

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram at the Meeting of the Fifth Committee on Agenda Item 121: Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2004-2005 New York, 29 October, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

As I address the Fifth Committee for the first time, let me begin by extending to you my felicitation on your assumption of the leadership of this important Committee.

We thank the Secretary General for introducing the proposed budget. His personal presence is reflective of the importance that this subject has for the smooth and efficient functioning of the Organization. We wish to assure him and his team our full support and cooperation.

We also thank the Chairman of the ACABQ for introducing the Advisory Committee's report. It is a good report with clear recommendations based on what appears to be an in-depth review and analysis of the budgetary proposals.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of Group of 77 and China. We highly appreciate and value the guidance and leadership provided by the Moroccan delegation to the work of the Group of 77 in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the timely submission of the budget document, prepared in a results based format. It is our hope that results-based budgeting should contribute towards enhancing performance measurement and inculcate a results-oriented work culture. To this end, we support the call for greater involvement of programme formulating bodies in the planning and programming process.

We note that the proposed programme budget has been presented in a shorter, more strategic format, representing a step further in the process of reform. The objective of this approach must be to align the activities of the Organization with the priorities identified by the General Assembly, such as those reflected in the Millennium Declaration, particularly Millennium Development Goals, integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of UN conferences, and Monterrey Consensus on financing for development.

We believe that all mandated activities must be provided adequate resources. We further believe that in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter, all member states must fulfill their legal obligation of providing adequate resources to implement the mandated programmes and activities. Pakistan, on its part, pays its dues in time and in full.

However, at the same time, any additional mandate should not automatically mean additional posts. Requests for additional resources should be specifically linked to the fulfillment of planned objectives and full justification in terms of work load and expected accomplishments. The objective should be to achieve greater efficiency and higher productivity through a judicious and optimal use of available resources. To this end, we support budget discipline and the measures to achieve efficiency and efficacy in the working of the organization, including through streamlining of organizational units, methods, and processes.

We strongly support greater use of information and communication technology with a view to increasing efficiency, productivity, and overall savings. In the face of limited resources, ICT can help bring in efficiency and capacity through knowledge sharing, linking of databases,

expeditious dissemination of information, improved forecasting techniques, and greater accountability of the use of resources. We, therefore, call for better implementation of the ICT strategy and endorse the call for making ICT plans.

Addressing the development needs of member states is one of the cardinal areas of activities of the United Nations and its agencies, as reflected in the medium term plan. The programmes that relate to poverty alleviation, promotion of universal primary education, basic health services and other high priority areas identified in various UN mandates, such as NEPAD, Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs, and support programmes for LLDCs, SIDS, and other developing countries, should receive adequate allocations of financial and human resources.

While detailed discussion will take place during the informals, we would like to offer general remarks on some of the cross-cutting issues relating to the budgetary proposals:

- We believe that for any effective discharge of executive responsibility, a degree of flexibility to reallocate resources is required. In this regard, it would be useful to develop criteria for the use of any such authorization, proposed modalities for reporting, and the duration and programmatic impacts of reallocations.
- On vacancy rates, it is our view that the appropriated rates should be as close to the actual vacancy rates as possible.
- As for the use of consultants, we believe that consultancies should be engaged only where it can be demonstrably established that in-house expertise is not available.
- We support the application of regulation 5.6 of PPBME regulations to discontinue outputs of marginal utility. However, we agree with the opinion of the Advisory Committee that in the termination of those outputs, which have been specifically authorized by legislative bodies, the relevant intergovernmental machinery should be involved.
- On restoration of budget cuts, we look forward to receiving more information relating to the impact on common services facility infrastructure. Likewise, we would require more information on the issue of postponement of December re-costing mentioned in the Advisory Committee's report before a considered decision could be taken.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great privilege for the Pakistan delegation to contribute constructively to the intergovernmental consideration of this important item. I am very confident that Minister Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, who has been asked to coordinate informal consultations on this important item, will play an active role in achieving a successful outcome. We thank all delegations for reposing their confidence in the Pakistan delegation and look forward to actively participating in discussions on this item.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.