



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MISHAL MOHAMMED AL-ANSARI, STATE OF QATAR, ON AGENDA ITEM 109, PROGRAMME PLANNING, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 11 November 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 109, entitled "Programme planning".

2. The Group wishes to thank the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, Ms. Nonye Udo, for her introduction of the report of the CPC. We wish to commend her and other members of the Bureau of the CPC for their tireless efforts in guiding the Committee to the conclusion of a highly successful session. The Group also appreciates the introductions of the relevant reports of the Secretary-General by the Controller, Mr. Jean-Pierre Halbwachs, and Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dileep Nair.

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007

3. According to the General Assembly 58/269, the strategic framework should constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations and should serve as the basis for programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, part one should highlight the longer-term objectives of the Organization and the priorities to be designated. Accordingly, part two encompasses the biennial programme plan for all 26 programmes, which should reflect the translation of legislative mandates.

4. The Group is of the view that the plan outline as currently drafted is not as balanced as it could have been in terms of issues related to economic, social and cultural development. The internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements since 1992, represent the highest priorities of the Organization and should be fully reflected as the major objectives of the Organization. The Group is of the view that the eight priorities of the present medium-term plan are still valid and should be reaffirmed for the biennium 2006-2007. The Group recognizes that they have been enumerated without reflecting any order of importance.

5. While there is a continuing need to address the many conflicts around the world and to combat international terrorism, it is necessary to recognize that the importance given to those issues should not dilute or detract from the importance of development issues. The Group reiterates its position that resources should be commensurate to all mandated programmes and activities. Furthermore, the Group expresses its concern that given the increasing requirement of resources for funding various activities of the Organization, not enough resources are being made available for development.

6. The Group emphasizes the view that the right to development is an essential component to an integrated approach to human rights. Furthermore, the Group shares the view of the CPC set out in paragraph 53 of its report.

7. The Group notes the use of terminologies such as "global public goods" and "global commons" as well as others contained in part one including those referred to in paragraphs 2, 6, 22 and 26 on which there is no intergovernmental agreement as to their scope or definition.

8. The Secretary-General states in the document that the legislative mandates are addressed to Governments, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations organizations and other entities, as well as to the Secretary-General, and that, therefore, responsibility for the success of the programmes was neither the exclusive preserve of Member States, acting individually or in intergovernmental organs, nor of the Secretariat. In this context, the Group reiterates that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/231, "expected accomplishments, and where possible, indicators of achievements are included to measure achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the Organization and not those of individual Member States."

9. The Group therefore endorses the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination regarding part one, plan outline, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007. The Group requests that the narrative of the longer-term objectives of the Organization, as currently drafted in part one, plan outline, should be revised in order to reflect the objectives based on the legislative mandates adopted by Member States in relevant international conferences and fora. The revised document should also draw required lines between the objectives

and the relevant implementing entities in the Secretariat. The Group requests that the document be redrafted with the technical consultation of the relevant departments in order to overcome the substantive shortcomings in the text.

10. With regard to Part Two: Biennial programme plan, the Group emphasizes the importance of views provided by the specialized intergovernmental bodies on the various programmes of the strategic framework as well as their consideration by the relevant sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies in accordance with the provisions of the rules and regulations governing program planning, the Programme Aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation.

11. With respect to the structure and format of the programmes in the biennial programme plan, we recognize that much remains to be done in the articulation of objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. Some indicators of achievement remained somewhat abstract and that, without the inclusion of baselines and targets, it is difficult, when reviewing each programme, to assess its measurability. Also, some indicators of achievement measure the quantity of work rather than the quality of results achieved. We encourage the Secretary-General to improve data systems, establish standards, develop manuals and guidelines and conduct training programmes in this regard.

12. The Group notes that the Committee for Programme and Coordination referred some of the programme fascicles to the relevant intergovernmental bodies for their substantive consideration. The Group expects that all the relevant Main Committees will finalize their consideration of those programme fascicles.

13. The Group recalls that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269, the proposed biennial programme budget should be prepared in accordance with the approved biennial programme plan and the CPC should examine any changes in the budget fascicles for any programmatic changes in the budget fascicles and, in this context, the Group emphasize the crucial role of the CPC in the programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation process.

Effectiveness of the CPC

14. The Group welcomes the continuing efforts of the CPC in improving its effectiveness. The Group notes that the CPC, in accordance with invitation extended by the GA, has continued with its consideration of measures to improve its effectiveness. We welcome the decision to prioritize this consideration by taking this matter up at the early part of the next session. We respect the intergovernmental nature of the CPC and stress that the CPC is the most appropriate forum for this discussion.

Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2002-2003

15. The Group recalls that the Secretary-General, in his report on improvements to the current process of planning and budgeting (A/58/395 and Corr.1), had recommended that the General Assembly approve, among the features of an improved planning and budgeting system, a modified biennial programme performance report that would focus on the achievement of expected results. In that regard, the Group notes that the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/269 of 23 December 2003, has limited the specificity of its response to urging the Secretary-General to improve the format and timing of programme performance and evaluation reports.

16. The Group notes with appreciation that the Secretariat has been successfully implementing new and revised mandates adopted during the biennium 2002-2003, such as the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

17. The Group emphasizes the need for all programme managers to fulfill their obligations to implement fully the relevant resolutions, regulations and rules related to results-based budgeting and management.

18. The Group also notes that future reporting on programme performance be more closely aligned with the objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. The Group also notes that information on the outputs shall continue to be provided.

19. We wish to stress that all mandated programmes and activities should be monitored, adjusted, if necessary, and fully implemented in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programmatic Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME). The termination of any outputs should strictly be done in accordance with regulation 5.6, whereby the relevant inter-governmental bodies should approve the termination of outputs resulting from legislative mandates.

20. The Secretariat should ensure that concrete explanations are provided in illustration of the attainment of

expected accomplishments. We note that some of the explanations were still too vague and generic, and we trust that consistent standards will be set for surveys and other performance measures, which, in turn, will ensure that common benchmarks are used to evaluate results.

21. We recall that a significant portion of the indicators of achievement, which were set out in the programme budget for 2002-2003, were prepared without any baseline data, which may have impacted on the accuracy of the information contained in the performance report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.