



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. DAYANA RIOS, MINISTER COUNSELLOR IN THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 147: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 13 May 2014)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 147, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations - cross-cutting issues".

2. At the outset, Mr. Chairman, the Group wishes to pay tribute to the men and women who serve in the peacekeeping missions with such a high level of commitment, professionalism and courage. We also remember at this time the peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of humanity.

3. The Group would like to thank Mr. Chandru Ramanathan, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; Mr. Anthony Banbury, Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support; and Ms. Catherine Pollard, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, for introducing the various reports of the Secretary-General. We further wish to express its appreciation to His Excellency Mr. David Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and Chair of the 2014 Working Group on Contingent-owned Equipment, as well as Ms. Carman La Pointe, Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the ACABQ, for introducing their respective reports.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the consideration of policy matters pertaining to the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the UN peacekeeping operations. During the consideration of this agenda item, the Group will be focusing on examining the following key elements:

- Ensuring that budget preparation and approval is based on the real situation on ground and the implementation of mandates, rather than arbitrary cuts disguised as "efficiency measures";
- The financial and budgetary implementation of intermission cooperation and related mechanisms, in order to ensure they do not violate rules approved by the General Assembly, specially the provisions that prohibit the utilization of cross borrowing between active missions
- Progress in the implementation of major business transformation projects related to peacekeeping operations including IPSAS, ERP/Umoja and Global Field Support Strategy with regards to their qualitative impact and intended benefits;
- Systemic and unresolved issues and difficulties faced by the Troop-Contributing Countries, including under-representation in the Secretariat and mission civilian components, matters related to timely settlement of death and disability compensation claims as well as settlement of dues owed

to troop-contributing countries for Contingent Owned Equipment;
- The report of the Working Group on Contingent Owned Equipment.

Mr Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China would like to remind that each peacekeeping mission has its own mandate and functions, faces its own challenges, and operates in a unique environment. Budget preparation and approval must be guided by such peculiarities if we want peacekeeping to be effective. The Group is deeply worried by a growing trend of imposed budget reductions, guided by financial imperatives, the need for additional resources in other peacekeeping missions or an arbitrary overall target for peacekeeping expenditures, in blatant disregard with the specific needs of missions.

6. It is also a great concern to notice that alleged "efficiency measures" are sometimes pursued at the expenses of operational capacities, the safety and security and morale of peacekeepers, as in the cases of budget cuts that affect medical transportation and decisions adopted in rations management.

7. The Group also believes on the need to continue improving the administration of peacekeeping missions. However, a "peacekeeping on the cheap" approach will fail to achieve the purpose of helping countries to stabilize and establish the basis for a sustainable peace and will, in the end, generate the need for additional resources.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Recently, the Organization has faced a renewed surge in the demand for peacekeeping missions. The Group of 77 and China recognizes the difficulties faced in responding to crisis in a timely manner and thanks the Secretary-General for his efforts in that regard. Yet, it is deeply concerning to see new challenges as justification for open violation of decisions of the General Assembly and the basic budgetary principle that money must be spent in accordance with budgetary approval.

9. The Group of 77 and China recognizes the benefits that may arise from intermission cooperation in some circumstances, but regrets its implementation is happening in detriment to the independence of mission's budgets and transparency in the budget process. The Group of 77 and China will not accept that new processes and practices undermine the decisions of the GA that prohibits cross-borrowing between active missions. The Group will seek further clarification on this matter during informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China notes that peacekeeping missions that have undergone a "civilian staffing review" presented significant reductions in their civilian components. We recall that the mandate given by the Assembly was to ensure that the civilian staffing structure of each mission is APPROPRIATE to effectively implement its mandate and caution against a biased implementation of GA resolution that always understands "appropriate" as a reduced civilian component. We stress the need for the Secretary-General to fully respect the terms of GA resolutions.

11. The Group will also seek clarifications with regards to the use of Government-provided personnel and to the practice of lending staff from one mission to the other.

12. The Group of 77 and China would like to underline the importance we attach to both the military

and civilian mandates of peacekeeping operations. It has long passed the time when the benefits of having multidimensional peacekeeping mandates were questioned. It would be a terrible setback if the pressure to reduce costs in a context of new emerging challenges to international peace and security results in a return to the prevalence of military solutions that disregard the need for parallel, effective peacebuilding efforts. Compromising the ability of missions to perform the substantive civilian activities foreseen in mandates is the recipe for long military presences.

13. In that context, we are dismayed that, in spite of the progress Member States made in recognizing the critical role played by quick-impact projects in strengthening the link between missions and local populations and in accomplishing missions objectives, we cannot avoid petty discussions with regards to small provisions for such types of activities. The Group reaffirms the critical role played by Quick Impact Projects and stress the need to ensure that funds for implementation of QIPS are readily available during all phases of the mission.

Mr. Chairman,

14. Troop-contributing countries make an invaluable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security while making great sacrifice under difficult, harsh, complex and often dangerous situations. In this regard, our Group would like to emphasize the importance of the Secretary-General continuing to closely consult with the troop-contributing countries on all matters related to peacekeeping operations. We also underline the importance of the issues contained in the report of the Contingent Owned Equipment Working Group, which will follow with close attention.

15. Furthermore, the Group finds it difficult to understand the continuing lack of improvement in the representation of TCCs particularly at senior management level in the Secretariat, despite repeated calls by General Assembly that Secretary-General makes further concrete efforts to ensure adequate representation of troop-contributing countries in all relevant departments, particularly in DPKO and DFS, in line with their contributions to UN peacekeeping. Our Group will be interested to hear about steps taken in this regard.

16. This year there has been a slightly increase in the number of allegations reported related to sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, compare to 2013, as noted in the report A/67/756. It is important that efforts continue to be made to reduce the allegations and the length of time taken to investigate them, in particular cases involving most egregious forms and children.

17. The Group encourages the collaborative efforts between the Organization and its Member States, in terms of preventive measures, awareness raising and training to ensure effective implementation of the zero-tolerance policy.

Mr. Chairman,

18. The agenda item on cross-cutting issues serves as an important policy tool in providing comprehensive guidance to the Secretary-General on the effective and efficient management of United Nations flagship activity of peacekeeping operations. Implementing cross-cutting policies cannot equate to an all-encompassing treatment of peacekeeping missions and their budgets. The Group fully rejects reductions imposed by arbitrary ceiling on peacekeeping expenditures and procedures that lead to cross-borrowing between active missions.

19. The Group of 77 and China assures you of its constructive participation under this agenda item.

I thank you.