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**Agenda item 141
Proposed programme budget for 2021**

**Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for 2021 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and section 36, Staff assessment
(A/75/372)**

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by
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Assistant Secretary-General, Controller

23 November 2020

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

1. I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's revised estimates relating to the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) for the Syrian Arab Republic for 2021 contained in A/75/372.
2. The conflict in Syria remains one of the most complex in the world, affecting the lives of millions of people. It is currently estimated that over 11 million people continue to require humanitarian assistance throughout the country, including some 2.8 million people – half of them children – across Idlib and the northern part of Aleppo Governorate. The extension of the Security Council's authorization of UN cross-border humanitarian assistance under resolutions 2504 and 2533 has enabled continued life-saving assistance to be delivered to those in need. The role of these humanitarian operations remains vital and is a lifeline for millions of people who continue to depend on them, especially in communities in north-western Syria, which are only accessible via cross-border operations.
3. Since UN cross-border operations began in July 2014, UN agencies have dispatched more than 41,000 trucks into Syria through the border crossing of Bab al-Hawa in addition to the border crossings of Bab al-Salam, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha until those were excluded from the list of authorized crossings by the Security Council. The UNMM monitored and verified the loading and the passage into Syria of all of these relief consignments.
4. In the first seven months of 2020, cross-border relief consignments reached millions of people in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, including food assistance for 1.4 million people on a monthly basis, and medical supplies for 2.3 million per month, as well as delivering non-food items to over 1

million people, water and sanitation support to over 2.2 million people, and 2.2 million pieces of personal protective equipment to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. The year 2020 has witnessed the largest amount of cross-border assistance ever recorded since the beginning of the operations of the UNMM in 2014, as UN agencies and their implementing partners have been responding to humanitarian needs exacerbated by the military escalation in Idlib at the beginning of the year, and the COVID-19 pandemic, while also prepositioning aid in the event of a non-renewal of the Security Council resolution in July. The UNMM has been able to continue processing this surge of assistance without any interruption throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, while putting in place significant mitigating measures to address the risks related to the virus.

6. On 10 July 2020, the Security Council authorized the continuation of the UN cross-border operations for Syria through the border crossing of Bab al Hawa and extended the mandate of the UNMM for a period of 12 months until 10 July 2021 in its resolution 2533 (2020). The budgetary requirements of the UNMM until 31 December 2020 are being covered from the approved programme budget resources for UNMM in 2020. The budgetary requirements for 2021 have been included in the Secretary-General's revised estimates report before you, relating to the programme budget for 2021 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and section 36, staff assessment.

7. The proposed resource requirement for the period would amount to \$1,972,000 net of staff assessment (\$2,166,900 gross) and represents a decrease of \$871,500 (30.6 per cent) compared to the 2020 appropriation of \$2,843,500. The decrease is due to the exclusion of the border crossings of Al Yarubiyah and Bab al-Salam from the list of authorized border crossings. The proposed staffing structure of the UNMM for 2021 would include 19 positions (down from 30 positions in 2020), as a result of the proposed abolishment of eleven positions (8 in Iraq and 3 in Turkey).

8. The proposed resources and positions would provide optimal capacity for the UNMM to deliver on this mandate.

9. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, I thank you for your consideration of the proposal and we look forward to supporting you in addressing any questions you may have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.