



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by Cherith Norman
Minister Counselor for United Nations Management and Reform
On the Conclusion of Work of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary)
At the Second Resumed Part of the 71st General Assembly Session
Wednesday, June 28, 2017

[As Delivered]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

My delegation would like to acknowledge with gratitude your leadership during this session and throughout the 71st session. We join others in thanking the Fifth Committee Secretariat staff, ably led by Ms. Sharon van Buerle and her committed team as well as the interpreters and sound engineers for their hard work, courtesy and professionalism. We are further grateful to the bureau and all of the coordinators for leading us to a successful conclusion this session.

My delegation would also like to thank in particular DM and DFS staff for their efforts, in particular Maria Costa, Rick Martin and their teams, and to all Secretariat colleagues who made themselves and their staff available at all hours to facilitate our discussions. We welcome the presence of USG for the Department of Field Support Mr. Khare, Acting USG for Management Ms. Bettina Bartsiotas and Chair of the ACABQ Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu.

United Nations peacekeeping provides critical support for the maintenance of international peace and security. We express our gratitude to all of the personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations as well as those at Headquarters supporting peacekeeping, and we pay tribute to those peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

Madam Chair, the United States commends the consensus reached by this Committee in approving the 2017/2018 peacekeeping budget that enables effective mandate delivery and backstopping support, while also realizing efficiencies. As we noted at the opening of this 2nd resumed part, it is this Committees' collective responsibility to carefully examine the requests before us to ensure that peacekeeping budgets reflect actual requirements, are driven by realistic planning assumptions, and reflect efficiencies from ongoing change management initiatives. We noted that several long-standing peacekeeping operations were ripe for change, and that this session couldn't be business as usual. The 7.5% reduction in the 2017/2018 budget from the current year appropriation responsibly reflects the decreasing deployment of uniformed personnel, and reflects the closures of the missions in UNOCI and MINUSTAH and the further downsizing of UNMIL.

Madam Chair, we are heartened that this Committee was able, through constructive dialogue and engagement, to reach consensus to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This resolution recognizes the need to broaden our discussions beyond peacekeeping and ensure that all UN Agencies, Funds, and Programs do their part to enforce the zero tolerance policy and to support victims. We also note the importance that the Committee has placed on thorough, rigorous analysis of *how* the zero tolerance policy is implemented on the ground, by requesting detailed assessments of: victims assistance efforts in the field, areas of cooperation between the Secretariat and funds and programs in key areas such as screening and investigations, and of individual missions' work to uphold the zero tolerance policy in their own unique context. We urge the Secretary-General to provide the Committee with detailed evaluations in future reports to enable member states to better understand where existing gaps lie and how best to address them.

Madam Chair, this Committee also reached consensus on the outcomes of the triennial 2017 Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) Working Group. These outcomes include agreements on: incentivizing rapid deployment capabilities and performance; mainstreaming technology; and, improving medical support. While these are all positive outcomes, my delegation believes that much more can be done to improve the COE performance and financing frameworks. The peacekeeping partnership will only fully realize its potential when we work constructively together as member states with the Secretariat to find common solutions that improve peacekeeping.

While my delegation was disappointed that we were not able to reach consensus on a cross-cutting resolution this session, we will continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure that peacekeeping remains fit for purpose. We remain committed to initiatives that improve performance in the field, including generating required capabilities, as well as accountability for poor performance and misconduct. We continue to support efforts to strengthen mission leadership, improve planning and analysis, and to integrate modern technology. We look forward to the Secretary-General's proposals on his reform agenda, including within the peace and security and management reform pillars that will enable the Organization to better plan, manage, support, and transition field operations.

Madam Chair, I would like to thank all my colleagues in this room for the constructive spirit in which we approached this session, and for the trust we have sustained in discussing these important and difficult issues. I would like to wish all of our colleagues who will be leaving the Fifth Committee best wishes for success in their new assignments. While I would like to name each and every one, I do not want to leave anyone out. Our delegation has enjoyed and benefited from working with you over the years, and we will miss each of you.

In closing, Madam Chair, we sincerely commend you once again for your leadership and engagement during the 71st session and wish you the very best as you move beyond the Fifth Committee.

Thank you.