

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MRS CAROLINE
NALWANGA MAGAMBO, FIRST SECRETARY PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF
WORK, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY- FIFTH COMMITTEE**

(New York, 1 May 2017)

Madam Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on the organization of work of the Fifth Committee during the second resumed part of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. The African Group would like to once again thank the Bureau under your able leadership for the continued efforts aimed at facilitating the delivery of the Committee's responsibilities in the most efficient and effective manner. The African Group aligns itself with the statement presented by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and would like to add a few remarks.

At the outset, the Group would like to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Anand M. Bajaj, Chair of the Audit Operations Committee and Director of External Audit, Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant-Secretary General, Controller, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee in our meeting today.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to supporting initiatives geared towards the attainment of international peace and security of which peacekeeping in the context of the United Nations is a key component.

It is for this reason, that we express our sincere gratitude to all uniformed and civilian personnel who have dedicated their lives to serve the United Nations, as well as, those at Headquarters supporting the work of peacekeepers in the field. We also pay special tribute to all fallen United Nations and African Union personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the pursuit of peace.

Madam Chair,

The Fifth Committee has a heavy workload ahead of it with the large number of reports to be considered during the next four (4) weeks. It is therefore regrettable that we once again have to register our concern with the late Issuance of a substantial number of reports. This unfortunate situation directly impacts on the ability of Member States to consider the reports in advance so as to prepare for the session adequately. Having to deal with reports that have not been translated into all the official languages of the United Nations, also present serious challenges to a number of delegations.

The African Group takes note of the tentative nature of the programme of work and it is our expectation that the Bureau will continue to amend it throughout the session to reflect progress made in the negotiations. Though we are fully cognizant of the fact that the budgets are time-bound, we also expect that the programme of work will provide Member States with adequate time for thorough consideration of the reports.

We therefore reiterate, that the timely issuance of documents still continues to be one of the most critical reforms that should be addressed for the effective functioning of the Fifth Committee. The six weeks rule for the distribution of documents should be addressed by the Secretariat and the African Group looks forward to the timely issuance of documents to enable delegations and the advisory Committee have adequate time to study and analyze reports in future sessions.

Madam Chair,

The African Group will continue its practice of limiting its statements on individual missions, in order to assist the Committee to move swiftly to the informal consultations and negotiations. In this regard, the African Group would like to use this opportunity to make a few general comments on peacekeeping operations.

The African Group wishes to register its appreciation for the efforts of the Department of Field Support (DFS), Peacekeeping Operation (DPKO) and other field-based offices with regard to the facilitation of the field trip of the Fifth Committee conducted in February this year. The visit enabled our Group to update itself of the progress and challenges that peacekeeping missions are facing, particularly in the area of improving the security and safety of troops and civilian personnel, inadequate facilities and infrastructure including accommodation, logistical support as well as medical facilities and and it is against this knowledge that we will carefully scrutinize the budgetary proposals to ensure that the challenges are addressed.

Madam Chair,

The integrity of the United Nations depends, among others, on the ability to deliver on its mandates successfully. In an environment where resources are increasingly becoming scarce, it is required of us to explore ways to improve efficiencies, effectiveness and greater accountability. We are also cognizant of the dynamics of peacekeeping operations where execution of mandates requires the protection of civilians, human rights and the environment. It is our hope, therefore, that the new challenges are appreciated, to maintain the balance between provision of appropriate resources and expected results.

The African Group notes that the total proposed resource requirements for peacekeeping operations for the financial period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, inclusive of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, the UNLB3 and the support account, are currently estimated at \$7.972 billion, excluding voluntary contributions-in-kind. This represents an increase of \$82.7 million or 1.0 per cent when compared to the approved resources for the 2016/17 period.

The Group further notes that the figures contained in the overview report are subject to change due to ongoing developments on the ground in certain missions and concurrent consideration of different situations in the Security Council, with implications for the resource requirements for the period 2017/18. The Group trusts that further information will be provided to the Committee on the impact of these changes during the second resumed session, and stresses that the budget rules will not be changed to accommodate assumed changes still to be negotiated in the Security Council.

The Group would like to reiterate the great importance it attaches to the allocation of adequate resources for each individual peacekeeping operation, in particular those on the African continent, taking into account the complexity of mandates and the unique challenges on the Ground. In this regard, all mandates authorized by the UN Security Council must be fully resourced.

The African Group would like to emphasize that the consideration of peacekeeping budgets should not be taken as a simple cost reduction exercise, but rather a responsible mandate resource allocation and policy guidance driven exercise. The Group will therefore scrutinize each budget proposal, as well as the findings of oversight bodies such as the Board of Auditors and the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee. In this regard, the African Group will carefully look at the performance of, and proposals for, all closed and active peacekeeping operations, as well as the United Nations Support to the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Regional Service Center in Entebbe and the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi.

Madam Chair,

The Group will also follow closely a number of cross cutting issues directly linked to individual mandates, including those related to mission support, Umoja implementation and its alleged benefits, facilities and infrastructure, oversight, supply chain management, environmental and waste management, as well as the implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Panel on Peace Operations. The Group notes that Quick Impact Projects and programmatic activities are critical elements in supporting sustainable peace in line with the 2030 Agenda, and should therefore play a more prominent role in peacekeeping operations. The African Group will also closely scrutinize planned reform initiatives of the Secretary-General, while noting with concern that implementation of reform initiatives should be undertaken with the approval of the General Assembly.

Having taken note of the evolving nature of the program of work for the second resumed part of the seventy-first session, the African Group cannot overlook the heavy workload placed on the Committee. It is in this context that we encourage the spirit of open and transparent negotiations amongst all parties during this session in order to address the issues before us successfully and within the time allocated.

As we are all aware, an extension of this session beyond the allotted time frame will impact negatively on the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). In this regard, the Group discourages the general notion of the Committee working beyond the designated period.

The Group also discourages the closed door and small room configurations during the negotiation period in order to ensure transparency and inclusiveness in the final outcome.

In conclusion, the Group wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively, with a view to achieving a positive outcome on all agenda items in a timely manner.

I thank you, Madam Chair.