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**Remarks by Stephen Lieberman,
Minister Counselor for United Nations Management & Reform
At the Opening of the First Resumed Session of the Fifth Committee
68th General Assembly
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Thank you Mr. Chairman, and good morning colleagues. I hope that all of you had a restful winter since we last met.

Mr. Chairman, our session last fall was historic in both the positive and negative senses. In recent years we have allowed ourselves to let Christmas Eve become the deadline for closing the session. I think we have clear consensus that extending even further and beyond Christmas Eve as we did last year should not be allowed to set a precedent. But, on a more positive note, our long hours and hard work paid off. We achieved consensus on some noteworthy budget, staffing, and policy initiatives that will enable the Organization to continue to perform its important mission efficiently and effectively. Nonetheless, some of our work to improve the Organization was not completed during the fall session, and we have another opportunity during this first resumed session to find consensus on important policies that will move the Organization towards more responsible stewardship of resources, higher standards of performance and improved outcomes in the years ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

We Member States and the Secretariat too often focus on the immediate needs of the Organization, and not enough on the long-term vision. During the first resumed session we will be challenged to make decisions on several critical proposals that have long-term impact on the health and sustainability of the United Nations. We have examined the Secretary-General's priorities and hope that during this session we the Member States can provide him the tools and guidance that he needs to shape the United Nations that we envision for 10-20 years from now. The agenda that we consider during this session can help move us along that path.

For example, the Secretary General's staff mobility proposal will allow the United Nations to more nimbly and ably address challenges around the world. In this Committee, we have expended considerable energy discussing this proposal because we recognize that our decision will shape the organization for years to come. We now have been debating this issue for well over a year. My delegation believes it is time for us to act. Last fall, we were close to reaching agreement. We should promptly resume our deliberations building on the many points where we

had agreement last fall, resolve the points where we have not agreed, and expeditiously close this agenda item with a decision to charge the Secretary-General with implementing a solution.

Also brought forward from the fall session is the Secretary General's proposal to create a partnership facility. The facility would harness private and government resources in order to support the important work the United Nations is doing around the globe in vital areas such as economic development, health and the Millennium Development Goals. We expect that the Secretary-General will address our questions from the previous session and that we will also be able to move forward on this important initiative.

Other proposals that we have discussed before and where we were very close to agreement include the full-time representative of the Secretary General for the investments of the assets of the UN Joint Staff Pension fund and, and the subvention for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. My delegation is prepared to move quickly to complete our action on these agenda items as well.

We also look forward to discussions on civilian capacity, which we hope will finally be concluded in this committee and the reports on accountability and the JIU.

We will also discuss facilities matters such as organizational resilience, long term accommodations for the United Nations and how best to finance the associated costs incurred through the Capital Master Plan budget at a time when our national budgets are ever more severely constrained. My delegation will have more to say on these individual items when they are introduced.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with our colleagues and the Secretariat to reach agreement on these vital areas within the allotted timeframe with the expectation that we can work together expeditiously to provide the tools and guidance to move the United Nations forward and enable it to address the ever pressing challenges around the world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.