



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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- AS DELIVERED –

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The core of the second resumed session is the approval of peacekeeping budgets. The missions we are funding are the United Nation's flagship activity, and a crucial tool paving the way for longer-term stability and development of countries emerging from a crisis. We recognise the demanding conditions in which peacekeepers carry out their work, we are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices they make and commend their commitment. We also pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives while serving in a peacekeeping mission.

The Member States of the European Union make an important contribution to UN peace and security. We actively support and participate in UN mandated peacekeeping operations and other relevant activities throughout the world, and contribute with troops, civilian police and other personnel. But, as the largest collective financial contributors, with shares amounting in total to 36.76 per cent of the peacekeeping budget, we also have a great interest in making UN peacekeeping even more efficient and effective. We will therefore closely examine the budgets of all the peacekeeping missions, as well as the support functions, with a view to providing them with adequate financing to carry out their mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's proposed budgets for peacekeeping missions for the financial period 2013/2014 total \$7.120 billion, but with new mandates agreed, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali, this is set to rise significantly. Therefore, and against the backdrop of continued difficult economic conditions facing many members of the General Assembly, strict budgetary discipline remains more necessary than ever to ensure that resources are both truly needed and – in addition - used effectively, efficiently and in an accountable and transparent way.

The Secretary-General has provided us with an update on the cash position of the 24 closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2012. We urge the Secretary-General to return to Member States all cash surpluses from the closed missions. We also note with concern that a satisfactory and sustainable solution to the problem of closed missions with cash deficits is long overdue and necessitates urgent attention. In this respect, we call upon all Member States to pay their assessed contributions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States of the European Union continue to support the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, and welcome the close involvement of the membership and relevant United Nations bodies in this process. We encourage the Secretariat to work to ensure that the strategy produces economies of scale and savings, as well as strengthened accountability and improved delivery of services on a global and regional basis for a more rapid and effective deployment of missions. As work continues on developing the strategy, it will be increasingly important to get a clearer picture of the impact of the strategy and its concrete results.

Please allow me now, Mr. Chairman, to make some brief remarks on the items we did conclude during the first resumed session. We would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your guidance during the previous session as well as the members of the bureau for all their work. We are glad that we were finally able to conclude successfully the deliberations we began in the main session on HRM reform. The measures we have agreed upon will both ensure on-going implementation of previous reforms and seek improvements to important aspects of human resources management, including performance appraisal, workforce planning, recruitment, training and HR systems as well as a rebalancing of staff-management relations in line with the staff regulations. We look forward to progress in this regard and the report of the Secretary-General in the 69th session. As strong proponents of the principle of managed mobility, we also welcome the resolution adopted on the Secretary General's proposals on a managed mobility policy and look forward to considering his proposals in the main part of the 68th session.

We remain committed to providing staff of the United Nations with the appropriate support to allow them to work effectively and safely, especially those working in the most dangerous circumstances. But this should be done bearing in mind the limitations imposed by many Member States on their own national civil services as a result of the financial difficulties they face. It is unrealistic and unsustainable that UN staff members should be artificially insulated from current economic realities. In this context, we are pleased the Committee took a number of first steps to modernise the management of official travel for staff, and make it more efficient and effective under the current budgetary constraints. Regarding the long-term sustainability of the Common System, we welcome the ICSC's intention to undertake a comprehensive review of the compensation package of all UN staff members, encourage the Commission to take a truly fresh look at the rewards and benefits which staff – both new and existing - currently enjoy, and look forward to receiving their recommendations as soon as possible. We have also mandated the Secretary-General to continue to explore all options in relation to the long-term accommodation needs of UN staff and we look forward to discussing the potential solutions in the first resumed session next year.

Mr. Chairman,

It is regrettable that - due to the lateness of the relevant documentation - the Committee was unable to begin discussing Procurement in the first resumed session. We look forward to taking up this important item as early as possible in the main session of the 68th General Assembly. It is well known that we believe the UN's procurement activities should incorporate the principle of sustainability. We look forward to an exchange of views in this regard and also on air charter procurement, compliance and delegation of authority, and the operational benefits of and possible lessons learned from the Regional Procurement Office in Entebbe.

Mr. Chairman, like you, we are committed to improving the functioning of the Committee. The first resumed session has shown that in certain circumstances, such as was the case with the item on accountability, different ways of working can be found. This will not work for all issues, but we should all be open to exploring options.

Finally, we look forward to working constructively with all partners to achieve consensus outcomes on the peacekeeping budgets for 2013-2014.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.