

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
2018-2019****New York, 11 October 2017**

Your Excellency, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency, Ambassador Tommo Monthe, Chair of the Fifth Committee,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am grateful for this opportunity to introduce the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019.

The budget is our shared roadmap for fulfilling the promise of the Charter. It reflects the priorities established by the General Assembly, and our commitment to deliver results for the people we serve.

As you know, the Assembly invited me to prepare the 2018-2019 proposed programme budget based on a preliminary estimate of just under \$5.4 billion.

I am proposing a budget level of just over \$5.4 billion, before re-costing. This is almost 4 per cent – or around \$200 million – below the appropriation for the current biennium.

While mandates are increasing, the regular budget, excluding special political missions, has not grown in real terms over the past 17 years.

Over that same period, the number of posts has increased by just over 1,000, almost exclusively under Safety and Security, following the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre. You are all aware that the United Nations has had to expand its security capacities across the world in order to protect our staff and facilities.

The budget level is \$10 million above the Budget Outline figure adopted by the General Assembly in 2016. This increase relates to a request for an increase by the International Court of Justice, as well as a decision of the General Assembly concerning the humanitarian monitoring mechanism in Syria.

With regard to special political missions, since 2010, new operations have been established in Yemen, Syria, Burundi, Colombia and elsewhere. During the same period, other operations were discontinued, for example in Sierra Leone and Nepal. As a result, the budget level for special political missions has remained around \$1.1 to \$1.2 billion per biennium, and the proposal for 2018-2019 maintains that level.

The proposed budget includes preliminary re-costing of \$128 million, mainly related to inflation as per standard methodology. This takes the regular budget requirements to \$5.53 billion.

In terms of posts, the proposal reflects an overall net decrease of 92 posts compared to the current budget.

The Organization will continue to rely heavily on voluntary contributions to complement regular budget resources in delivering its mandates. Extra budgetary resources are currently estimated at \$21.3 billion, representing a decrease of \$178 million compared to the current biennium.

As part of the budget process, a number of revised estimates and programme budget implications that have been, and will be, presented for your consideration at the current main session will also have an impact on the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019.

Mr. Chairman,

In taking the oath of office last December, I promised to work with the Member States to reform the United Nations thoroughly and continuously. Together, we have articulated very promising proposals for change, including for the budget process.

I am deeply grateful and encouraged by your ideas and support.

Reform is for the people we serve and, indeed, for everyone who serves under the UN flag or is part of the enterprise of building a better world for all.

We have looked at our systemic weaknesses to find new ways of being more nimble, responsive and effective in managing our staff and resources. An extensive review of our internal policies and administrative instructions is under way to remove duplication, reduce fragmentation and streamline procedures.

Some important steps are already reflected in the budget proposals before you.

I have strengthened whistle-blower protection to reflect international best practice. I have asked an internal working group to consider additional areas for improvements, and I intend to consult staff and management in the coming months. The budget proposals include resource requirements to strengthen the Ethics Office for whistle-blower protection.

The General Assembly has acted on my proposal to create a new office of counter-terrorism, which is now operational.

I have also introduced a new strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations system, and I have submitted supplementary regular budget proposals, including provisions for the establishment of the Victims Rights Advocate post.

With respect to development, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution provides us with a strong mandate to reposition development at the centre of our work – and to pursue other changes to the United Nations development system, at Headquarters and the country levels. Our objective here is clear: to better support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Paris Agreement.

I will make further proposals on this in the course of this year.

As you know, women's empowerment is a top priority.

To advance our commitment to equal rights, last month I launched the UN system strategy on gender parity, which provides a roadmap to reach parity at the senior levels of leadership by 2021, and ultimately 2028 across the board.

This goal is not just about numbers, but about transforming our institutional culture so that we can access and capitalize on our full potential. It is about creating a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all staff.

I will bring specific proposals related to human resources management and conditions of service that require the approval of the General Assembly, to this Committee in 2018.

We have finalized a review of the peace and security architecture of the Secretariat, and a first report will be submitted to the Plenary during this session. A detailed costed proposal related to the new structure will be submitted to the Fifth Committee in May 2018.

Management reform of the Secretariat is central to my reform agenda, and underpins our efforts to remove fragmentation and duplication.

My management reform proposal is aimed at bringing decision-making closer to the point of delivery, decentralizing authority and simplifying rules, policies and procedures. This requires greater transparency and accountability in all activities to better serve the intergovernmental and governance processes at Headquarters.

Mr Chairman,

We will continue to improve ourselves. But I will also need the support of Member States to make the Organisation more effective.

To this end, I will introduce two reports to the Fifth Committee in this session.

The first contains the principles that will guide my reform efforts.

The second contains concrete proposals to strengthen the planning and budgetary process and allow me to redeploy our resources in support of mandate delivery.

I am proposing a new management paradigm for the Organization.

First, I am delegating managerial authority to programme managers and demanding greater accountability from them for mandate delivery.

Second, I am proposing changes to our management and support structures.

Third, I am proposing measures to streamline and improve the planning and budgeting processes.

Fourth, I am proposing measures to improve my ability as the Chief Administrative Officer to redeploy resources within parts of the budget to better support the implementation of mandates.

The reform proposals will not affect the budget proposal for the biennium 2018-2019.

For the new management structure, we will provide a breakdown of functions and a costed proposal for the two new departments in 2018. Some of the changes will be reflected in the support account for 2018/2019, and others will be accommodated within the approved staffing table for the regular budget.

The changes to the planning and budgeting cycles and documentation will come into effect in 2020.

Mr Chairman,

I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to realize the aims of the Organization and meet the global public's high expectations.

My representatives are always available to answer your questions. I am also available to provide further clarity and address any concerns you have.

Let us work together to ensure that the United Nations makes the best possible use of our resources in the service of humanity.

Thank you.