



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BOUBACAR DIALLO, G-77 COORDINATOR OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 141: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2021 -
REQUEST FOR A SUBVENTION TO THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL FOR LEBANON,
AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE FIRST RESUMED PART OF THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
24 March 2021**

Mr. Chair

- 1- I have the honor to submit this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda Item 141 Proposed Programme Budget for 2021: Request for a Subvention to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.
- 2- At the outset, the Group wishes to thank Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, for introducing the Secretary-General's report. Our sincere thanks as well to Mr. Abdalla Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Budgetary Question, for introducing the related report.

Mr. Chair,

- 3- The Group of G77 and China wishes to commend the work of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon for its significant contributions to international justice and the rule of law. The judgment issued by the tribunal on 18 August 2020 and the subsequent pronouncement of the sentencing of the perpetrator on 11 December 2020, is a testament to the tribunal's ability to hold the perpetrators of crimes accountable, thereby successfully fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Chair,

- 4- The Group commends Lebanon for consistently honoring its agreed financial obligation to for the Special Tribunal since its establishment in 2007. Unfortunately, prevailing special circumstances have left the government of Lebanon unable to cover its 49 % share of contributions to the budget of the tribunal in 2021. Lebanon has been witnessing an unprecedented socio-economic and financial crisis, resulting in the country's defaulting for the first time in its history on its debts as well as contributions to the Tribunal. This crisis was further exacerbated by the 4 August 2020 explosion in Beirut which destroyed its main trading port, as well as the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. While the Group commends member states who have voluntarily contributed to the Tribunal over the years, it also takes note of the inability of several donors to commit to making contributions at the same level as they had in previous years.

Mr. Chair,

5- The Group takes note of the tremendous efforts made by the tribunal to reduce its 2021 budget by 37 per cent compared with the 2020 approved budget. We are also encouraged by the development of a Strategic Plan to implement structural, procedural and managerial changes to ensure maximum procedural efficiency in completing the Tribunal's judicial activities. However, the Group is deeply concerned that the Tribunal's financial position remains uncertain and that it is currently able to sustain its operations only until the end of April 2021 based on its available and pledged resources. A financial failure of the Tribunal would have deeply negative impacts on the quest for justice for the people of Lebanon and the world. It would also be detrimental to the Tribunal's independence, and will create an alarming and unfavorable precedent to the international and hybrid criminal jurisdictions and justice system.

Mr. Chair,

- 6- For this reason, the Group stands firmly with the people of Lebanon and international justice and urges all Member States to do the same by approving the subvention at the level requested by the Secretary General to supplement the Tribunal's budget for 2021 with the understanding that the subvention will be subsequently reimbursed from the excess voluntary contributions received by the Tribunal, the applicable reporting requirements to the Assembly will be complied with and the voluntary nature of the funding arrangement of the Special Tribunal will not be changed.
- 7- In conclusion, let me assure you Mr. Chair of the commitment of the Group of 77 and China to work constructively with all delegations towards the urgent and timely conclusion of this important item in order to ensure that the Special Tribunal is able to fulfill its mandate without interruption

I thank you Mr. Chair.