

**MISSION PERMANENTE  
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE  
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**



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**STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. BROUZ  
RALPH COFFI, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM  
134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2033,  
IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 27 October, 2011)**

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 134: Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2012-2013.

The Group would like to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, to the Fifth Committee and to thank him for the introduction of the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2012-2013. The Group also thanks Mr Collen Kelapile, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing the Advisory Committee's report contained in document A/66/7.

The African Group fully associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group would, however, like to make the following statement on a number of pertinent issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group strongly believes that the consideration of the budget is the highest priority of the Organization in the current session. It provides an appropriate mechanism for Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the realization of the priorities that the General Assembly has identified for the biennium 2012-2013 in conformity with paragraph 13 of its resolution 65/262. The Programme Budget also provides an opportunity for the Secretary General to reflect these priorities and more importantly, to chart a strategic vision which amplifies the objectives, goals and policies that will guide the implementation of those mandates.

The level of resources proposed for the biennium 2012-2013 amounts to approximately \$4.73 billion net for the regular budget before re-costing. We have been informed that during the preparation of the budget, Programme managers were under instruction to ensure a 3 per cent reduction on their resource requirements. It should be noted, that the instruction was issued after the General Assembly had adopted resolution 65/262 on the Budget Outline. This raises a number of concerns, including those raised by the ACABQ on the arbitrariness of the proposals informed by the decision. The Group is also concerned that the resources proposed by the Secretary-General may not be adequate to effectively address the priorities set by the General Assembly; particularly in the context of the present global economic and financial crisis, the huge humanitarian crisis due to the climate changes, the threats linked to important peace and security challenges and the urgent needs of the development Agenda. To be able to address all these situations, we all must have in mind that under the provisions of Article 17 of the Charter, Member States are obliged to provide adequate resources to the Secretary-General to facilitate

full implementation of mandated programmes and activities, and also to ensure the timely and effective provision of essential services that are a prerequisite for the proper functioning of the intergovernmental machinery. Our Group believes that the application of measures that lead to arbitrary budget cuts does not augur well and may actually impede the effective implementation of all the mandates given by member states, especially those related to development.

While the Group remains firmly supportive of measures geared to engendering effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability in the utilization of resources, these noble objectives should not be confused with indiscriminate cost-cutting which invariably has the potential of hemorrhaging the Organization to the point of ineffectiveness. This Group stands ready to carefully study the proposals before us to ensure vibrancy and relevance of the Organization is not compromised during our watch.

Mr. Chairman,

You will recall that the World Summit in 2005 reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in promoting development. The recent global economic and financial crisis has given impetus to calls for the United Nations to play an even bigger role in development. The United Nations Conference on the Global and Economic crisis held in June 2009 achieved consensus on several important issues including the need to reform the International Financial Institutions. As a result, an open-ended working-group involving all parties was formed to draft reforms to the current global reserve system. In essence, it means that the United Nations is expected to play an even more critical role in the debate and decision making process in support of development for the benefit of the vast majority of the world population. Our Group is therefore disappointed to note that whereas the United Nations should rightly be leading in promoting development, the proposed programme budget is manifestly skewed. Over 90 per cent of the resources are being dedicated to two pillars: Peace and Security, and Human Rights, leaving a paltry 10 per cent for development related activities. How is the United Nations expected to play its rightful role in development and be more pro-active in addressing developmental challenges if adequate resources are not provided for the development pillar?

As regards to the Development Account, it is regrettable that the current proposal does not provide for any resource growth on this important item. The envisioned goal of some US \$ 200 million for the Development Account remains a distant dream, and the promised additional resources from savings and efficiency gains have as yet to materialize or are routinely diverted to other uses.

The African Group is prepared to explore additional measures to enhance financing of the Development Account, since the current level is unacceptable.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, Africa is one of the eight (8) key priorities of the United Nations. To underscore this, the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) was established on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003, by the Secretary-General, in line with General Assembly resolution 57/300, with the objective of promoting international support for peace and development in Africa. The

functions of OSAA are clearly spelt out in the Secretary-General's ST/SGB/2003/6 of 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003. OSAA is the focal point for New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) within the United Nations System and the coordinator of its global advocacy and support. In view of the foregoing, this Group is deeply concerned at the continued vacancy in the post of Special Adviser on Africa. We recall that the Secretary-General's previous proposal of a merger of the functions of OSAA and those of the OHRLLS under one leadership, whether as an experiment, or as a temporary arrangement, as had been touted, were rejected by General Assembly through its resolutions 62/224, 62/236, 63/260, 64/243 and 65/544 and the Secretary-General was asked to fill the post expeditiously. It is therefore important that the Secretary-General implements this General Assembly mandate expeditiously and without further delay.

On a related matter, we recognize that regional commissions play an important role in the implementation of developments programmes and as such there is need to strengthen them from time to time. We look forward to deliberating on how to further strengthen regional economic commissions so that they are better equipped to effectively deliver on their respective mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring equity in the allocation of resources among all United Nations duty stations and offices. The General Assembly, in paragraph 125 of its resolution 62/236, mandated the Secretary-General to bring the financial situation of the United Nations Office at Nairobi in line with those of similar United Nations administrative offices. While acknowledging the efforts made in this regard and those contained in the present budget proposal, we are aware that a lot more still needs to be done. We call upon the Secretary-General to further intensify his efforts in this regard.

The issue of recruitment and placement within the organization remains a matter of concern to the African Group. This Group wishes to reiterate the importance it attaches to equitable geographic representation and gender balance within the organization. We believe that there is need to enhance transparency and accountability in the recruitment of staff into the United Nations. The lack of proper representation of our Group in the senior ranks within the Organization requires urgent attention.

Mr. Chairman,

We note that extra-budgetary resources account for nearly 90 per cent of the resources that have been budgeted for the biennium 2012-2013 for various support, substantive and operational activities. These resources are necessary and critical to the United Nations operational activities on account of the fact that over 80 per cent of the regular budget resources are earmarked for personnel and common staff costs. While we acknowledge the importance of extra-budgetary resources, we insist that they should not provide an avenue for circumventing or re-aligning intergovernmental mandates and priorities. There is need to ensure adequate and proper mechanisms for the enhancing transparency and accountability in the approval, utilization, and reporting on the extra-budgetary resources. These resources should not provide a secondary inlet for donors to facilitate the recruitment of their own candidates into the United Nations thereby exacerbating the geographic and gender imbalance within the Organization.

On the funding of Special Political Missions, the African Group is concerned about the distortionary effect that the integration of the SPMs resources in the Regular budget level. It is instructive to note that the SPM budget has grown from US \$100 million in 2000, to a high of US \$1.2 billion proposed for the 2012-2013 biennium. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report, requested in resolution 65/259, on the review of the current funding and backstopping arrangements for SPMs.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group re-affirms the important role of the General Assembly and of its relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies such as the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in respect to the budget process. Each has specific mandates spelt out within the Charter and which should be strictly adhered to. We reiterate that the budgetary process, as approved by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, and reaffirmed in other subsequent resolutions, continues to be valid and should be fully adhered to. In this regard, we emphasize the role of the Fifth Committee as the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted to consider all administrative, financial and budgetary questions, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the readiness and commitment of the African Group to engage in open, transparent and inclusive negotiations on the proposed programme budget to ensure an outcome that is good for Member States and which will enable this organization to discharge its mandates effectively.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.