

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP BY MR. FELIX EBOA EBONGUE, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON, ON FINANCING OF ALL UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY – FIFTH COMMITTEE

(New York, 3rd May 2022)

Mr. Chair,

1- I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Africa Group on the overarching matter **of financing of all United Nations Peacekeeping Operations**.

2- The African Group wishes to thank Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Assistant-Secretary General and Controller, for introducing the various reports of the Secretary-General. We also wish to extend our appreciation to Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee for introducing the related reports.

3- We wish to indicate that **our Group will make one statement for all PKOs in order to save time and thus to remain consistent with our commitment to work in an efficient fashion**. In this regard, the African Group would like to use this opportunity to make a few general comments on peacekeeping operations.

4- At the outset, the Group wishes to acknowledge the **invaluable work** being dedicated to the attainment and maintenance of international peace and security, and of which the **United Nations peacekeeping operations are a key component**. It is the Group's privilege to convey its **gratitude to all personnel**, both civilian and uniformed, at Headquarters and in the field.

5- Similarly, the Group reiterates its **warm appreciation to host countries** for their cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. **The Group also commends the TCCs and PCCs** for their invaluable contribution.

Mr. Chair

6- The Group reiterates that the **overall budget of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations must be commensurate with UN Peacekeeping mandates.**

7- The African Group reiterates his call, as a matter of emergency, to all Member States to fulfill their financial obligations in time, in full and without conditions. While the cash pool of active Missions for a trial basis for three budget periods started 2019 has proved to be useful, particularly by allowing the settlement of payments due to PCCs and TCCs, this temporary arrangement shall in any case be considered as an alternative to comply with the financial obligations.

8- We note that for the current budget cycle, the United Nations supports **11 active Peacekeeping missions**, for an overall budget proposal of **6 billion and 512 million dollars**, inclusive of all Peacekeeping components, representing an increase of 134.5 million dollars compared to the 2021 – 2022 apportionment. The Group further notes that **this budget proposal is an exception to the trend of resources decrease over the last years**, despite the challenging situation faced by Operations.

9- Considering the budget performance for the 2021 / 2022 period, we note an overall budget implementation rate of 96.9%, as compared to a rate of 98.5% for the preceding period. While these figures show a fair rate, close scrutiny of the expenditure classes reveal that **improvement can be made in allocating proper resources and avoid unnecessary allocation of financial resources to budget lines with high underexpenditures** such as air operations or official travels, whereas **critical budget lines, for instance National civil staff, Facilities and infrastructures or Medical are constantly underbudgeted.** The Group trusts that transparent engagement will be crucial to gain effectiveness in **aligning the Operations needs with the budget allocations.** We will also seek clarity on the over expenditure under Umoja maintenance and support costs.

10- While it is important to allow flexibility to the Secretariat, the African Groups strongly believes that determining the resources level of each budget class and also within these **classes falls perfectly under the prerogatives**

of the Committee. In this regard, we trust that global allocation of resources without guidance or an overall resource reduction, without specification of the components concerned by the said **reduction, shouldn't be the normal course of action.**

Mr. Chair

11- The Group wishes to express its appreciation to the relevant Departments of the UN Secretariat, as well as Operations on the ground, for the facilitation of the field trip of the Fifth Committee conducted in April this year. **The resumption of this important visit of the Fifth Committee enabled the committee to see firsthand realities** on the ground and update itself of the progress and challenges that peacekeeping missions are facing, particularly in improving the security and safety of troops and civilian personnel, inadequate facilities and infrastructure including accommodation, logistical support as well as medical facilities; it is against this knowledge that we will carefully consider the budgetary proposals to ensure that the challenges are addressed and that priorities are considered.

12- Among those challenges, the African Group continues to stress that the **complex environment** in which these missions operate warrants for new approaches and a more “**close to the field approach**” of the financing of Peacekeeping Operations. In this realm, the Group welcomes the **triple nexus humanitarian approach** which envisions stronger collaboration and coordination among actors from the fields of development cooperation, humanitarian action and peacebuilding.

13- The Group notes that despite the positive evolution and the successful management mechanism of **Covid-19** by Missions, this pandemic continues to be a threat to life, health, safety and security to UN personnel and host countries. The Group also notes that **climate change and environmental hazards** have come to increase and complexify the work of peacekeepers and stresses the need for the Committee to consider the financial requirements of the missions to face these challenges.

14- With respect to reducing the **environmental footprint** of peacekeeping operations, the Group acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the multiyear environmental strategy. However, the

continuous high use of generators and the less than expected investments in environmentally friendly energies such as solar panels and wind turbines remains of concern. During informal discussions, we will seek to understand the lack of engagement of some missions in implementing environmental initiatives that will lessen their footprint. We will seek to 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

15- Regarding the priorities, the African Group stresses the following:

- **the determinant role of Quick Impact Projects and Programmatic Activities** for successful mandate implementation. The Africa Group pleads for more resources to be allocated to QIPs and Programmatic activities, as **there is no peace possibility in an environment where poverty and struggle for survival have taken away hope, leaving despair and anger as sole daily companions.**
- Conducive working environment, **including decent accommodation** and catering for civil and military personnel are critical for mandate implementation. It is time missions **abandon random lodging of personnel in Prefabs and invest in more planned and durable construction**, with the aim of leaving a **useful legacy** at the departure of the Mission and handover of sustainable goods to local authorities, as per the Financial Rules and Regulations.
- Filling all vacant post, with particular consideration to **long vacant posts** and local posts is of utmost importance. Similarly, increased efforts shall be put on **nationalization of functions**. The Group deeply regrets that the General Assembly's previous guidance in that regard have not been more implemented, and we are concerned about the **lack of progress** made in the current budget proposals.
- **Local procurement and use of local knowledge and expertise** are part of the longstanding priorities of the African Group. We continuously advocate 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. Unfortunately, even on products on which the continent clearly has a comparative advantage, its presence is minimized. Local vendors are left with no clear strategy to help them fully and equitably participate in procurement activities.

The Group will take the opportunity to request an update on the concrete measures taken by the Secretary General in this regard.

Mr. Chair

16- Before concluding, allow me to stress on the critical role of Special Representatives of the Secretary General, Heads of the different Missions, in the continuous construction of a political environment favorable to a definitive solution to crisis in host countries; no energy is to be spared in bringing together all conflicting parties and stakeholders, including youth and women, for the building of a long-lasting peace.

17- 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 Africa Group will therefore not subscribe to any approach of prejudging the mandate of any peacekeeping mission and will persevere in the mission-by-mission approach reinstated during the 75th session of the General Assembly. The group stands ready to constructively engage on these important issues with a view to concluding this agenda item in a timely manner.

I thank you