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Chair: Mr. Castañeda Solares (Vice-Chair) (Guatemala)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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In the absence of Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal), Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 161: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (continued)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (continued) (A/C.5/70/L.38)

Draft resolution A/C.5/70/L.38: Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

1. **Mr. Chenneerappa** (India), speaking as the coordinator of the informal consultations on sub-item 161 (b), said that the Committee had been unable to reach consensus on the text of the draft resolution.

2. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Secretary-General, in the proposed budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, stated that Israel had not paid the amount of \$1,117,005 resulting from the tragic incident at Qana on 18 April 1996. The Secretary-General further explained that he had received no response to his subsequent letters addressed to the Permanent Mission of Israel in that regard, the latest dated 12 January 2016.

3. The Group stressed once again that Israel should pay the amount due in connection with the incident at Qana on 18 April 1996, and requested the Secretary-General to report on the matter to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. The Group reiterated its acknowledgement of the positive contribution made by UNIFIL to the restoration of peace and security in the region.

4. **Mr. Goren** (Israel) said that the awkward ceremony surrounding the Committee's annual consideration of the UNIFIL budget was reminiscent of Albert Einstein's definition of insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Problems could not be solved by the same thinking that had created them. He called attention to the biased conduct politicizing the work of the Committee by singling out one delegation. The Committee's annual consideration of the draft resolution was a cautionary tale that illustrated the

consequences of allowing political interests to influence the Committee's discussions.

5. **The Chair** said that action would be taken on the draft resolution at a subsequent meeting.

Agenda item 134: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (continued)

Supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/70/794 and A/70/883)

6. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/70/794), said that the report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/247, had been prepared following consultations with officials from across the Secretariat and the United Nations system and on the basis of information provided by 38 entities, as well as comprehensive consideration of the two interdependent Agendas, with a view to maximizing synergies and reducing fragmentation and overlap.

7. The new Agendas required ambitious, comprehensive and transformative action. While responsibility for implementation lay with Member States, the Agendas would also transform the United Nations system. Consequently, although the Secretariat had already begun realigning work plans and refocusing resources previously dedicated to the implementation of the goals that the Agendas were designed to replace, the Secretary-General proposed that the Secretariat's roles and areas of activity should be strengthened to reflect the ambitious nature of the new Agendas.

8. His proposals built on the areas in which the Secretariat enjoyed a comparative advantage: supporting the strengthening of capacity and improving policy coherence at the regional, national, subnational and local levels; facilitating regional and international cooperation; catalysing new partnerships and improving the effectiveness and accountability of existing partnerships at all levels; supporting a favourable international enabling environment through intergovernmental processes; supporting follow-up and

review; and undertaking public advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Agendas themselves did not specify such additional expectations for the Secretariat; Member States bore ultimate responsibility for determining how the United Nation could best support their implementation.

9. The broad range of thematic issues and extensive time frame covered by the two Agendas would present other areas of activity for the Organization and opportunities for Member States to consider its future role. It was expected that, over the Agendas' 15-year implementation period, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the General Assembly and its committees, special sessions, high-level meetings and other processes, would continue to guide the United Nations system on how best to contribute to the two Agendas. The Secretariat stood ready to respond to the new expectations that would arise as a result of the ongoing evolution of the work programme of committees and bodies.

10. The Secretary-General's proposals had been developed with a view to ensuring that the Organization operated with efficiency and fiscal prudence. The proposed strengthened roles and activities of the Secretariat would entail additional requirements of \$33.5 million for the biennium 2016-2017 and \$42.5 million for the biennium 2018-2019, based on the application of a vacancy rate of 50 per cent for new temporary Professional posts in the first biennium and 9 per cent for the continuation of the posts. The temporary nature of the 62 proposed new posts reflected the limited time period covered by the two Agendas, and the requirements for forthcoming bienniums, including 2018-2019, would be reviewed again and validated in the context of the biennial programme budget formulation process. The Secretariat was committed to supporting Member States' efforts to implement the Agendas, which were of critical importance to humanity and the planet.

11. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/70/883), said that the Secretary-General's report (A/70/794) did not comply with General Assembly resolution 70/247 and did not contain a request for appropriation of the additional resources required in connection with his proposals. The Secretariat had also committed a number of other missteps in handling the two Agendas, particularly in

connection with adoption of the draft resolutions endorsing the Agendas and submission of the related revised estimates.

12. Consequently, the Advisory Committee was currently unable to recommend the appropriation of resources. It nevertheless recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into expenditure commitments for 2016 in order to avoid delaying the implementation of the Agendas. Lastly, taking into account its comments on the Secretary-General's report (A/70/794) and the budgetary process, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit, without delay, a comprehensive proposal addressing the delivery of mandates in support of the two Agendas.

13. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed the Group's appreciation to the Chair and Bureau for having scheduled consideration of the Agendas at the second part of the resumed session.

14. The Group attached great importance to the implementation of the two Agendas and to the provision of adequate financing, in both of which the Secretariat had a critical role to play. The Secretary-General's report (A/70/794), however, had not been submitted in accordance with the time frame set by the General Assembly, and failed to comply with the Assembly's request in its resolution 70/247 for a comprehensive proposal for the effective and efficient delivery of mandates in support of the Agendas. The Group agreed with the Advisory Committee's characterization of the Secretary-General's report as incomplete and incoherent, as it lacked a detailed presentation of and justification for the additional resource requirements, as well as a request for a related appropriation.

