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Statement by Ambassador Kelly Craft

U.S. Permanent Representative

Agenda Item 141 and 142: Proposed programme budget and plan 2021

Main Part of the 75th UN General Assembly

October 12, 2020

[As delivered]

Thank you Mr Chairman.

I have been thinking about how wonderful it is that the UN's World Food Program won the Nobel Prize for Peace and what it means about the United Nations as an institution and the significance of funds well spent.

Since the creation of WFP in 1961 at the request of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a man who believed in the UN's mission and understood that combatting hunger is critical not just because it is a moral thing to do, because it is the best way to build stability in the world, the United States has played a central role in managing and financing the World Food Program.

It is in this context, Mr. Secretary-General, that I reflect on your presentation of the 2021 UN budget. Now, more than ever, we must ensure that our budget expenditures focus on programs that we know work, like the life saving efforts of WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and other essential agencies that have proven track records of success.

The only way we will know if UN programs work, however, is if we ensure transparency throughout the system. Transparency allows for accountability. Accountability is the responsibility of each of us in this body. Our constituents deserve no less. The people our programs serve have their lives literally depending on it.

Mr Secretary-General, as Chief Executive Officer of this Organization, you have not only taken fiduciary responsibilities seriously, but also navigated the disruptions from COVID-19. Global taxpayers have been well served by your efforts, and speaking on behalf of the United States, I owe you and your team a tremendous debt of gratitude for respecting U.S. taxpayer contributions.

During my confirmation hearing as U.S Permanent Representative, I stated that the United Nations can be a force for good, that its objectives – global peace, friendship among nations, development and human rights protection – are just as relevant today as they were 75 years ago.

However, the organization must be transparent and accountable to best deliver on this mission.

Over a year into the job, the same assessment rings true and I use every opportunity to express this to the President as well as to Congress.

This is how we consider the budget before us today.

And given the negative economic impact of COVID-19 worldwide and the economic toll that our individual countries face as we combat the effects of the virus, cost-efficiency is all the more important to ensure our tax payer dollars are being spent prudently.

Americans expects nothing less from me as their representative to the United Nations. Each of us has a duty to our respective countries to safeguard precious contributions to this vital organization.

This virus has reshaped our work patterns and forced us to depend on technology more than ever. This challenge must be embraced by the Fifth Committee which is capable of finding new ways to operate optimally.

Mr. Secretary General, your commitment to UN reform is linked to the annual budget.

We welcome that the budget reflects real costs and reduces volatility, which gives us more certainty of the level of resources needed to run the United Nations. However, some wasteful and undisciplined practices, such as recosting, must be addressed.

The best approach is paying for what is needed.

We all must look through a magnified lens to ensure that overspending is kept in check.

Chairman Bong, thank you for your chairmanship and for providing the member states with the Committees report. We all acknowledge the value of the ACABQ.

Mr. Chairman, although the proposed budget is \$2.99 billion, with all of the add-ons that we currently know of, the Secretary-General's budget proposal will be at least \$3.15 billion, a 2.5% increase over the 2020 appropriation.

The United States joins the Secretary-General in his ongoing efforts to monitor how UN departments and managers are justifying their funding requests, managing the resources currently at hand and the quality of results delivered.

The U.S. continues to be the largest donor of this institution providing 22% of the UN's core budget and 25% of peacekeeping.

Investing money where it has tangible and beneficial effects is to be applauded. Throwing money at failed policies and mismanaged programs is often times worse than bad because it perpetuates failure.

The world cannot afford failure.

We must keep faith with Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the World Food Program. The best way to honor this important work of UN organizations practicing transparency and accountability is to ensure that the resources necessary to work its fund is available, even in a time of tightened government budgets around the world. We know the resources are protected when we hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards of transparency in making budgetary decisions. This is why we are so grateful to the Secretary-General for his leadership in challenging all of us to uphold these principals.

Our constituents deserve nothing less. There is no better return on an investment than the investments that save lives.

Thank you.