



**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 ITEM 141:
PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2021, 12
OCTOBER 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 Agenda Item 141: Proposed Programme Budget for 2021. ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2 ASEAN thanks the Secretary-General for his introduction of the proposed programme budget for 2021. We also extend our appreciation to Mr Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the ACABQ, for introducing the ACABQ's report.

Mr Chair,

3 The UN marks its 75th anniversary in turbulent times. We are confronting a global pandemic with severe economic and social impacts. At the same time, geopolitical tensions are rising sharply in many parts of the world. For all its imperfections, the UN and a strong multilateral system remains the best shot we have at promoting life-saving work globally. To do this, the Organisation's mandates must be adequately funded. We cannot continuously demand that the UN do more, while giving it less resources. We must move towards more realistic budgeting, with a focus on achieving results. This was the core reason for the move from a biennial to an annual programme budget in the first place.

4 ASEAN reiterates its firm belief that the Organisation's mandates must be funded. Arbitrary cuts to the proposed budget or the deliberate withholding of resources should have no place in the UN, but it is a reality that we have been dealing with for years. If left unchecked, these artificial constraints are only setting up the UN for failure. The Secretary-General has expressed his commitment to delivering results on the ground. Member States should therefore do their part to support his drive to produce results, with both our words, and our actions. At the same time, ASEAN

stresses the importance of efficient, transparent and responsible utilisation of the Organisation's resources as well as full accountability to member states.

Mr Chair,

5 ASEAN recognises the efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the presentation of the programme budget, in line with the specific directions given by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. In particular, the narratives and proposed budget figures must be clearly linked to a results-based budgeting framework, and they must accurately reflect existing mandates and the measures to achieve them. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to improve the presentation of the programme budget in this regard.

Mr Chair,

6 ASEAN notes that initial estimates to finance Special Political Missions in the proposed budget amount to over US\$706 million. This accounts for more than 23 percent of the proposed budget for 2021. ASEAN appreciates the role of Special Political Missions in the UN's work on peace and security. However, we also believe that it is time this Assembly had a serious discussion on the funding arrangements for Special Political Missions vis-à-vis other development priorities. This is pertinent in view of the ongoing reform of the UN's peace and security architecture. It is also extremely timely, given the recurring liquidity challenges in the regular budget. We look forward to having further discussions on this topic when the specific agenda item of Special Political Missions is considered during this session.

Mr Chair,

7 ASEAN will take an active interest in the forthcoming discussions. We look forward to a constructive and productive dialogue with all stakeholders.

8 I thank you for your attention.

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