

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**REMARKS TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013
New York, 27 October 2011**

Mr. Chairman, Ambassador [Tommo] Monthe of Cameroon,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to introduce my proposed programme budget for the 2012-2013 biennium.

As you know, this formal presentation is part of a broader dialogue that we will continue in the weeks to come.

Please know that my door is always open for consultation.

I am absolutely committed to working with all of you throughout this process.

The budget before you reflects a central challenge: how to resource this Organization at a critical time.

The financial crisis is crippling many countries. Governments – and especially people – are struggling. In these difficult circumstances, the world is turning more and more to the United Nations for answers and help.

We must live up to the expectations of you, the membership, and respond to the needs of the peoples of our world.

And we have a responsibility to make the best possible use of the resources which you, the Member States, provide.

This budget reflects that reality.

It is the product of a careful exercise in which I issued a clear challenge to my senior managers:

Fulfil our mandates.

Rethink our business practices.

Reduce overlap.

Embrace innovation.

Encourage creativity.

Build synergies.

Help modernize our operations so we operate better in our fast-changing and complex world.

My proposals reflect a wide range of adjustments based on efficiencies, improvements and investments.

For the 2012-2013 biennium, I am proposing a budget of \$5.197 billion, before recosting.

This is 3.7 per cent below the approved budget outline of \$5.396 billion. That represents savings of almost \$200 million while still enabling us to deliver fully on our mandates.

This new budget is also 3.2 per cent less than the budget of the current biennium.

Consistent with established practice, this budget includes a preliminary recosting. This results in an additional \$147 million, bringing the regular budget requirements to \$5.344 billion.

There is also a net decrease of 44 posts. We achieve this by abolishing 147 posts, adding 63 new posts, and converting 40.

We have also cut costs for travel, consultants, general operating expenses, supplies, materials and equipment.

The proposal also includes a provision of over \$1 billion for special political missions related to peace and security that are expected to be extended or approved during the biennium. This amount is slightly above what was initially approved for the 2010-2011 budget, but below the current revised level.

Special political missions have critical, life-saving mandates. They often operate under extremely difficult conditions. Detailed, individual budgets for each will be presented to you during the current session.

The budget proposals also include resources to strengthen the management capacity of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and to enable the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to respond to new and expanded mandates.

The Fifth Committee will receive a number of other reports at this session on essential requirements, including my proposals for strengthening the administration of justice and preparing for the Strategic Heritage Plan.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

This budget was prepared against the backdrop of global financial austerity and uncertainty.

But we did not pay attention only to technical and mechanical questions.

Managers took their decisions based on how best to carry out the mandates you have entrusted to us.

They had full discretion to review their business processes and to find the optimal approach to funding their operations.

Information and communications technology will play a key role as we strive to fully meet your expectations. Once deployed, ICT will generate substantial efficiencies. When our operations are more modern, they are also more accountable and effective.

We remain fully committed to implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system as well as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). There are challenges with each of these critical projects, but work on both will continue. We will have our first IPSAS-compliant financial statements by 2014.

I will continue to update and improve the way we operate, including through the Change Management Team I established earlier this year. Under the direction of the Deputy Secretary-General, the Team is in touch with all departments and offices in the Secretariat and across the United Nations system. It is working closely with all of you, the Member States, and I will share the outcome of this important exercise with you in due course.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Fifth Committee,

Like delegates to all of the other General Assembly Committees, you are in the middle of your busiest season. You have to find your way toward the compromises that will strengthen our Organization.

But you also have a very particular task: to pay close attention to the finest details of the workings of this Organization. Without the Fifth Committee's painstaking labour, it would not be possible to implement the work of the other Committees.

While you meet here, the other committees will be considering emerging issues. Their deliberations may give rise to new demands. We will have to continue working together to respond to rapidly evolving global developments.

So I thank you, in advance, for what we know will be hours and hours of effort in the weeks ahead, and for the hard decisions you will have to take.

I will do everything possible to support you. My senior advisors will be always available for any questions you may have.

All I ask is that throughout this process, we never lose sight of why we are here: for the peoples of the world; so they can enjoy greater peace and security, human rights protections, development and a sustainable future. I count on your leadership and commitment.

Thank you very much.