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**Statement by Ambassador Christopher Lu
U.S. Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform
138. Proposed programme budget 2023 and 139. Programme planning
October 12, 2022**

[As Delivered]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary-General, we commend you for submitting a budget proposal that accurately reflects the significant challenges facing our global community.

I would like to address several priority areas for the United States.

Two and a half years after the pandemic began, the UN has recognized, as have other organizations, that the nature of work has changed. Flexible work can be successful, and we commend the Secretariat's decision not to renew the lease for the DC-1 building. Shared service centers, such as those in Kuwait and Entebbe, are also an important component of where we work, and we should explore other cost-efficient ways to support field offices around the world.

How we work is just as important as where we work. Virtual and hybrid meetings are here to stay, and the UN should continue to expand its technological capabilities in all construction projects and renovations. Translation services also have been positively impacted by technology, as well as by the recycling of large portions of previously translated text. We commend the UN staff for their hard work, and we believe that, in general, the UN should be constantly examining the impact of technology on productivity – and how and where services are provided.

With regard to the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Secretary-General's reformed budgetary cycle has improved the program planning process through increased engagement by program managers, a more agile planning process, and greater transparency and efficiency.

This year, the CPC provided conclusions and recommendations for more plans than in any previous year of the annualized budget. The working methods of the CPC and Fifth Committee can be difficult at times, but they are essential to ensuring that member states work in a collective fashion. Any attempt to undermine the consensus-based process of program planning would be unacceptable to the United States.

In addition, while we are largely supportive of this budget proposal, we are concerned by several provisions that would move voluntarily funded activities onto the regular budget. Such proposals, we believe, should be kept to a minimum and approved only when they are well justified.

Finally, we are deeply concerned by several ACABQ recommendations that we believe subvert the will of the General Assembly. The ACABQ has rejected the inclusion of predictable Human Rights Council mandates in the program budget, and with regard to UNRWA, the ACABQ has contradicted a long-standing General Assembly resolution stating that only international staff salaries should be financed by the regular budget.

These – and other concerns – lead us to believe that the structures and functions of the ACABQ need to be reviewed. We look forward to working with other delegations to consider ways, both formally and informally, to improve the ACABQ's ability to advise the Fifth Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.