



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KAREN TAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE TO
THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015
ON BEHALF OF ASEAN MEMBER STATES**

(New York, 28 October 2013)

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

2 I have the honour to speak on behalf of the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam on Agenda Item 134: Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015.

3 We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions Mr Carlos G. Ruiz Massieu for introducing their reports on the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2014-2015. We also welcome President of the 68th General Assembly John Ashe to the meeting this afternoon.

4 ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item. We are against arbitrary budget-cutting targets which compromise the UN's ability to implement its mandates. The growth in the scope and size of UN mandates in recent years reflects the proliferation of international challenges as well as the international community's increasing expectations of the UN. Member States look to the UN to solve problems of international peace and security, development and humanitarian affairs. The work of the UN and its agencies help many people who would otherwise be ignored. Member States must ensure that the UN has sufficient resources to implement the mandates we entrust it with.

5 The growing complexity of UN activities must be matched by a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in the Secretariat. The UN Secretariat must demonstrate that it is making every effort to ensure that the resources entrusted to it by Member States are used as efficiently as possible. The UN is also fully accountable to Member States. It should therefore expect close scrutiny of its budgetary requests for the next biennium in the upcoming negotiations.

Mr Chairman,

6 ASEAN notes that the initial estimate for the budgets of Special Political Missions (SPMs) in the Secretariat's proposals amount to about \$1.1 billion. While there has been a reduction of \$32.1 million from the proposed programme budget outline, we note that this reduction is proportional to reductions under other budget sections. Moreover, this preliminary estimate does not include requirements for SPMs in the Sahel, Great Lakes and Syria. ASEAN is strongly committed to supporting SPMs. We are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices made by UN staff working in difficult environments in the field. However, it cannot be denied that the growth in the regular budget in recent years has been disproportionately due to the growth in SPMs. Today, SPMs take up one-fifth of the UN's regular budget. This has resulted in gross distortions in the size of the regular budget.

7 Out of 38 SPMs, 34 are mandated by the Security Council and 4 by the General Assembly. However, the financing arrangements for SPMs are tied to the regular budget. ASEAN believes that the special responsibilities of the Permanent Members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security must be reflected in the scale of assessments for SPMs as is already the case for Peacekeeping Operations and International Tribunals. We look forward to continuing this discussion in greater detail when the specific agenda item of SPMs is considered next month.

8 ASEAN Member States look forward to engaging constructively in discussions on this agenda item.

9 I thank you, Mr Chairman.

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