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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: SUPPORT ACCOUNT FOR PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, 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, specifically on the support account for peacekeeping operations.

2. At the outset, the Group would like to thank Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China is a staunch supporter of peacekeeping operations. In addition to contributing financially to the budgets of peacekeeping missions and being the largest troop and police contributors to their operations, members of the Group of 77 and China host most of the currently active operations. As such, the Group believes the United Nations peacekeeping operations must be provided with adequate resources for backstopping, so as to enable them to effectively and efficiently discharge their increasingly complex mandates.

4. Over the last few years, the changing nature of peacekeeping operations has posed additional challenges for their support component, as new requirements have been placed on personnel both in the field and back at the Headquarters and support structures. Even so, the Group of 77 and China reiterates that the level of the support account should broadly correspond to the size and complexity of peacekeeping operations on the ground.

5. In this regard, the Group is concerned with the general upward trend in the resources requested for the support account, even as, according to the Secretary-General, the authorized levels of military and police personnel, the number of civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations, as well as the overall budget of peacekeeping missions have been decreasing in the last half decade. The Group is particularly concerned with the ever growing number of posts at the D-1 level and above, which in just four years has increased from 34 to 43 or 26.4%.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group of 77 and China concurs with the view of the Advisory Committee that the various reform initiatives undertaken in recent years by the Secretariat, such as the Global Field Support Strategy, the Umoja Enterprise Resource Planning System and other supply chain managements improvements have not fully led to the efficiencies and economies predicted by the Secretary-General, which were, in many cases, the main selling point for those initiatives.

7. During informal consultations, the Group will carefully analyze the requests of the Secretary-General for new posts, especially those at the senior levels, to ensure they are indeed relevant to the support needs of UN staff, as well as troop and police contingents on the ground. We will also request detailed information on the status and results of the aforementioned reforms in order to consider the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake a follow-up study on the support account to those that were carried out during its 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> sessions. This is especially relevant as we begin to consider budgetary proposals arising from the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General on the future of United Nations peace operations.

8. Turning to issues of representation, the Group continues to note with concern the lack of improvement in the representation of troop and police contributing countries within the peacekeeping support structure, both in the field and at Headquarters, and in particular at senior levels. The Group recalls that the General Assembly has consistently requested the Secretary-General to make concrete efforts to improve this situation, especially in the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. In this regard, the Group will be seeking updates from the Secretariat on measures taken to improve TCC and PCC representation during our consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Moving on to resource requirements, the Group of 77 and China has taken note of the information related to the budget performance of the support account for the 2014/2015 period, including the unencumbered balance of US\$ 1.8 million, as well of the updated information related to the current period. We have also taken note of the proposed post and non-post requirements for 2016/2017, which represent an increase of 3.3% in comparison with the level proposed for 2015/2016.

10. During our deliberations on this agenda item, the Group of 77 and China will closely scrutinize the Secretary-Generals proposals for establishment, abolishment, reclassification and redeployment of posts, resulting in the envisaged realigning of the capacity of the support account in areas such as force generation, environmental responsibility, medical support, safety of staff, human rights and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, which are among the Group's priorities.

11. Furthermore, the Group will seek additional details on the proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the restructuring of the United Nations Office to the African Union, so as to take an informed decision with respect to the relevant recommendation of the Advisory Committee. We will also be interested to learn more about the proposed efficiency gains from the implementation of Umoja at Headquarters, in light of the Secretary-General's difficulty, in his proposal for the regular budget for the biennium 2016/2017, in demonstrating the linkages between purported efficiencies and resulting budgetary proposals.

Mr. Chairman,

12. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its support to United Nations peacekeeping operations and adequate backstopping capability at Headquarters. The Group reassures you of its determination to engage constructively on this agenda item, with a view to providing peacekeeping operations with the necessary resources to effectively deliver their mandates.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.