



PHILIPPINES

Item 141. Proposed Programme Budget for 2021

Item 142. Proposed Programme Plan for 2021

10:00 am, Monday, 12 October 2020

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

by

MS. MARIVIL V. VALLES

Fifth Committee Delegate

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines
to the United Nations**

Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Philippines thanks Secretary General Antonio Guterres for the report on the Proposed Programme Budget for 2021. We also thank the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the ACABQ for the presentation of their reports.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statements made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Singapore on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chair, we are well into the second year of implementation of the management reforms, and a key aspect of it is the transition from a biennial to an annual budget period, on a trial basis, beginning with the programme budget for 2020. This significantly overhauls the UN's planning and budgeting process.

In light of this important change, the Philippines highlights the following points:

1. My delegation welcomes the consultations conducted with Member States in respect of the budget preparation process in order to improve the presentation of the budget document, as well as to have it closely aligned with approved mandates. We welcome the new process, which we think can help the organization to function efficiently and effectively despite the current crisis.
2. The Philippines, however, is of the view that the budget document does not adequately reflect the current needs and budgetary realities for 2021. The Philippines stresses the importance of having a budget that is crafted and executed in consonance with the current exigencies of mandate implementation. We stand

ready to work with stakeholders to have an outcome that promotes efficiency and effectiveness, and one that responds to the priorities of Member States.

3. The Philippines highlights the importance of the sequence of the review processes conducted by the CPC and the Advisory Committee. While we acknowledge the Secretariat's efforts to continue to improve the budget proposal, the Philippines notes that the budget process does not adhere to certain key budgetary procedures and practices on the conduct of the review.
4. Given the result of the CPC deliberations on the matter last June 2020, my delegation agrees that the situation continues to affect both the timeliness and accuracy of the review processes. The PH finds it reasonable that all proposed resource requirements should be based on a programme plan duly approved by the General Assembly.
5. As such, the Philippines looks forward to the General Assembly conducting a thorough review of the sequential process of the budgetary cycle subsequent to the first full budgetary cycle to enable an informed decision on the implementation of the annual budget at its 77th session.
6. Cognizant of the huge impact of the pandemic on the current work operations of the UN, my delegation supports the recommendation of the ACABQ for the Secretary-General to provide more information on its impact in the next proposed programme budget, including lessons learned, best practices and efficiency measures across the UN system. We envisage that current provisional working arrangements would result in savings for the organization.
7. Since a number of meetings have been deferred to a later date during the main session of the 75th UNGA, and budgetary implications will be accordingly re-assessed, the Philippines concurs with the projection that related adjustments to the budget proposal may arise in the course of the 75th UNGA. It might be useful for the Secretary-General to present a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of flexible working arrangements on expenditures at the next session.
8. Finally, the Philippines supports the view that efficiency gains can be realized in non-post resources specifically on travel expenses of staff. Having said that, the PH reiterates that no changes on established budgetary methodology, procedures and practices should be made or implemented without prior review and approval by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chair, the proposed programme plan and budget are two most important agenda items of the Committee this main session. We believe that sufficient and reasonable time must be given for the conduct of informal consultations for this item. The

Philippines is committed to working constructively on this matter, with a view to reaching an agreement that will benefit the organization and Member States.

I thank you.