

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**  
**BY H. E. MARTHA AMA AKYAA POBEE, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS, CHAIR OF THE AFRICAN GROUP FOR THE MONTH**  
**ON SHIFTING THE MANAGEMENT PARADIGM IN THE UNITED NATIONS  
DURING THE MAIN SESSION OF SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS**  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY - FIFTH COMMITTEE**  
**(NEW YORK, 4 DECEMBER, 2017)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda items 124, 134, 136, 137 and 141.
2. The African Group would like to thank Mr António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for being here in person to introduce his vision for the United Nations entitled “Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: ensuring a better future for all”. The Group would also like to extend its appreciation to Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for introducing its related report.
3. The Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The African Group is particularly grateful for the ongoing inclusive consultative process conducted by the Secretary-General in developing his proposals. Reform is meaningful only when there is broad ownership by all member states and there is buy-in in a reformed culture of doing business by the management and staff of the Organisation. The African Group is further encouraged by both the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-Generals' personal commitment to deeper and broader consultation with the Group on all matters relating to African Union-United Nations cooperation.
5. The African Group agrees with the Secretary-General that the Organization is plagued with mistrust at various levels, between the Member States and the Secretariat as well as between the management and the staff. The Group firmly believes in the need to address this trust gap through enhancing transparency and

strengthening accountability and oversight mechanisms. This paradigm shift in the manner by which member states, the Secretariat and staff engage each other will definitely take time and effort but is invaluable for any endeavours to reform the organization.

6. The African Group is committed to a United Nations that is fit for purpose and delivers on its mandates to improve the lives of our people. The African Group will consider all the proposed reform in the context of mandate delivery and sound management principles, and not merely for cost savings or staff reductions. Proposals to streamline departments, procedures, processes, reduce duplication and change reporting lines must improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of mandate delivery, as well as accountability, transparency and Member State oversight.
7. The Group supports an integrated approach in the reform process to improve synergies and maximize benefits between reforms in the peace and security pillar, the development pillar as well as management reform which are interlinked and an integral part of each other.
8. This Organization has been undergoing constant reforms which have had varied success and the Group welcomes the ongoing evaluation of the impact, both positive and negative, of previous reforms and call on the Secretary-General to build on best practice and development risk management in his refined proposals. Management reform is not a static once-off process and the African Group urges the Secretary-General to strengthen and monitor the Organisation's ability to deliver on the recommendations of independent panels as well as and observations and recommendations from oversight and review bodies, including the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; the Board of Auditors; the Office of Internal Oversight Services; and the Joint Inspection Unit. The programme plan and proposed programme budget documents should further allow member states, and the relevant intergovernmental bodies, to fully understand, monitor and shape the Organisation's delivery on all its mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The African Group attaches great importance to the mainstreaming of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the recommendations in the report. The Group appreciates the responsiveness of the Secretary-General to the intergovernmentally agreed mandate to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The African Group looks forward to programme plans and budget proposals that support the balanced

implementation of all the goals and targets, as well as other Charter and intergovernmentally agreed mandates.

10. The Group will examine the management reform proposals to see how they address Africa as one of the 8 priorities of the Organisation, paying special attention to how a reformed delegation of authority; programme plan and budgetary proposals; and a new organisational structure will align with AU-UN cooperation and the continent's priorities as developed in its Agenda 2063, particularly in the field. The African Group looks forward to proposals on how the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, UN Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union will be strengthened in the reform process. The Group would like to note its concern that the post of the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa remains vacant and urges the Secretary-General to urgently address this issue.
11. In the context of sustainable peace on the African continent, the African Group emphasizes that reform requires not only changes to the structures and mindset of the Organisation, but sustainable and predictable financing for all the mechanisms of the Organisation across the peace spectrum. The African Group continues to believe that Special Political Missions should be financed through the implementation of the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms used to fund peacekeeping operations. This would enable the Organisation to respond more effectively and efficiently to their respective mandates in the field, a key goal of management reform.

**Mr. Chairman,**

12. Gender parity and greater geographical balance at all levels of the Secretariat are goals that we should already have achieved after seventy-two years. In this regard, the Group welcomes the Gender Parity Strategy of the Secretary-General and looks forward to the Strategy on Geographical Representation. The African Group emphasises that equitable geographical representation is not a dilution of the merit principle. The Group strongly believes that there is a need for a reformed human resources management based on equal and non-discriminatory job opportunities in New York and in the Field.
13. A Secretariat with a broad geographical representation, gender, diversity of regions, cultures and legal systems will strengthen the Organization's ability to understand and respond to the complex environment in which the UN operates. The Group struggles to understand how certain departments that primarily focus on African issues are dominated by staff from another region. The African Group notes that fair geographical representation is not only a target for the Secretariat,

but for all bodies and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

**Mr. Chairman,**

14. The Secretary-General has made technical recommendations in his report on the implementation of management reform. The African Group would like to acknowledge the detailed consideration of these proposals by the Advisory Committee. The Group will examine these proposals and recommendations in detail during the informal consultations. The Group will continue to engage on these and future reform proposals, particularly on programme planning, delegations of authority, accountability, evaluation, oversight, human resources management, procurement, information and communications technology.
15. The African Group will pay particular attention to strengthening the intergovernmental, multilateral, and international character of the Organisation. In this regard, the Group underscores the oversight roles of the General Assembly through its Fifth Committee, as well as the sequential consideration of the programme plan and programme budget by the Committee on Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions which ensure a strong link between programme implementation, resource allocation, mandate delivery and accountability to the universal membership.

**Mr. Chairman,**

16. In conclusion, the African group would like to thank the Secretary-General for addressing reform in a comprehensive whole-of-Organisation vision. The African Group is committed to a United Nations that is fit for purpose and delivers on its mandates to improve the lives of our people, and will consider the proposals in the context of enhanced mandate delivery and sound management principles. The Group wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage in constructive deliberations on this important agenda item.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.