



STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

ON

AGENDA ITEM 136

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET: BIENNIUM 2018-2019

**IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY COMMITTEE
(FIFTH COMMITTEE)**

NEW YORK, 11TH OCTOBER 2017

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community on agenda item 136 on the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. At the outset, CARICOM wishes to align itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

I also wish to express the Group's appreciation to the Secretariat for the presentation of the proposed programme budget for the 2018-2019 biennium, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, for introducing the Committee's related report.

Mr. Chairman,

In September 2015, all Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since then, the momentum of the sustainable development goals has grown, yet more needs to be done to enhance the scale and speed of implementation of the Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda reflects a more comprehensive and integrated approach to development in its application. In this same way, the budget document must also reflect a comprehensive strategic plan of the Secretary-General in delivering the mandates and priorities agreed upon by Member States. It is an authoritative statement of intent and purpose that aims to ensure that the United Nations is capable of effectively responding to the needs and challenges of its diverse membership, including Small Island Developing States, such as those of the Caribbean Community.

I take this opportunity, therefore, to recall paragraph 46 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which underlines "the important role and comparative advantage of an adequately resourced, relevant, coherent, efficient and effective United Nations system in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable development."

Mr. Chairman,

While CARICOM acknowledges that the implementation of the Umoja project has resulted in efficiencies in some areas of the organisation, the Group notes that the direct costs of the implementation of the Umoja project are estimated to reach approximately \$466.2 million by the end of 2017.

However, CARICOM is concerned that, despite this significant investment of resources, Umoja has not resulted in the anticipated improvements in the quality or timeliness of the information provided to the ACABQ in support of the Secretary-General's budget proposal for the upcoming biennium.

Information or analysis on the project ought to provide the General Assembly with a clearer understanding of the impact of Umoja, with a distinction between efficiencies specifically attributed to the implementation of Umoja and those achieved through other factors. Further to this, CARICOM is of the view that the next annual progress report on Umoja ought to contain detailed information relating to the qualitative and quantitative benefits, including the impact of Umoja on individual offices and departments.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is also deeply concerned that, despite the expanded mandate established by the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to support the sustainable development of SIDS, the resources allocated to the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Social and Economic Affairs has remained unchanged.

CARICOM firmly believes that the allocation of resources to the work of the SIDS Unit, as well as the Office of the High Commissioner for Least Developed, Land-Locked Developing, and Small Island Developing States, must be predictable and reliable; and therefore, an overdependence of voluntary contributions presents a real challenge to these entities in the execution of their inter-governmentally agreed mandates.

Therefore, CARICOM calls for all mandates approved by the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations to be provided with adequate resources from the regular budget for their implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM also notes that the Secretary-General has made a proposal regarding a reduction in resources, including the abolishment and redeployment of a number of posts, within the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). CARICOM anticipates that these proposed staff resource adjustments would not affect the regional commission's capacity to carry out its important mandate of promoting economic and social development.

Lastly Mr. Chairman, considering the importance and comprehensiveness of the budget proposal, the Group strongly believes that sufficient time must be provided for informal consultations. We ask that the Chair and the Bureau ensure that adequate time in the Programme of Work is allocated for this important agenda item to allow the membership to consider the items judiciously.

In closing, CARICOM once more looks forward to actively participating in the discussions on this agenda item, and will constructively engage with you, the Secretariat and our partners on this important matter.

I thank you.