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

**Report on the use of the commitment authority and request for a subvention to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone
(A/75/343)**

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by
Chandramouli Ramanathan
Assistant Secretary-General, Controller

7 December 2020

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

1. I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General under this agenda item contained in A/75/343, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/263, by which the Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount of \$2,537,000 for 2020 to supplement the voluntary financial resources of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone (RSCSL). The report addresses the activities of the Court, the current financial situation, efficiency measures, and future financing arrangements against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. In mid-March, the Court promptly adapted to the COVID-19 global environment by combining remote and in-person working methods in order to avoid major disruptions to its activities. The Court also adopted and disseminated all public health guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of its personnel, prisoners and witnesses. The strict compliance with public health protocols by its personnel has so far mitigated against the risk of being infected with the coronavirus. The pandemic affected the Court's work in the second, third and fourth quarters of 2020, including, inter-alia, in the areas of archiving where an alternate office attendance schedule was put in place to enable continuation of this task at a slower rate, reduced travel for field missions, and annual visits to prisons to inspect the conditions of imprisonment.
3. The financial situation remains a challenge for the Court. Fundraising efforts undertaken in 2020, relied on social media and teleconference platforms, such as Zoom, Skype and WebEx to raise awareness

of its achievements, its funding challenges, and to seek voluntary contributions. Over 52 fundraising bilateral meetings were held in 2020, 40 of which were held virtually.

4. Despite the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Government of Sierra Leone, and key donors of the Court, including the Member States of the Oversight Committee, and the intense fundraising efforts made by the Principals of the Court, voluntary resources are not adequate and, at this stage, there are no prospects for additional voluntary contributions.

5. Given the lack of adequate and sustained voluntary contributions for the Court to fulfil its mandate, the Secretary-General requests the General Assembly to approve a subvention in the amount of \$2,856,300 through appropriation, to fund the activities of the Court in 2021. The proposed resources and positions would provide optimal capacity for the RSCSL to deliver on this mandate.

6. 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.