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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Jun Yamazaki  
Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Agenda item 134:  
Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014/15

The Fifth Committee, Main Part of the Sixty-Eighth Session  
United Nations General Assembly  
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to start by expressing my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for personally introducing his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015. I would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the ACABQ, for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee. My delegation would also like to warmly welcome the presence of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Japan is aware that the proposed programme budget provides the means with which the Secretariat of this Organization will be able to implement the mandates agreed by the Member States.

At the same time, we must clearly recognize that the financial resources of the Member States are finite. This is especially true when Member States are struggling with very difficult financial conditions at home.

If we look at the recent budget periods, we notice a trend of considerable growth when we plot the final appropriations of each period. This is a concern for my delegation. My delegation therefore believes that now is a good opportunity for us to try to

change this trend so that the funding of the Organization can be sustainable into the future.

My delegation recalls the budget outline resolution adopted one year ago by consensus. Bearing in mind the very difficult financial conditions of their respective home governments, the Member States agreed on a modest budget outline number of 5.393 billion US dollars. In this regard, Japan notes with much appreciation the Secretary-General's efforts to try to contain the proposed budget for 2014-2015 within this agreed envelope. However, further efforts will be needed to reconcile the proposed budget with the aforementioned outline, as it still exceeds the envelope.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation understands that there is a strong tendency to request additional resources to meet additional mandates. However, my delegation strongly believes that the Secretariat needs to cope with new mandates within the agreed envelope by 'doing more with less'. The Secretary General's management reform initiatives including Umoja could help in this endeavor. Review of obsolete activities is imperative. During the budget negotiations, the Member States need to carefully examine each resource request and agree to provide funding only to those activities that cannot be discontinued or deferred. We should also not shy away from addressing the issues related to remuneration of staff.

My delegation would also like to reiterate the importance and necessity of the comprehensive staffing review as requested in the budget outline resolution adopted last year. We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to propose in the programme budget for 2014-2015 the abolishment of 396 posts that would result in a net reduction of 261 posts. This is only the first step. There must be further room to do the job in a better way and also seek efficiencies. For example, according to the current proposal, the number of posts at the P3 level and above will increase, while those at the level of P2 as well as at GS will decrease. Such a proposal is neither healthy nor sustainable from the long-term perspective. My delegation underscores here again the necessity to tackle the staffing structure in



order to realize a healthy and sustainable Organization.

Finally my delegation would like to briefly touch upon the re-costing methodology. Because it is one of the major elements that are contributing to the increase in the total budget figure, it has drawn continued attention. The methodology consists of several components that respectively would give rise to different approaches if they are to be addressed in their different ways. In many national governments and international organizations, there is an overall expectation to manage within the resources initially approved and not come back with additional resource requests. Two years ago, we agreed to defer consideration of re-costing, and last year we decided to provide re-costing based on actual expenditures. Trying to discern a better way forward continues to be a challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States need to be pragmatic and judicious as we collectively pursue efficient and effective ways on allocating our limited resources. We also expect the representatives of the Secretary-General to assist, as required, the Member States as they engage in budget deliberations when clarifications and other information are required.

In closing, I would like to assure you, Mr. Chairman, that my delegation will constructively engage in the negotiations on this proposed programme budget for 2014-2015 so that a balanced and sensible agreement could be arrived at on a consensus basis.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.