



**CLOSING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY  
H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE  
GROUP OF 77, FOLLOWING THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ADOPTION  
OF THE PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015 (New York,  
27 December 2013)**

Mr President.

I believe the spirit of Nelson Mandela hovers over the United Nations, guiding us, pointing the way to a higher ground. His spirit urges us to extract the essence of that which rests within our better natures to perform the formidable tasks and responsibilities with which the United Nations and its community of diplomats are charged. We all know of the many lessons he gave on the subject of opposing sides coming together to work in partnership for the good of all. "Knowing that in the end he and the other side must be closer," Madiba said, "And thus emerge stronger." May the spirit of the great man lead us to such unity; for the United Nations, and the world we represent, will need it if we are to overcome the great challenges lying before us in the twenty-first century.

We have negotiated, in the long hours of the days and nights that approached Christmas, on Christmas Day itself, and during these last two concluding days, a twelve-point package that has led us to the adoption of the biennium budget this afternoon. Having so arduously agreed upon that delicately balanced package, it has been necessary to defend its integrity with vigilance. From the Group of 77's position, such vigilance was required because it has been our solemn duty, throughout this process, to protect the delivery of essential United Nations services to the people of the developing world. We all know that such services are vital for our efforts to eradicate poverty and uplift the conditions of the developing world.

One of the elements of the twelve-point package was the decision to defer the Secretary-General's proposal on mobility to the first resumed session in March 2014. This deferment has been a bitter disappointment to many parties, including many in the Group of 77, for the central aim of the mobility proposal is to increase the equity and effectiveness pertaining to the UN's human resources. It is clear to many that mobility will improve the lot of those public servants who dedicate themselves to the provision of UN services on the ground in the developing world. As such it behoves us all to remain seized of the mobility proposal, to talk through any remaining differences, so that we might sit down in March ready to deliver a positive outcome.

Mr President, I take this moment to thank you for the firm hand and wise counsel which you have exerted during these budget negotiations. We have been most fortunate to have had a man of your stature at the helm, a man with such deep understanding of the affairs of the General Assembly, a man with so many years of UN leadership under your belt. The Group's thanks also go to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their ever-responsive action on necessary number-crunching and their ever-available expert analysis and good advice. I would like to present the Group of 77's sincere appreciation to the Chair of the Fifth, Ambassador Taalas. In the wee small hours of the morning, Ambassador Taalas was always there, giving everything he had to the brokerage of the twelve-point package that brought home the biennium's budget.

To Ambassadors Torsella, Yamazaki and Vrailas, representing the Partners, along with their tireless experts negotiating team, I doff my fedora, and give thanks for their understanding, and for the

commitment we all shared towards achieving a settlement that would under the circumstances be the best possible for the United Nations. I have a special word of appreciation for Ambassador Torsella, who is moving on from the United Nations to new duties - he has left his mark and we wish him God speed to what lies ahead. Finally I would like to thank Ambassadors Patriota, Monthe, Manano and Goicochea, along with Juliana Ruas and the G77 experts negotiating team for their dedication to the job of representing our Group through these long negotiations. Again a special word of thanks - this time to Sai Navoti of the Fiji Mission, who has so steadfastly led the Group of 77 in the Fifth Committee during 2013. He returns to his island paradise in Fiji next week. To one and all, as we say in Fiji, vinaka vaka levu.

Mr President, we have today approved the 5.4 billion dollar budget for the United Nations for the 2014-2015 biennium. It represents the best that we as Member States can muster at this time of continuing austerity in the world economy. It has been crafted with the desire we all share to fortify this organisation that it may fulfill its fundamental duty to humanity. In joining the consensus on the biennium budget, the Group of 77 and China does so with deep concern that the budgetary austerity may negatively affect the development pillar of the work of the UN. We request the Secretary General to make every effort to ensure this does not eventuate. The commencement of the biennium is now days away - let us enter it as a global community that stands side by side, as we design a global development agenda for the universal betterment of this planet, an agenda that has at its centre a renewed commitment to the abolition of poverty from this world and a common dedication to uplifting the freedom of others.

Thank you again, Mr President.