



**STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. KAREN LOCK, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH
AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 124: PROGRAMME
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007
(PEACEBUILDING SUPPORT OFFICE)
FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, 15 March 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the revised estimates for the Peacebuilding Support Office under agenda item 124: programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

The Group wishes to thank Ms. Sharon van Buerle, Acting Director: Programme Planning and Budget Division for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates for the Peacebuilding Support Office (A/60/694). We also wish to thank the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), Mr. Rajat Saha, for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on this matter (A/60/7/Add. 36).

At the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 60/180, which finalised the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, it became clear that the Secretary-General would not be able to provide the necessary Secretarial support to the Commission from within existing resources. The Fifth Committee consequently decided to revert to the matter based on information from the Secretary-General on the status of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office, including information on the resource requirements of the Office and proposed arrangements to meet those requirements.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, in response to the request of the Fifth Committee, and wishes to reaffirm its commitment to ensuring that the Peacebuilding Support Office receives adequate human and financial resources to effectively support the work of the newly established Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China would appreciate clarification of the following aspects contained in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee:

Firstly, the Group notes that it is proposed that the additional resource requirements for the Office be financed as a charge against the provision for special political missions under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. It will be recalled that the additional resource requirements resulting from the implementation of other World Summit decisions were financed as revised estimates to the programme budget. The General Assembly, furthermore, in 2005 approved only a portion of the total provisions required for the activities of the special political missions for the 2006-2007 biennium. The Group

therefore would appreciate receiving more specific information on the proposal to finance the resource requirements for the Office as a charge to the provision for special political missions and not as a revised estimate to section 3 of the programme budget.

Secondly, the Group of 77 and China notes that more than half of the staffing needs of the Office will be met either through redeployment of existing resources or through secondment of staff from other organizations of the United Nations system. It would be appreciated if we could receive an indication as to whether the redeployment will be done from existing resources in the Department of Political Affairs or from other Departments in the Secretariat through the 50 post redeployment experiment. Furthermore, we request an indication of the impact that the proposed redeployment may have on programme delivery in the releasing section or Department. We also request a breakdown of the organizations of the United Nations system that provided the posts, on a non-reimbursable basis, to the United Nations Secretariat.

Thirdly, the Group notes the reduction of US\$1,234,100 that may arise if the Assembly decides to endorse the recommendations of the ACABQ, as contained in paragraphs 8 and 10 to 12 of its report. The Group believes that careful consideration should be given to the impact that any reduction in the proposed resource level may have on the overall functioning of the Peacebuilding Support Office and its ability to support the work of the Commission, in particular in the start-up phase. We would, therefore, appreciate receiving clarification as to what impact, if any, the proposed reductions may hold for the Office. In this context, it is not clear if the Office would be able to undertake its functions through using other forms of communication, such as video-conferencing, in view of its planning, policy and analysis support functions. We note, in this regard, that video-conferencing may at times offer a poor substitute for direct interaction with staff on the ground in the areas that ought to be the focus of the Peacebuilding Commission's work.

Lastly, the Group would be interested in hearing the rationale behind the proposal that the Office be headed at the level of an Assistant-Secretary-General. The Group, furthermore, wishes to stress the importance of ensuring that the international character of the United Nations is respected in the recruitment and selection of staff for the Office. The Peacebuilding Commission will benefit from drawing on the expertise of nationals from developing countries and regions that are affected by the type of challenges that the Commission has been mandated to address.

The Group looks forward to a constructive consideration of the resource requirements for the Peacebuilding Support Office. We fully support the work of the Commission. We believe that it is imperative for Member States to ensure that the Commission receives the necessary resources to ensure its effective functioning. It is an important aspect of the overall efforts to strengthen the United Nations and deserves our support. We, therefore, trust that other Member States will join us in responding favourably to the Secretary-General's request for additional resources for the Office.

I thank you, Mr.Chairman.