15. Member States must be given a full picture of the resources required for mandate delivery to be able to make a well-informed financial decision. In addition, the Secretary-General's report did not adequately explain how the proposals relating to departments and offices would be categorized according to whether they contributed to strengthening or expanding existing substantive activities, or creating new substantive activities. In that regard the Group stressed the importance of adhering to the content and spirit of resolution 70/247.

16. In presenting future budget proposals the Secretariat must comply with the relevant mandates, especially regarding time frames, while observing the rules, regulations and established practices relating to the budgetary process, and must provide a clear and justified request for the appropriation of resources. Failure to do so would undermine the Organization's capacity to deliver on its critical mandates.

17. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Secretary-General's report lacked concrete proposals and failed to take into account the mandates in General Assembly resolutions 70/1 and 69/313. Regrettably, the Secretariat had departed from an approach based on balanced and integrated consideration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development by attempting to adapt the two Agendas to four internal priorities. The Sustainable Development Goals represented an integrated, indivisible and balanced framework that demonstrated the scale and ambition of the 2030 Agenda and aimed to build on the progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals. The result of more than two years of intensive consultations with civil society and other stakeholders worldwide, the Goals and related targets focused particular attention on the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable. It was therefore regrettable that the Secretary-General's proposals provided for virtually no support for capacity-building, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, despite the numerous requests by Member States.

18. The Group noted with concern the late introduction of the two Agendas owing to resistance from a small group of Member States. Yet Member States must take into account not only resources but also the international community's commitment to pursuing global development that would give rise to win-win cooperation and significant gains for countries worldwide, including conflict reduction and an enhanced capacity to anticipate future challenges, while ensuring that no one was left behind.

19. The Group urged the Secretary-General, in preparing future proposals, to take into account the specific characteristics of the two Agendas: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda was intended to support, complement and contextualize the targets of the 2030 Agenda in terms of means of implementation. The Group expected the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive budget proposal for implementation of

the two Agendas with specific commitments pertaining to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, African countries, conflict-affected countries, regional commissions, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

20. **Mr. de Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the member States of the European Union, said that the European Union was determined to contribute to the implementation of the two Agendas as providing a global framework for action of unprecedented ambition, and to ensuring that strong mechanisms were in place to follow up on and review their implementation. The Secretariat and the United Nations development system must adapt their activities to the new paradigm embodied by the Agendas rather than seeking to adapt the Agendas to the status quo. In particular, the 2030 Agenda demanded a system that worked cohesively as a network towards a common set of goals rather than a rebranding of existing functions. Thus, while the European Union supported the work undertaken by the Secretary-General, it concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendations, including in relation to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Secretary-General's December 2015 report (A/70/589).

21. The Secretary-General's focus should be on reprioritization and thorough analysis of current mandates; new resources should only be requested in connection with specific mandates and well-defined needs, clearly linked to the new Agendas. Under the Secretary-General's leadership, the Organization would benefit from taking a considered, comprehensive and holistic approach to supporting implementation of the new Agendas. Lastly, he emphasized that the introduction of the Secretary-General's report during the last week of the second part of the resumed session departed from the Committee's working methods and the provisions of the relevant resolutions, particularly paragraph 29 of General Assembly resolution 70/247.

22. **Mr. Dettling** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the two new Agendas were historic, ground-breaking achievements that provided a global framework and implementation strategy for the realization of sustainable development and eradication of poverty at the national and international levels. The two delegations were therefore particularly dissatisfied at the failure of the

Secretariat to develop actionable proposals with a detailed budget derived from intergovernmental mandates in support of implementation of the Agendas. Just as the revised estimates proposed in the Secretary-General's December 2015 report (A/70/589) had reflected only the financial requirements of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs rather than any institutional reforms necessary for the Agendas' implementation, the current report (A/70/794) was likewise inadequate in that it constituted neither a budget document nor a coherent strategic plan for implementation.

23. He therefore largely agreed with the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and, notwithstanding the time constraints on the preparation of the Secretary-General's report (A/70/794), was concerned that some information of most relevance to the Fifth Committee had only been presented to the Advisory Committee as supplementary financial information, not intended for distribution. The Secretary-General should submit a new report also covering the activities for which financing had been requested in 2015 in the context of the revised estimates. He should also provide detailed clarification regarding the use of the commitment authority of \$7.5 million authorized by the General Assembly and ensure that no expenditures were committed for activities that were not linked to specific mandates.

24. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) said that the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provided a transformative framework for Member States, the private sector and civil society to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with support from the United Nations. In that context, her Government was reviewing and reorienting its activities to support the implementation of the Goals at the national and international levels. The United Nations system must likewise reorient its activities and reprioritize its resources to effectively support Member States' efforts to achieve the Goals.

25. In view of the late introduction of the reports on the two Agendas and the need for clarification of the requirements relating to the Organization's role in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, more extensive discussion should be deferred to the main part of the seventy-first session.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.