.
8. At the 75th session of the General Assembly, the Africa Group encouraged the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa to continue improving on the content and structure of the Office, so as to make it a strategic tool for the development of the continent in the context of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, the Africa we want. The Group will want to ensure that adequate human and financial resources are given to the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa to carry out its mandate effectively, following the implementation of the reforms.
9. Furthermore, the African Group attaches great importance to the Development Account. The Group is concerned about the decreasing percentage share of the Development Account vis-à-vis the overall budget. We reiterate once more that General Assembly resolution 52/12 B encourages the Secretary-General to track and identify savings resulting from efficiency measures to be transferred to the Development Account.
10. Concerning Special Political Missions, the Africa Group considers that these Missions are the most effective tools for sustaining international peace. Regrettably, this Committee has so far failed in providing Special Political Missions with adequate financial and human resources. Given that

Special Political Missions serve as early warning mechanisms in conflict situations, it is imperative that we adequately resource them so as to lessen the need to fund Peacekeeping Operations. These measures will go a long way in saving lives and preserving the integrity of States from the scourge of conflict.

11. On Programme Planning, we wish to reiterate our long-standing support to the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programming, evaluation and coordination. The Group is concerned that the Committee continues to witness an increase in the number of programmes that remain open due to lack of consensus. The Group stresses the fundamental role of the CPC and denounces the politicization of its work. Additionally, the Group wishes to recall the rules and procedures of CPC and stresses that implementation of resolution 75/243, paragraph 9, is vital to ensure an effective and efficient outcome of the overarching Programme Budget negotiations.
12. The Africa Group insists that open programmes should be reviewed by the General Assembly Plenary or the relevant Main Committees where their mandates emanate from. The Group urges the affected Main Committees to consider the said programmes as soon as possible to enable the Fifth Committee to approve the related budget, in a timely manner.

Mr. Chairman

13. The Africa Group cannot stress enough the significance of more in-person meetings to handle the work of the Fifth Committee, especially the budget discussions. Our Group's involvement in the work of the Committee is seriously hampered by virtual mediums which lack interpretation services, thus, excluding a significant number of our Group.
14. We thus emphasize the need to utilize every possible slot in the Programme of Work to grant in-person meetings for the introduction of

agenda items, Q&As, and, more importantly, once we engage on the drafting of resolutions.

15. Finally, Mr. Chairman, rest assured that the Africa Group will be engaging constructively on this important agenda item and looks forward to its deliberations so as to ensure that we provide the budget to the Secretary-General on time.

I thank you.