



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES OF THE UN JOINT STAFF PENSION FUND, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SIXTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 8 November 2013)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 134 pertaining to the administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

2. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank Mr. Philip R.O. Owade, Chairperson of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee, Mr. Johannes Huisman, Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division, and Mr. Richard Moon, Vice-Chairman of Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the various reports that the Committee will consider under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the work of the Joint Staff Pension Fund which provides retirement, death, disability and related benefits for the staff of the United Nations and other participating organizations.

4. The Group notes that as at 31 December 2012 there were the same 23 member organizations of the Fund, with a combined total of 188,775 active participants and beneficiaries covered by the Fund. The Group has also taken note that active participants to the fund increased from 120,774 in December, 2011 to 121,098 in December, 2012. We have also taken note of the information on the payments to retirees and beneficiaries as well as the expected future payments by the Fund.

5. The Group of 77 and China has further taken note of the Fund's balance in the beginning and at the end of last year which shows the increase of US\$5 billion;

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group of 77 and China notes from the Pension Board's report that, in accordance with IPSAS, the Fund will report on the fair value of its investments and on its operations as of 31 December of each year going forward. The Group also welcomes the alignment of reporting on the operations and on the investments of the Fund following the implementation of IPSAS.

7. Turning to the Performance Report of the Fund for biennium 2012-2013, the Group notes that revised estimate in the amount of US\$ 185.7 million for this period represented under-expenditures of US\$ 8.4million as compared to the original appropriation amounting to US\$ 194.1 million.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Turning to the budget for biennium 2014-2015, the Group notes that a total of US\$ 174.6 million

is proposed before recosting, representing an overall decrease of US\$ 19.5 million before recosting, compared to the revised appropriation for 2012-2013. The Group also notes, that, due to the change in the methodology for formulating its budget for administrative expenses, the Board's proposed requirements for 2014-2015 reflect an increase of US\$1.8million compared to 2012-2013.

9. The Group has also taken note that the budget proposal provides for a total of 234 continuing established posts, 27 new posts and 10 temporary posts. The Group has further taken note that the budget proposes one Assistant-Secretary General post as a full-time representative of the Secretary-General to the Fund. The Group will be interested to learn the rationale for this proposal, its added value, and to what extent it takes into account the pending review of the Fund's governance arrangements and management structure.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China will also closely follow many thematic issues related to the Fund, including recruitment, after-service health issuance, medical standards and diversification of the Fund's investments - both on instruments and geographically. The Group will also be interested to learn the progress on the implementation of IPSAS and efforts being undertaken to address underlying challenges.

11. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of our readiness to engage in constructive exchanges on the merits of the proposals before this Committee on this important agenda item.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.