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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. SIRITHON WAIRATPANIJ, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM
148: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF
THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: CROSS-CUTTING
ISSUES AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTIEH SESSION OF
THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 9 May 2016)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 148: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, in particular on the cross-cutting issues.
2. At the outset, the Group wishes to once again pay special tribute to the uniformed and civilian men and women who serve in the peacekeeping missions under the United Nations with such a high level of commitment, professionalism and courage, usually serving under adverse circumstances, especially those who lost their lives in the service of peace and humanity.
3. The Group would like to thank Mr. Atul Khare, Under Secretary-General for Field Support, Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant Secretary-General and the Controller, Ms. Heidi Mendoza, Under Secretary-General, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Ms. Carole Wamuyu Wainaina, Assistance Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.
4. On the special note, the Group welcomes the appointment of Ms. Heidi Mendoza as the Under Secretary-General for OIOS as well as Ms. Jane Holl Lute as Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse and we look forward to supporting them delivering their given responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China continues to attach great importance to the consideration of administrative and budgetary matters of the peacekeeping operations in the context of cross-cutting issues as part of the necessary element to provide policy guidance for the effective and efficient mandate delivery. It is even more important this year as the Committee will be examining elements of new initiatives including those arising from the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.
6. The Group welcomes the improved and streamlined format of the current report which focuses on new developments, policy changes, and management challenges and we would like to encourage the continued efforts in this regard. However, the Group notes that there are a number of reform initiatives that have been presented separately and some with no specific course of action which give difficulties of the Member States to connect the dots and provide respective policy guidance. We stress that future reports provide information on the linkages of reform initiatives, and specific action to be taken related to peacekeeping operations, for Member States' consideration and approval, in particular on any structural and/or policy changes.

Mr. Chairman,

7. With regard to the planning, budget and financial management, the Group has taken note of the information related to the budget implementation including the excessive redeployment between expenditures groups and classes and some from one mission to another.

8. The Group, in the same line with the Board of Auditors, is concerned about the continued weaknesses in this area including substantive variations between appropriation and actual expenditures which imply poor budgetary formulation and implementation and, as a result, may negatively impact mandate delivery.

9. The Group stresses the fact that the formulation of the budget for PKOs should be based on the existing mandates and specific circumstances of each mission on the ground. We will examine a number of these elements during the informal consultations. Like the Advisory Committee, the Group stresses the need for adherence to the budgetary discipline as well as existing financial rules and regulations.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China also notes the information related to civilian personnel, incumbency and vacancy rates and we would like to stress the need for timely recruitment of all the personnel while addressing the underlying challenges on the ground. The Group reiterates our concern on the lack of substantive improvement on the representation of the troop and police contributing countries in the Departments of Field Support and Peacekeeping Operations including at the senior levels.

11. We are concerned that some senior positions in these departments remain exclusively belong to a small group of Member States. We therefore call upon the Secretariat to improve the representation in this regard, as well as to increase the recruitment of women taking into account the invaluable contributions they make to the maintenance of the international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Turning to the delivery of support to peacekeeping missions, the Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize once again the importance of the development and presentation of the clear benchmarks for realizing savings and efficiencies reported by the Secretary-General.

13. With regard to the impact of the Global Field Support Strategy, the Group welcomes substantive progress that has been achieved including on the advancement of the Regional Service Center in Entebbe. However, like the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee, the Group is concerned that none of the four pillars of the Global Field Support Strategy had fully achieved their desired end-state vision and that it had not been able to provide necessary assurances with respect to the reported cost savings attributed to the implementation of the Strategy. In this regard, any future initiatives related to the support of peacekeeping operations should be provided with comprehensive and factual information to ensure the stated benefits are empirically verifiable.

14. We have also taken note of the establishment of the reconfigured Resource Efficiency Group and look forward to detailed information on its functioning during the informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

15. Turning to Umoja implementation, the Group notes the progress achieved so far and we encourage continued efforts to address the challenges faced by peacekeeping missions in the most efficient and effective manner. The Group also takes note of the information on the estimated quantifiable benefit of Umoja implementation in the missions for 2016/2017 and would like to once again stress the need for the Secretary-General to provide accurate and reliable information on the implementation with full justification in the future reports.

16. With regard to the support priorities for 2016/2017, the Group has taken note of the elements outlined in the Secretary-General's report including those related to improving supply chain management, strengthening environmental management, advancing technology and innovation, strengthening administration and management to support field missions and preventing misconduct.

