

# Remarks to the Fifth Committee on Agenda Item 136: Proposed Budget Biennium 2018-2019

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## AS DELIVERED

On behalf of the United States, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his 2018-2019 budget proposal to the Fifth Committee. Additionally, I would like to recognize the Secretary-General's personal engagement and leadership on reforming the United Nations, including improving the process for formulating and presenting the regular budget to Member States. I would like to further thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of ACABQ, for the Committee's report.

While we recognize that this budget comes amidst proposed change and does not fully reflect the Secretary-General's reform vision, the United States would like to express its concern about the process used to formulate the budget. Instead of respecting the General Assembly's established budget outline agreed last December of \$5.3 billion dollars – and using the outline as a starting point to develop the budget from the bottom-up – the Secretariat continues to make only incremental changes from one biennium to the next. Without a bottom-up approach, the Secretariat cannot strategically prioritize nor conduct a long-overdue impact assessment.

As a result, we end up with budgets that increase by millions of dollars each biennium. The United States believes that we must reassert the essential nature of an approved budget – that it is a ceiling not to be raised, except in extraordinary circumstances. Accordingly, the United States urges fundamental reform of the “recosting” practice that has made responsible budgeting impossible. We cannot continue to budget by looking backward, saying the budget is what we spent rather than what we have available to spend, that just doesn't make sense. The solution is not to keep coming back for more money – the solution is to balance unforeseen increases with strategic cuts and adaptation.

Effectively managed organizations cope with change through a continual process of streamlining, innovation, and responsive and transparent planning and budgeting. Accordingly, the United States will press for real reductions, both on the overall budget level and staffing.

This organization must be disciplined about priorities. We cannot support unsustainable budget growth.

We must promote budget levels that balance what the United Nations needs to fulfill its mission with Member States' financial constraints. The only sustainable United Nations is an affordable one.

Thus, it is urgent that we work together with renewed focus to move the United Nations onto a sound and sustainable fiscal path by ensuring that the Organization's budget meets real world needs, even if that requires challenging the status quo.

We look forward to constructively engaging and working with all Member States to approve a budget level that appropriately accounts for the financial reality that Member States face, along with our duty to ensure that the United Nations has the resources that it needs to effectively implement mandates.

Thank you.