



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

231 EAST 51<sup>ST</sup> STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10022  
TEL: (212) 826 0840 FAX: (212) 826 2964

**STATEMENT BY MS DIANA LEE,  
DELEGATE TO THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON AGENDA ITEM 136,  
ON IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS,  
FIFTH COMMITTEE,  
20 OCTOBER 2011**

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Thank you, Mr Chairman. Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General for Management Ms Angela Kane, for her comprehensive and informative presentation last Tuesday on Agenda Item 136: Improving the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

2 Singapore is encouraged to learn that there has been improvement in financial indicators for the United Nations in 2011 in some areas, despite the global economic climate. We are also pleased to hear that the number of Member States deemed to have paid all their assessments due to the United Nations in full has increased to 18 as of 10 October this year, compared to 12 in 2010, and that the amount owed to Member States has fallen from US\$539 million in 2010, to a projected US\$448 million in 2011. However, we observe with some concern that there has been a notable increase in the level of unpaid assessments compared to last year, for all categories, due to Member States not meeting their financial obligations to the UN in a timely manner.

Mr Chairman,

3 Over the years, my delegation has consistently stated that the financial difficulties of the UN are entirely avoidable. We understand that some Member States face genuine difficulties in paying their assessments, and we empathise with their predicament. But these countries do not account for a large proportion of the budget. We recall USG Kane's observation last week that arrears for all categories continue to be concentrated in a short list of Member States. So the real reason for this situation is well known to us all – late and non-payment of assessments by certain major contributors. The solution is simple: each and every Member State should pay its assessed contributions in full, on time, and without conditions. We would go a long way towards putting the UN on a sound financial footing if the major contributors would only live up to their basic responsibilities.

4 Nevertheless, Singapore recognises that while full and timely payment by Member States is important, it is but one half of the equation. The UN must also play its part. It must be an accountable, efficient and effective manager of the financial resources it has been entrusted with; particularly at a time when many of its Member States face severe economic pressures of their own at home. Just as Member States must answer to their taxpayers, the UN must be answerable and be fully accountable to its Member States. The Secretariat needs to continue its efforts to develop a stronger results- and performance-oriented culture, and deliver on the mandates that it has been charged with. My delegation has asked for real ownership by the Secretariat of its reform processes, and for the Secretariat to show resolve in making accountability take root in its ethical and moral DNA. Unless there is an honest and open accounting of the resources given to the UN, there will be challenges ahead in securing continued resources.

Mr Chairman,

5 In truth, the financial situation of the UN is not completely dire. On the contrary, the UN is in better shape than some of its Member States. There is no air of crisis pervading these halls, unlike the sombre mood in some regions. But precisely because of the sense of need, of palpable hunger, in regions such as the Horn of Africa, that we as Member States and the United Nations must concentrate our efforts to ensure the speedy delivery of resources to the most desperate. We should review how efficiently the resources given to the UN are channelled to meet the priorities of the field, rather than indulging in excessive spending at UN Headquarters. My delegation firmly believes that there is a misalignment of priorities and misallocation of resources that needs immediate correction.

6 Ultimately, we must work together, both Secretariat and Member States, towards our common goal of a UN that is efficient, effective and responsive to the challenges of today. It is a symbiotic relationship. We look to the UN to fulfil its obligations to Member States; and we look to Member States to provide the UN with the necessary resources to fulfil its mandates, and to honour their assessed contributions in full, on time, and without conditions. This is a Charter obligation and the agreed condition for UN membership. We question the wisdom of demanding more from the Organisation while continuing to withhold contributions. Doing so only undermines the commitment we all took in joining the UN. It is not enough to claim a stake in the UN with only words. We must do so in deed as well. Thank you.

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