

**STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY MR. MÁRCIO BURITY, THIRD SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 136:
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019 AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 11 October 2017)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Africa Group on agenda item 136 entitled proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

At the outset, the African Group would like to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to the Fifth Committee and thank him for the presentation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. The Group would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as Inspector Jorge Callejas of the Joint Inspection Unit, and Director Simona Petrova with the Chief Executives Board for introducing the committee's related report.

The Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and wishes to make additional comments on pertinent issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group believes that to have an effective and fully operational United Nations that is capable of addressing challenges facing global citizens, the implementation of its mandates should be underpinned by adequate provision of resources. In this regard, we request the Secretary-General to ensure that future budget proposals are based on agreed mandates by the General Assembly and are presented strictly in accordance with established procedures including the Financial Regulations and Rules. Any changes in

budget preparation methodology should be subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

The African Group strongly believes that the consideration of the budget is the highest priority of the Organization in the current session. It provides an appropriate mechanism for Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the realization of the priorities that the General Assembly has identified for the 2018-2019 biennium in conformity with paragraph 7 of its resolution 71/274. The Programme Budget also provides an opportunity for the Secretary-General to reflect these priorities and more importantly, to chart a strategic vision which amplifies the objectives, goals and policies that will guide the implementation of those mandates.

The Group understands that the resources proposed by the Secretary-General may not be adequate to effectively address the priorities set by the General Assembly, in particular threats linked to the peace and security architecture and the urgent needs of the Development Agenda. To address all these, the committee must have in mind that under the provisions of Article 17 of the Charter, Members States are obliged to provide adequate resources to the Secretary-General to facilitate the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities, and also to ensure the timely and effective provision of essential services that are a prerequisite for the proper functioning of the intergovernmental machinery.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the level of resources proposed for the 2018-2019 biennium amounting to approximately \$5.405 billion (net) for the regular budget before re-costing, the African Group expresses serious concern with the continued unjustified across-the-board resource reduction that imperils mandate delivery including those related to areas of our key interests such as development. The Group is highly concerned with the downward trend of budget growth that does not take into account 'real changes' and additional mandated responsibilities of the Organization.

Specifically, the Group is deeply concerned with the unjustified reductions in the number of post and non-post resources in important areas including development for Africa, maintenance of international peace and security; effective co-ordination and humanitarian assistance; disarmament and drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism. The Group will seek specific clarification on how mandates in these areas would be implemented with such reduction of resources and increased challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

As we consider the budget proposal before us, the African Group will carefully scrutinize all the budget sections and elements with a view to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for an efficient and effective implementation of the given mandates. With the observations by oversight bodies and the Advisory Committee serving as points of reference, the Group will also be identifying wastage and inefficiencies with the aim of proposing a redirection of resources to developmental and other urgent priorities.

The Group notes that development of Africa is one of the eight United Nations priorities and in this regard, we urge the Secretary-General to focalise and place special emphasis on Africa's development agenda. The Group will, in this connection, closely examine the Secretary-General's proposals regarding, inter alia, the following areas as they are connected to Africa's programmes:

- Political affairs - including elements of disarmament, peacekeeping operations, mediation and conflict prevention;
- International co-operation for development - including United Nations support for Africa's development agenda, least developing countries, land locked developing states and small island developing states; trade and development; international drug controls, crime and terrorism prevention; and women empowerment;
- United Nations System Support for NEPAD;
- Regional co-operation in the areas of economic and social development including support to the regional economic integration in Africa;
- Implementation of capital projects in particular at the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

Also, proposals on humanitarian assistance, environment, development account and human settlement, will be given special attention during budget consultations and negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

Further, we believe that the Secretary-General's proposals on certain initiatives including implementation of United Nations Global Service Delivery Model, ongoing and additional

construction projects at offices away from Headquarters should be useful in strengthening the already existing infrastructure and related facilities.

The Group values the important role played by monitoring and evaluation of programmes being implemented by United Nations in terms of identifying elements which require improvements. Monitoring and evaluation inform programme design and resource allocation. It is noted that proposed resource allocation under regular budget for monitoring and evaluation activities for the 2018-2019 biennium is lower compared to that of the 2016/2017 biennium. The Group is surprised that self-evaluation has not been instituted by all United Nations Secretariat entities.

Though the role of highly qualified and experienced personnel is undisputed, the Group wishes to highlight the importance of entry level personnel as a lack thereof is inimical to the rejuvenation of the Organisation. The Group therefore is of the view that any proposal by the Secretary-General to cut posts should take into account the need for a rejuvenation of the Organisation and the dividends this would bear for an effective implementation of its mandate.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you that the African Group stands ready to engage constructively during informal consultations and negotiations with an objective of reaching a consensus at the earliest opportunity.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.