



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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Conclusion of the Second Resumed Session

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- As delivered -

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

At the outset let me thank you for your excellent work as Chair of the Fifth Committee during the 70th Session of the General Assembly. The Committee has managed to achieve consensus on all important items at hand, in a spirit of compromise and collective thinking in the interest of the Organization as a whole. We greatly value and appreciate your skillful guidance in leading us through our agenda with the aim of successfully concluding the different sessions of the Fifth Committee.

The Member States of the European Union attach great importance to peacekeeping as a core task of the Organization. We highly value the partnership between the UN Secretariat, troop contributing and host countries, and financial contributors that make UN peacekeeping unique.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the hard work and commitment of all UN personnel involved in the difficult task of peacekeeping. We also pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives while serving in a UN peacekeeping mission.

The outcome of our intense negotiations ensures, first and foremost, that peacekeeping missions are provided with the necessary financial resources to continue their operations without compromising delivery of their mandates. Strict budgetary discipline and ensuring that resources are used effectively, efficiently and in an accountable and transparent manner are principles that are of course of primary importance for our group, as indeed they are for all of us.

Another major accomplishment of this session was the successful conclusion of a resolution on peacekeeping cross-cutting issues. We achieved this result thanks to a shared sense of the importance of engaging constructively and pragmatically in discussions, to provide guidance to the Secretary-General on the range of overarching themes in the crosscutting context, which are important for the effective operation of peacekeeping missions. Amongst other things, the resolution addresses the important issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in a comprehensive and transparent way and provides for the necessary tools to effectively enforce a zero tolerance policy for this issue that casts a cloud on the integrity of the entire UN.

The European Union Member States have constantly stressed that the payment of assessed contributions in full, on time and without condition is a fundamental duty of all Member States. We regret that a solution could not be found to the long-standing question of the reimbursement of Member States' financial contributions and of the payment of troop-contributing countries' claims in respect of closed PKOs, and that its consideration had to be deferred. We are confident that a proper settlement will be found when we return to this question next year.

Mr. Chairman,

Again the Committee has been unable to conclude this peacekeeping session within the time allocated. There is a strong shared feeling that four weeks is not enough to deal with the complex matters at hand and the massive amount of work that the approval of each individual peacekeeping budgets entail. Also, the back-to-back organization of the Fifth Committee with the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) hampers the organizational effectiveness of the Committee and its Secretariat. As a result, important decisions are being delayed and

negotiations by candle light require the Secretariat to put in place costly and cumbersome work-arounds to complete administrative actions needed before the new budget period begins. We should also be mindful of the impact of continuing uncertainty we create, not at least to UN staff whose livelihood depends on the budgetary decisions; and action to recruit new staff and begin procurement can be put at risk as time between the budget decisions and mission staff beginning summer vacation breaks diminishes.

The Member States of the European Union are interested in finding a structural solution to the persisting time problems related to the agenda of the second resumed sessions of the Fifth Committee. We have raised this issue with the Bureau of the Fifth Committee in advance of this session, and will address this issue at the Committee on Conferences. We also believe the Chair of the Fifth can send a signal to the PGA and the USG for DGACM as well as to the co-chair of the revitalisation of the GA to address these problems that relate to the working methods of the Fifth.

We believe that a duration of five-six weeks would be appropriate for the second resumed session. In such a scenario the second resumed session should start early May with a view to concluding its business with a firm political deadline by mid-June at the latest.

We are also convinced that having the Committee on Programme Coordination and the Fifth Committee in parallel is detrimental to the work of both the Fifth and the CPC. Finally, we are also interested in further exploring why before 2011 it was standard practice for ACABQ to only have PKO reports during the first four months of each year. We believe future Bureaus should stress the need for more discipline in this regard.

We look forward to discussing this item with the wider membership of the Committee.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.