

We believe that during this current process of administrative and budgetary reform, our first priority must be the elimination of the too long outstanding financial difficulties of this Organization. All of our changes and reforms will, in fact, be in vain if we do not at the same time liquidate the United Nations' deficit.

My delegation, therefore, urges member states which have not yet done so to consider what contributions they can now make to strengthen the financial position of the United Nations so that as we persevere in the process of administrative and budgetary reform, we may do so with confidence in the knowledge that our Organization is on a sound financial basis.

Finally, I would like to comment on the Secretary-General's request in his foreword to the 1968 estimates for clearer guidance as to the rate of budgetary growth which the General Assembly would be prepared to support either annually or over a longer period of time.

My delegation is fully aware of the importance of this question. The United Nations system being "big business" needs to be approached in an ever-more business-like way. The Ad Hoc Committee of 14, realizing this, opted for long-term planning and programme budgeting as the solution to this problem. It believed that a serious attempt had to be made to rationalize what the United Nations family of agencies was doing, to sort out and establish priorities, build coherent programmes taking into consideration those priorities, and to place a price-tag on each major or significant programme comprising each agency's budget. On the basis of this information, member states would, first, either accept or modify the programme, second, study the cost implications and the time-phasing, and third, reach agreement on whether they were prepared to support financially what was proposed. Thus, the various organizations, having presented their proposals, would leave it up to the membership to decide the extent to which it wished to be committed financially for some definite future period.

While my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's desire for guidance on an acceptable rate of budgetary growth, we believe that a solution should be sought through the adoption of long-term programme planning rather than by attempting to establish an arbitrary rate of budgetary growth. It is our view that without an opportunity to examine, comment and decide upon priorities and programme content, we cannot assume any advance commitments on budget levels or rates of growth.