



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY AMBASSADOR BOUBACAR DIALLO, G-77 COORDINATOR, PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEMS 139:
PROGRAMME PLANNING, AND 138: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2022,
AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 13 October 2021)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda items 139 and 138, Programme Planning and Proposed Programme Budget for 2022, respectively.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the presentation of his proposed programme plan and budget for 2022, and to congratulate him for the approval of his second mandate. We also thank Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee, for introducing the Committee's related report.
3. **On the programme plan**, Mr. Chair, the Group of 77 and China wishes to recognize the Chairperson of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), Mr. Giovanni Battista Buttigieg, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta, and the Vice Chairs and Rapporteur of the committee, for their efforts during the committee's deliberations this year. We thank Chairperson Buttigieg for the presentation of the Committee's report.

Mr. Chair,

4. This Committee is yet again faced with the undeniable violation of the Rules and Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. We continue to be gravely troubled by the timeline under which the related programme budget has been prepared by the Secretariat, analyzed by the ACABQ and then presented to us without a basis of an inter- governmentally agreed programme plan, as stipulated in the aforementioned Rules and Regulations.
5. As we enter into the final year of the trial period for the annual budget cycle, and we get closer to evaluating the format and timeframes we shall adopt in this sense for the coming future, the Group of 77 and China underscores the enormous importance of preserving programme planning as the cornerstone of the whole programme budget process of the Organization. For that purpose, it will be indispensable to allocate the necessary time for all staff and programme managers to prepare adequately the proposed strategic framework and for the proper intergovernmental process of review and adoption to take place.
6. Only with enough time can we ensure truly that inter- governmentally agreed mandates are translated into implementable programmes. We need to ensure that programme managers as well as the Organization at large are not in a constant cycle of programme budget preparation, but actively pursuing the implementation of the agreed programmes. Therefore, we look forward to continue the discussions in this Committee on the appropriate sequence to be followed in the formulation, review and adoption process of the programme plan and budget. The Group has waited patiently for an outcome on this matter and it is our hope that the rest of the Committee will come to see the benefits of ensuring that our programme budget is projected on the basis of a solid and consensus based programme plan.

Mr. Chair,

7. The Group reaffirms its steadfast support to the prerogatives of the CPC in its work as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programming, evaluation and coordination. Despite the participation in person in this year's session of some experts from capital, we hope that the continued improvements to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to the traditional full participation of all experts in New York and to the enjoyment of much needed interpretation services. These are vital conditions for CPC, or any intergovernmental process for that matter, to provide better guidance in the interpretation of legislative mandates and in the consideration and development of evaluation procedures for the improvement of programme design and the avoidance of overlap and duplication.

8. The Group has examined the programme plan and the CPC's report. In this regard, we appreciate the continued improvements made by the Secretariat in light of resolution 74/251, regarding the format of programmes and sub-programmes, despite the lack of consistency at times with inter-governmentally approved terms and terminologies. While disappointed that no consensus was achieved in CPC to put forward cross-cutting recommendations regarding the format of the programmes, we strongly believe that further guidance will be needed especially as we near the end of the trial period of the annual programme plan and budget.

9. The Group is heartened that despite the many obstacles this year, the Committee managed to consider and give recommendations on the majority of the programme plan, as well as for a number of OIOS Evaluation Reports, the JIU report on ECLAC, and the coordination reports on the United Nations system support for NEPAD, and on the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Mr. Chair,

10. Once again, there are a number of programmes, this time ten, which have been left without recommendations from the CPC due to a lack of consensus. Many of the members of our Group who participated in this year's CPC session, advocated to directly recommend that the relevant Main Committees of the General Assembly consider these programmes, in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243, yet again consensus was blocked.

11. The Group is baffled as to how the aforementioned paragraph, adopted by consensus, is not clear for some colleagues or has any margin for interpretation. The mandate is quite clear, that if CPC has not been able to provide conclusions and recommendations on a given programme or subprogramme then the plenary or the relevant Main Committee of the General Assembly, will have the subprogramme or programme before it in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee, at the earliest opportunity.

12. The Group strongly insists that the Plenary and all Main Committees of the General Assembly must enact their role in the review and action on these open programmes that are relevant to their work. We categorically affirm that this in no way undermines the pivotal role CPC has for our Organization.

