



STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE FIFTH WORKING GROUP ON THE REGULAR BUDGET AND TCF TARGETS FOR 2020-2021, 29 APRIL 2019

STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DURING THE 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE REGULAR BUDGET AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION FUND TARGETS FOR 2020-2021 ON 29 APRIL 2019, DELIVERED BY MR. AMIR SAEED, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN

Co-Chairs,

1. The Group wishes to thank the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat for providing Member States The Agency's revised Draft Programme and Budget 2020-2021 proposal, however, we must bear in mind that in order to come to the meetings of the Working Group prepared to make progress, it is imperative that adequate time be allowed for meaningful consultations among Member States and with the Secretariat, including at the regional level, as needed.
2. As a preliminary reaction, the Group maintains its principled position with regard to the Regular Budget, which calls for a balanced distribution of the budget between promotional and non-promotional activities of the Agency.
3. The Group has taken note of the proposed reductions across Major Programmes, and while still continuing studying them, expresses the apprehension that the Agency's activities under MPs 1, 2 and 6 run the risk of being negatively impacted.
4. Regarding the creation of additional positions in MP 3 and 6, as highlighted in paragraph 8 of the revised budget document, the Group would like to emphasize the need to maintain balance across MPs in both numbers and level of staff. In this regard, the Group would like to emphasize its position that recruitment to additional posts should be in line with the Secretariat's efforts in increasing representation of underrepresented Member States and regions, especially at the professional and managerial levels.
5. The Group would also like to point out that in explaining the reduction in MP6, the language employed is too generic and vague. A more detailed breakup of this proposed reduction is necessary for the Group to better evaluate it.
6. We note that while the previously proposed price adjustment has been revised downwards in light of the latest European Central Bank (ECB) forecast inflation rate for 2020, the final price adjustment to be applied, still remains 1.9%. The Group therefore seeks further clarification on the calculation on the proposed price adjustment in the revised budget proposal and its relation to increase in staff costs following the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) promulgated increase in post adjustments.
7. The Group would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the view that the TCF targets for 2020-2021 should enjoy a growth in line with the evolution of the regular budget and other relevant factors.
8. Finally, and in the light of the useful past practice, the Group wishes to recommend that the Co-Chairs hold informal consultations with Regional Groups to allow more in-depth discussions on the way forward.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.