

**Statement by Mr. Gregory B. Starr, Under-Secretary-General,  
Department of Safety and Security**

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**Agenda item 134: Proposed Programme Budget:  
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Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished Committee to present the Secretary-General's report on the Conclusions of the High-Level Working Group on Programme Criticality, A/66/680, as mandated by General Assembly Resolution 65/259. We also thank ACABQ for its report, A/66/720.

It is to be recalled that in 2009, the Chief Executives' Board for Coordination embraced a key principle, to balance security risk and programme implementation. This required a systematic approach to determining programme opportunities, particularly for high-risk activities. The underlying basis for this principle rested on security enabling UN programmes and activities rather than a risk adverse stance.

As noted in A/66/680, for many years the United Nations was criticized for sometimes applying security processes in an inflexible manner, making the Organization too risk-averse. At other times, the Organization has been accused of placing personnel at unnecessary risk. In response to this criticism, and on the basis of the realization that the Organization needs to be able to deliver results under difficult security circumstances, the United Nations system, through the High Level Working Group on Programme Criticality, has developed tools to better balance security risk and opportunity to ensure that UN personnel do not take unnecessary risks and that those who remain in-country work on the highest priority activities, in accordance with United Nations strategic results.

The tools, a programme criticality framework and methodology, were developed through extensive consultations at the Headquarters and field levels, with a broad spectrum of UN secretariat, and agency, fund and programme personnel, under the leadership and coordination of the United Nations Children's Fund. Although the Department of Safety and Security has been engaged in this effort, it must be emphasized that this is meant to be a

programme-led effort and designed to be implemented at the country level by the collective United Nations presence on the ground.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to present this report. I look forward to engaging with you to answer any questions or concerns you may have.