



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS BY MR. TERRENCE TEO, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA 141: SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSIONS, AT THE MAIN PART OF THE 75TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 13 NOVEMBER 2020

Thank you, Mr Chair.

1 I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on this agenda item on special political missions.

2 ASEAN thanks Ms Vivian van de Perre, Acting Director of the Field Operations Finance Division in the Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, including good offices and preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding missions authorised by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/75/6 (Sect.3)/Add.1). We also thank Mr Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the ACABQ's report on this issue.

Mr Chair,

3 ASEAN fully supports the critical role played by special political missions in responding to increasingly complex global security challenges. The number, size and mandate complexity of special political missions have grown rapidly because they have proved to be an effective tool in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore crucial that special political missions can function optimally and deliver on their mandates effectively and without delay.

4 However, the current financing arrangements have made it difficult for special political missions to operate at optimum capacity. It is particularly unacceptable that for almost ten years running, this Committee has failed to act on the recommendations of the ACABQ and High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to reform the funding and backstopping arrangements, despite passing other resolutions on reforms. These recommendations are still relevant today. Special political missions operate in a challenging and evolving environment. If we are serious about giving the Secretary-General the tools to respond effectively and flexibly to complex security situations, we must follow through in enabling his work.

5 In this regard, ASEAN strongly calls on the Committee to implement the funding and backstopping recommendations proposed by the ACABQ, including the creation of a separate account aligned with the budgetary cycle for peacekeeping operations, and charged on the peacekeeping scale. This is especially pertinent in the current circumstances, given the persistent liquidity challenges afflicting the regular budget, from which special political missions draw their funding. It is important for special political missions to be adequately resourced and have predictable financing, including during mission transitions and drawdown, so as to support the stability and continuity of peacebuilding activities. There should also be better coordination across the peace continuum, between special political missions, peacekeeping operations, and other peacebuilding activities.

Mr Chair,

6 The vast majority of special political missions are created through the decision of the Permanent Members of the Security Council. This includes the large field-based missions, which have more in common with peacekeeping operations than traditional special political missions. ASEAN notes that the General Assembly has reaffirmed in its resolutions that “the special responsibilities of the Permanent Members in the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security should be borne in mind in connection with their contributions to the financing of peace and security operations”. It is not unreasonable to expect those who hold immense influence over special political missions to similarly shoulder a larger responsibility for their funding.

Mr Chair,

7 Please allow me to conclude by reiterating ASEAN's continued commitment to increasing the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of special political missions. We urge all Member States to set aside their political differences and deliver a coordinated, sustainable and holistic solution for maintaining peace and security in the world. ASEAN also deeply appreciates the sacrifices of our colleagues working in the various special political missions, many of whom are operating in challenging environments in conflict and post-conflict zones. We look forward to the discussions on this issue.

8 Thank you, Mr Chair.

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