



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

**H.E. Ambassador Ioannis Vrailas
Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union
to the United Nations**

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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 Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland⁺ and Serbia^{*}, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, we would like to congratulate you upon your election as Chairman of the Fifth Committee together with the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that with your experience and under your leadership, negotiations within the Fifth Committee will reach a fruitful conclusion.

We also want to express our gratitude to your predecessors, Mr. Berger, and our deep appreciation to the Bureau of the Committee of the 67th session for the remarkable way they presided over the work of the Committee.

We are also pleased to be able to draw on the extensive experience of the Secretariat of the Committee, as well as on that of the other Secretariat officials and of the ACABQ, whose contribution is crucial for the conclusion of our programme of work.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for organising briefings in the early days of this session. It will help provide Committee members with useful information regarding the various issues before them and will save precious time during discussions about these agenda items. In this regard, I would like to thank in advance Mr Yukio Takasu, Under-Secretary-General for Management, for his presentation later this morning.

Mr. Chairman,

The Committee's agenda for the session is especially long and heavy and includes many important and complex items. Completing our programme of work within the agreed deadline of 13 December will require a collective effort on the part of us all. We can achieve this goal if we are determined to conduct our negotiations efficiently and in a constructive spirit. The first precondition of a successful outcome of the Committee's work is the timely availability of documentation. While we appreciate the efforts made by the Secretariat, we still experience occasional difficulties with the timing of the submission of reports relevant to our discussion. We would like to reiterate the important impact of timely submission of all required documentation in all official languages in particular for some important issues such as the SPMs budget. The quality and speed of our discussions depend on this.

^{*} The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺ Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.

Mr. Chairman,

When it comes to the work ahead of us, there are a few items that we would particularly like to highlight today. Let me reiterate first of all our long-standing approach to budgetary matters, which was reaffirmed by our foreign ministers on 24 June this year, when they underlined the continuing importance of ensuring that "UN financial resources are managed efficiently, according to the principles of budgetary discipline and coherence". In the current difficult economic climate which affects all Members of the United Nations, it is more important than ever to apply the same strict budgetary discipline to UN budgets that Member States are applying themselves. Consistent with this approach, the EU Member States firmly believe that, with regard to the current 2012-13 Programme Budget, we must do our utmost to adhere to the level of \$5.395 billion agreed in 2012. It is important also to recall that the General Assembly decision last December to further defer consideration of the issue of recosting does not imply a mere delay. As we have made clear before, there should be no assumption that further funding will be agreed.

With regard to the new proposals for the 2014-15 biennium, it will be important not simply to aim to agree to a budget in line with the budget outline level of \$5.392 billion which we all agreed last December, but to also go beyond this and to examine together in an open manner whether new approaches can lead to further savings whilst still allowing for the full delivery of mandates and a sustainable budgetary path for the Organisation. In this context, we urge the Organisation to continue to make every effort to innovate and improve its working practices, to manage its resources as efficiently and effectively as possible, and to work constructively with the Member States over the coming weeks. We will also continue to scrutinise with our usual close attention the budgets of the Special Political Missions.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU Member States have long been staunch supporters of Human Resources Management reform. We look forward to considering the Secretary General's refined proposal on mobility with a view to agreeing a workable new scheme before the end of this session, which will both meet the needs of the organisation and its staff, and the concerns of Member States, particularly relating to costs and recruitment. We look forward to having a constructive dialogue on the long-standing issue of SPM financing and backstopping. We will also have to carefully examine the proposals for financing major construction projects, in particular the Capital Master Plan and the Strategic Heritage Plan. Other important issues that will be before us this session include procurement, the UN Common System, UMOJA, ICT and IPSAS. Issues such as after-service health insurance (ASHI) liabilities will require careful scrutiny in view of the need for a sustainable solution. Furthermore, we will look attentively at new proposals from the Secretary-General such as on the re-organization of the UN knowledge, training and research functions and on the establishment of a new partnership facility. We will elaborate on the position of the EU Member States on these and the other issues on our agenda as and when they are presented, but at this stage it is clear that we all have much work ahead of us.

So in conclusion, allow me, Mr Chairman, to make clear the wish of the EU Member States to work with you and all members of the Fifth Committee in a spirit of constructive cooperation,

consensus and collegiality in order to allow us to understand the views and concerns of each other as we proceed, and so that we can reach tangible results at the end of the main part of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.