13. On the basis of this mandate, which serves to uphold the fundamental principle that every programme of the budget should reflect objectives and activities agreed upon by Member States, the Group considers it to be of the utmost importance that these ten open programmes are considered as soon as possible in line with paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243. This constitutes an unavoidable requirement to achieve a successful outcome this session on the proposed programme budget.

Mr. Chair,

14. As we look forward to our deliberations, we appreciate that in the current programme of work the informal sessions on the programme plan are being given the precedence they ought to have ahead of the consideration of their corresponding budget sections. The Group stresses that these items, though closely related, are not and cannot ever be viewed as the same. The Group emphasizes that agreements on any of the corresponding budget sections of the ten open programmes are not possible without the necessary agreement on those programmes.

15. The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its commitment in supporting and strengthening the work of the CPC and the ensuing intergovernmental process around the proposed programme plan. The Group also reiterates its appreciation for the work done by members of the CPC and for the Secretariat's invaluable support during the past session. The Group is committed to working constructively with you and all delegations to achieve a timely result on this vital agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

16. **On the programme budget**, it is one of the most important agenda items under consideration during this session. It serves as the resource base for and an important element underpinning the United Nations to fulfil its role and execute its legislated mandates. The budget document is not just a financial and accounting tool. It is an authoritative statement that should reflect the strategic vision of the Secretary-General in delivering the mandates and priorities agreed upon by Member States. For this reason, the Group has always been fully committed to delivering a substantive budget on time, and will continue to work with all sides to ensure that the budget is finalised in a timely fashion. The Group reiterates its request to the Secretariat and to all Member States to strictly abide by the consistent decisions of the General Assembly that no changes to the established budget methodology, procedures and practices or to the financial regulations should be implemented without prior review and approval by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chair,

17. This is the final year of the trial period for an annual budget. The Group notes that for the third year running, there is a lack of adherence to key established budgetary procedures and practices, in particular, the sequential nature of the review processes conducted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the ACABQ. As the proposed resource requirements are based on a programme plan that has not yet been approved by the General Assembly, it undermines the link between resource proposals and the mandated activities of the Organisation. We will address this in greater detail during our deliberations on budgetary procedures and practices.

18. The Group recognises the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the presentation of the programme budget. However, we agree with the comments of the Advisory Committee that further improvements can be made, such as on the presentation of deliverables for all programmes, the need to utilize technical terminology in particular when justifying proposed resources, and through the inclusion of comprehensive charts for individual budget sections and the Secretariat as a whole to facilitate understanding of the proposed resources.

Mr. Chair,

19. On the proposed programme budget itself, the Group notes the difference in actual vacancy rates in individual sections of the programme budget. We share the Advisory Committee's concern over the difference in recruitment efforts in individual sections. We further note with concern that timely

recruitment was constrained by the liquidity situation. The Group reiterates that vacant posts should be filled as expeditiously as possible taking into consideration equitable geographical representation.

Mr. Chair,

20. The United Nations adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development six years ago. We are now less than a decade away from our target date of 2030. International peace and security and development are two sides of the same coin. The ground conditions for peace and stability will not be laid if the development agenda is not realised.

21. In this regard, the Group reiterates its call for the strengthening of the development pillar. We are therefore concerned that the budget proposal contains cuts to bodies that are integral to the development pillar, including DESA, OHRRLLS, ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, and ESCWA. The Group will seek detailed explanations about the proposed cuts during the informal consultations.

Mr. Chair,

22. The Group also notes with concern that the reliance on voluntary contributions remains high. This could skew priorities towards specific areas that receive more voluntary funding. The Group firmly rejects any such manipulation of the Organisation's delivery of mandates. The Group reiterates its longstanding position that adequate resources must be provided for the Organisation to fulfil its mandates. We further stress that all extrabudgetary posts must be administered and managed with the same rigour as regular budget posts, and that extrabudgetary resources shall be used in consistency with the policies, aims and activities of the Organisation.

Mr. Chair,

23. The Group is committed to working constructively with you and all delegations on this item. We encourage all delegations to engage in budget deliberations with a spirit of flexibility and responsibility, in order to reach an agreement that is in the best interests of the Organisation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.