



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. WALEED ALSHAHARI, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 132: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2010-2011, REVISED ESTIMATES RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM, 28D, OFFICE OF CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES, AND 36, STAFF ASSESSMENT: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SUPPORT UNIT, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 10 March 2010)**

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the agenda item dedicated to the proposal of creating an Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit (EPSU).
2. The Group would first like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Ms. Catherine Pollard, for introducing the Secretary-General's report, A/64/662 and the Chairman of the ACABQ, Ms Susan McLurg, for introducing the related Committee's report, A/64/7/Add.22.

Mr. Chair,

3. Ensuring the well-being of all international civil servants and the United Nations peacekeepers are of the utmost importance to the Group of 77 and China. As we have repeatedly stated, the human resources of the Organization are our most valuable asset.
4. The Group notes with great concern that, in recent years, the United Nations personnel have suffered enormous loss of life due to natural disasters in the area of operations and have become the targets of increasing violence and malicious acts. We would like to pay tribute to all staff that, with an admirable sense of dedication and courage, have made the ultimate sacrifice to fulfill the goals and aspirations of the United Nations. Many of these personnel are from developing countries already serving in difficult circumstances. Their welfare and safety, both in times of emergency and crisis, which is the subject of the current discussion, as well as at other times, should be a matter of utmost priority and attention.
5. The G77 and China takes a particular interest on the proposal to create a new Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit. The Group of 77 concurs with the Secretary-General that the increased risk to United Nations staff demands a proactive, comprehensive and coordinated ongoing support system for the survivors of such incidents, as well as families affected by the injury or death of a loved one in the service of the United Nations. It is imperative that the Organization is properly equipped to deal with these situations, particularly during such difficult times for the victims and their families. We are concerned that, currently, there is no consistent contact point to address the needs of survivors or affected families, and that the support provided is offered on an ad hoc basis and as an additional function by staff members who are engaged in other roles and responsibilities. The G77 and China will seek more information on how the situation in Haiti was handled in terms of the Secretariat's interactions with affected families, special allowances and other measures established to help the international staff, the local staff and the United Nations peacekeepers rest and recover after the earthquake.

Mr. Chair,

6. In the context of the debate over the proposal, the Group views positively the proposal of creating a new Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit (EPSU). In the report we are informed that the Unit will be an initial step in a more comprehensive effort. We are looking forward to the additional initiatives that are to be presented in a report by mid-2011 that would include long-term support for victims and their families. We stress that the Medical Services Division needs to be strengthened as a matter of urgency.

7. Nevertheless, the G77 and China would like to point out that the proposal could have been based on a more systematic analysis of the existing capacities of the Secretariat that are engaged in related activities, such as disaster recovery, business continuity, trauma treatment and critical incident stress management, and could have included examining and building on complementarities throughout the entire United Nations system. In addition, better attention could have been given to enhancing cooperation and collaboration with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with a presence in the field. We acknowledge that the report before us is only an initial step, and we expect these issues to be addressed in the context of the comprehensive report to be presented in 2011.

8. Finally, Mr. Chair, the G77 and China is ready to debate constructively on the matter at hand, since it is its core interest that the United Nations swiftly and effectively respond to survivors and the families of those who perish or are injured in the line of duty as a result of situations of emergency.

I thank you.