

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR MUSINGA TIMOTHY BANDORA, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MULTILATERAL COOPERATION AND LEGAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, ON BEHALF OF THE G-77 AND CHINA, ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL A/C.5/51/53 ENTITLED: "IMPACT OF APPROVED SAVINGS MEASURES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATED PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES" (AGENDA ITEMS 115 AND 116)

New York, 7 October 1997

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the G-77 and China on the Report of the Secretary-General A/C.5/51/53 entitled "Impact of approved savings measures on the implementation of mandated programmes and activities". We will also be expressing our views on document A/C.5/51/57 at an appropriate time.

We wish to thank the Controller for the presentation of the Secretary-General's report.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China would like to thank the Secretary-General for the information provided in his report. We regret, however, that this report has been submitted to the attention of the General Assembly after a long delay from the Secretariat despite several General Assembly resolutions and requests from Member States in this regard.

We noted that most of the information provided in this report are of general nature, as rightly pointed out by the ACABQ in its report A/52/7. There are areas of concern to G-77. In this regard, the G-77 and China concurs with the ACABQ statement in para. 11 of its report A/52/7, namely that the Secretary-General should have given a clear explanation and analysis on how the savings required during the 1996-1997 biennium by General Assembly resolution 50/214 were implemented. The Group also agrees with the observation of the ACABQ in para 12 of its report that "the annex to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 on outputs deferred, postponed or curtailed in 1996-1997 and their disposition in 1998-1999 (A/52/6 (Part one) (Annex) is a listing without any quantitative or qualitative analysis of justification."

In this context, Mr. Chairman, the G-77 and China would like to express its deep concern at the discrepancy and contradictions between the assurances given to Member States by the Secretariat that all mandated activities would be fully implemented at the level of resources requested for 1998-1999, on the one hand, and the content of the report of the Secretary-General, which indicates that full implementation of mandated programmes and activities was not possible, on the other. Indeed, the ACABQ has rightly pointed out in para. 10 of its report A/52/7 that neither the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, nor the report on the review of efficiency (A/51/873) or this report of the Secretary-General on programme performance (A/C.5/51/53) support the claim that the full programmes and mandates called for by the legislative bodies can in fact be carried out.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, the G-77 and China would like, at this stage, to highlight some of the major concerns of the Group based on the information provided in the Secretary-General's report A/C.5/51/53.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China is deeply concerned by the statement made by the Secretary-General in para. 7 of his report regarding the negative impact of the implemented savings on the long-term work of the Organization.

We are of the view that the Secretariat must be fully equipped to enable it to implement fully all mandated programmes and activities. The Group notes with serious concern the use of vacancy rates higher than those approved by General Assembly resolution 50/214 to achieve budgetary reductions. We strongly believe that such practice should cease immediately. In this regard, we agree with the ACABQ observation that the higher vacancy rate seriously hampers the delivery of mandated programmes.

In this context, the Group would like to receive precise information from the Secretariat on the amounts underspent in view of the high vacancy rate throughout the biennium 1996-1997.

Mr. Chairman, the G-77 and China would like to emphasize the following points regarding some of the programmes and activities, without prejudice to its positions on any other activities or budget sections not addressed in this statement:

Political Affairs (Section 2)

The G-77 and China is concerned about the department's ability to address the political issues of interest to Member States in general, and in particular its ability to address urgent security problems in Central Africa as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report. On disarmament, the G77 and China regrets the reduction in the meetings of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, as well as the reduction in the number of fellowships to diplomats from developing countries in the disarmament programme.

Peace keeping and Special Missions (Section 3)

The G-77 and China regrets that shortfalls mentioned by the Secretary-General under this section are basically owing to a lack of staff resources. In this context, the group reiterates the General Assembly request in its previous and recent relevant resolutions, the latest being 51/243 on Gratis Personnel, where by the Secretary-General is requested to present all budgets in a manner that would enable the General Assembly to decide on the level of resources required to implement fully, all mandated programmes and activities.

International Court of Justice and Legal Activities (Sections 5 and 6)

The G-77 and China expresses its concern regarding the negative impact of the savings mentioned on the quality and timeliness of legal services. This is a serious matter that should be addressed properly by Member States. The same applies for the delays mentioned in the translation and printing of the ICJ=s reports and publications.

Development Activities (Sections 7A, 8, and 9)

The G-77 and China attaches great importance to the full implementation of mandates related to development activities as entrusted to the three departments in these sections under the 1996-1997 biennium. We regret the delay or postponement of these activities such as the launching or strengthening of work on issues emanating from the major conferences and the reduction in the number of some publications of special benefit to the developing countries. The restoration of such shortfalls is a matter of priority for our Group.

UNEP and Habitat (Sections 11, and 12)

The G-77 and China noted with great concern the delay caused by the budget reductions on the transfer of

expertise and technology through the programmes and activities of UNEP. Such delays would only hamper the ability of developing countries and their efforts to meet the challenges of sustainable development. The same is true for the effect of postponement or cancellation of some programmes and activities of Habitat.

Regional Commissions (Sections 15 to 19)

The G-77 and China is of the view that the regional commissions should be empowered to fully implement their mandated programmes. The negative impact mentioned in the Secretary-General's report with regard to the activities of the various regional commissions, and their ability and capacity to deliver their mandates in a timely and efficient manner, needs to be addressed.

Public Information (Section 25)

The G-77 and China regrets that this important area of the Organization's activities has been severely affected by the budget reductions. We deeply regret the fact that the local language versions of the U.N. publications and other local services rendered by the UN Information Centres have had to be reduced drastically because of lack of funds, as stated by the Secretary-General. We also question the suspension of some of the U.N. publications, like the U.N. Chronicle, in some of the official languages of the Organization. We regret that the Secretariat has taken such measures unilaterally, without regard to General Assembly resolutions emphasizing the need for equal treatment of the six official languages of the United Nations. Moreover, such measures would certainly have negative implications on the ability of the Organization to address international public opinion.

Before concluding, let me reiterate, Mr. Chairman, that the points raised by the G-77 and China in this statement reflect the general concern of the Members of the Group towards the content of the Secretary-General's report A/C.5/51/53, and do not in anyway affect the positions or the right of the Group to address at a later stage, and with more details, any of these issues as well as any of the sections which were not addressed today in our statement.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China expects that the Secretariat will be able during our deliberations on the programme budget for 1996-1997 as well as the programme budget proposal for the biennium 1998-1999 to submit to the members of the Committee, comprehensive and detailed responses and appropriate actions to the concerns expressed by the Group in this statement, as well as to the various relevant points raised by the ACABQ in its report and to propose appropriate measures in this regard for further consideration of the General Assembly. Such responses would facilitate our deliberations on this important issue.

The G-77 and China intends to engage actively and constructively in these forthcoming deliberations.

Thank you.