



**Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union**

**by**

**H.E. Thomas Mayr-Harting**

**Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations**

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**Fifth Committee**

**Item 134: Proposed Programme budget: biennium 2014-2015**

**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 Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Serbia\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Mr Chairman,

I would first like to thank the Secretary General for his presentation of the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2014-2015. I would also like to thank the chair of the ACABQ, Mr Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for his presentation of that Committee's report.

Mr Chairman,

Before addressing the proposal before us today, perhaps I could take the opportunity to make a few remarks about the regular budget for the current biennium. As you will know, we have looked to you, Mr Secretary General, and to your senior managers and staff at all levels to adhere as closely as possible to the budget level of \$5.395 billion agreed by the General Assembly in December 2012. We appreciate that new activity mandated by the Member States adds to the challenge, but in a context where we all have to deliver against a tight resource background, we look to the United Nations to "do more with less", to work better and smarter, as we all must in our own administrations, and to achieve its goals while operating within the budget level agreed by the Member States.

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

Mr Chairman,

Turning now to the Secretary General's proposed programme budget for 2014-2015, the EU Member States acknowledge the efforts the Secretary General has made, as set out in his recent letter to the PGA, to present a budget in line with the budget outline level of \$5.392 billion the General Assembly agreed last December and the thorough internal process undertaken with all programme managers to identify efficiency gains while continuing to carry out mandates within the overall resource constraints. Your leadership, Mr Secretary General, and that of your senior team is essential in this regard so we welcome the assurance in the foreword to your budget proposal, of your continued commitment to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat in performing its tasks. We also welcome the intention of improving the budget presentation by including detailed information on the impact of resource changes though we have some issues with the way this has been done. In particular, while we welcome the clarity that all mandates will be delivered, we think that certain distinctions made in assessing the effect of various changes have been overstated.

But what is already clear however, is that given the current difficult economic climate which affects all members of the United Nations, the same strict budgetary discipline that Member States are applying themselves has to apply to the UN as well. It will not be enough simply to aim to agree to a budget in line with the budget outline resolution we adopted last December. We need to go beyond this and examine together in an open manner whether new approaches can lead to further savings while still allowing for full delivery of mandates and a sustainable budgetary path for the Organisation. In this regard, we welcome your decision to address the growing personnel costs by making proposals to remove posts and also for presenting proposals to improve the work of the vacancy rate. We therefore

urge you, Mr Secretary General, and the Organisation to continue to make every effort to innovate and improve working practices, in order to manage resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. This needs to be an ongoing process and we look forward to hearing over the coming weeks of further innovative approaches identified by the Secretariat since the preparation of the budget proposal.

Mr Chairman,

In the interests of the future sustainability of the Organisation, we also need new and creative approaches to certain questionable habits we have adopted for elements of the programme budget. We have made this point before but it is becoming more pressing to tackle unsustainable practices like re-costing. It is in the interests of both the member States and the Organisation to find better ways to manage pressures such as those caused by exchange rate fluctuation and inflation. The forward purchasing of foreign currency undertaken by the Budget Controller this year has helped but much more is needed. A sounder basis to budget for such costs, in line with the standard practices used in our own public administrations, is now an imperative. We want to work with you, Mr Secretary General, and with Member States to that end.

Mr Chairman,

We can assure the Secretary General that we will give his budget proposal the attention it deserves and will scrutinise it closely. As staunch supporters of the United Nations and the principle of effective multilateralism, the Member States of the European Union are committed to providing the Organisation with the necessary resources to conduct its work while firmly believing there is still substantial room for improving its efficient and effective working. We look

forward to working closely with all partners with the aim of agreeing a realistic and sustainable budget for the next two years.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.