17. The Group will be very interested to receive updates and clarification on a number of these issues including the lessons learned from previous initiatives, strategies for implementing the proposed initiatives and compatibilities with the mandates, rules and regulations of the organization as well as cost benefit analysis.

Mr. Chairman,

18. With regard to air operations, the Group is supportive of the Secretary-General's continued efforts to improve management of the air operations in the field to ensure that the missions are provided with adequate service in the most efficient and effective manner.

19. We will be interested to learn the outcome of the initiatives in this areas related to improving efficiency, flexibility and aviation safety. Furthermore, we will be interested to learn the information on the roles and functions of different offices responsible for air operations as well as proposed measures to avoid duplication, overlap and reduce bureaucracy in the field. The Group would like to emphasize the need for continued coordination between the missions, UNLB, and RSCE in this matter.

20. It is strong view of Group of 77 and China that, taking into account of the roles and functions of RSCE, the Secretary-General should continue to enhance the use of flight rotation in the mission through Entebbe with a view to achieving maximum efficiency and economy.

21. The Group would also like to emphasize that, any measures taken to improve the air operation should not undermine availability of service, quality and safety, neither should they impact movement of troops, personnel and/or supplies. The Group welcomes the implementation of the long awaited aviation information management system (AIMS) and expects that the system will help to address persistent weakness in the management and oversight.

22. The Group would be interested to receive information related to the utilization of unmanned aerial system and related technology, including cost effectiveness, purchasing and bidding procedure, management and regulation, data security and a number of policy guidelines, such as classes and reimbursement during our informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

23. Turning to the operational costs and operational matters, the Group has taken note of information provided and will provide specific comments during our informal deliberations. The Group will also examine carefully the issues related to fuel, rations, official travel, vehicle holdings, demining, medical facilities, death and disability compensations, as well as matters related to safety and security in the field. We will also carefully look into elements of planned construction of facilities and infrastructure, in particular the accommodation project

with the view to ensuring the missions are provided with adequate support to fulfil given mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

24. Turning to the important issue of prevention and handling of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Group would like to reiterate its support for the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy. The Group of 77 and China honors the heroic work of tens of thousands of United Nations peacekeepers, underscoring that the United Nations should not let the actions of a few tarnish the achievements of the whole.

25. The Group believes that SEA cases should be addressed in a serious manner and perpetrators who are found guilty should be expeditiously brought to justice no matter whether they are UN, non-UN, civilian or uniformed personnel.

26. The Group is troubled to learn about some of the factors contributing to the increase in allegations, such as rehatting of the troops, the absence of pre-deployment training on standards of conduct, the excessive length of the deployment for certain contingents, the living conditions of contingents, including lack of welfare and communication facilities to stay in contact with home, among others. Other factors include some of the decisions taken in recent years to try to achieve some savings, like extending the rotation periods, which might be having a negative effect on the morale of the troops. The Group will seek more information on these issues during our informal consultations.

27. Having carefully considering the report of the Secretary-General, the Group believes that more can be done in the area of prevention of SEA. The report is heavy on reporting existing allegations, but considerably lacks what concrete measures in pursuing to prevent these crimes.

28. The Group believes that the General Assembly must take immediate actions to combat SEA in a holistic manner including pre-deployment training, preventive measures, full accountability, remedial action, as well as cooperation with other organizations and entities.

29. The Group will seek further information on mechanisms utilized by the Secretariat when dealing with SEA cases involving civilians and UN personnel as the report presents very limited information in this regard. We would like to better understand the mechanisms, or the lack thereof, of how the UN deals with its staff that are found guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse.

30. The Group is of the view that the UN should promote best practices in preventing and ensuring rapid accountability in substantiated cases. Future reports of the Secretary-General should include naming countries with exemplary and rapid response to substantiate cases and the deterring actions they took against the perpetrators.

31. The Group is concerned for not having received on time for this second resumed session the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the report of the external independent panel to review the UN response to allegations of SEA by non-UN forces in the Central African Republic. This report highlighted some major flaws in the way the UN Secretariat mishandled some cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, in particular, when dealing with parallel troops. The Group hopes to receive this report as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

32. In conclusion, allow me to assure you that the Group will be constructively engaging on a number of issues raised in various reports under this agenda item, including the annual activities of the OIOS, with the aim to reach positive and consensus outcome.

I thank you, **Mr. Chairman.**