

General Assembly approves \$5.4 billion UN budget for next two years

26 December 2017 – Concluding the main part of its 72nd session, the United Nations General Assembly on Sunday took a number of key actions, including approving a nearly \$5.4 billion programme budget for the Organization for the biennium 2018-2019.

The budget covers UN activities across a range of areas, including political affairs, international justice and law, regional cooperation for development, human rights and humanitarian affairs, and public information.

The approved amount is \$286 million (or 5 per cent) below the budget for the current two-year period 2016-2017 and \$193 million below the proposal made by the Secretary-General in October this year.

In addition to the budget, the 193-member General Assembly also adopted a number of key resolutions, including reforms in areas of peace and security, and of management.

Speaking at the closing session, Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, stated that progress is not measured by the number of resolutions adopted, but rather by the impact the United Nations makes on people's lives.

"Our work is not yet done. We have more to do next year," he said, noting areas, including the Global Compact for Migration, the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, maintaining momentum on the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), as well as Security Council reform.

"To have meaningful outcomes from all these processes we need to talk, and more importantly, to listen, to one another. These agenda items represent global challenges. And multilateralism is the tool we need to solve them," he added.

The UN budget

In approving the budget, the General Assembly also endorsed the proposal to move from a biennial planning and budgeting period to annual programme budget on a trial basis, as of 2020.

"This signals one of the [most significant shifts](#) in the programme planning and budgeting process of the Organization since the 1970s," stated a note issued by the Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

Explaining the details of the new budget, Johannes Huisman, the Director of Programme Planning and Budget, in the Office of the Controller, told *UN News* that most of the cuts were under operating or "non-post" areas, such as information technology or travel.

To a lesser extent, reductions also applied to personnel or post resources, he said.

Emphasizing that the UN budget will ensure that there is value for money, he said "This is a reassurance we can give to the tax-payers that no stone will be left unturned to make sure that the money is spent properly and ultimately benefits the world community in the areas where the UN is needed."

Listen to the full interview below:

AUDIO: No stone left unturned to ensure budget benefits the world community