



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
BY AMBASSADOR HORACIO SEVILLA BORJA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
ECUADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77,  
ON THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK AT THE SECOND PART OF THE RESUMED  
SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
New York, 1 May 2017**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of the 77 and China on the organization of work for the second part of the resumed 71<sup>st</sup> session of the Fifth Committee.
2. The Group wishes to reiterate its deep and sincere appreciation to you, Madam Chair, for your professional and able leadership, as well as to the other Members of the Bureau for the work they are doing to ensure the smooth functioning of the Committee. We take this opportunity to express our support for the work done by the ACABQ and the Secretariat to facilitate the negotiations of the Fifth Committee.
3. The Group recognizes the presence of Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant-Secretary General and Controller, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

Madam Chair,

4. Let me begin the substance of my remarks by first acknowledging the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations, for their high level of professionalism, dedication, and courage. The Group pays particular tribute to those who have given their lives for the maintenance of peace and security.

Madam Chair,

5. During the next four weeks, Member States will have to consider a large number of reports. Despite the heavy workload that the Committee faces in the coming weeks, the Group assures you of our readiness to engage constructively during the course of deliberations. We look forward to a frank and productive discussion with all delegations during this Session, and affirm our commitment to successfully concluding the work of the Fifth Committee on time.
6. It is therefore regrettable that we once again have to register our concern with the late submission of a substantial number of reports. This unfortunate situation impacts on the ability of Member States to fully consider the reports in all their detail, and adequately prepare for the Session. Moreover, while the Group is grateful for the Bureau's efforts to disseminate information as soon as possible, it is also challenging for a number of delegations when reports are not available in all six official languages of the United Nations in a timely fashion. The Group reminds all stakeholders of the importance of multilingualism.
7. The Group of 77 and China is particularly concerned with the trend of recent years whereby budgets for peacekeeping operations are submitted in breach of the six-week rule set by the General

Assembly. Member States have less and less time each year to complete our consideration of both the resource requirements and policy aspects of peacekeeping operations. We expect the Secretariat to continue its utmost effort to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions in this regard, which ultimately should be part and parcel of efforts to increase the accountability of the Secretariat to the Assembly.

8. The Group notes as well the fact that the ACABQ is expected to deal with an increasing number of reports within the same number of scheduled work weeks allocated to them a number of years ago. The Group acknowledges the efforts of the ACABQ in this regard.

Madam Chair,

9. On substantive matters, the Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the consideration of the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations, in particular cross-cutting issues, closed peacekeeping missions, and the Support Account for peacekeeping operations.

10. During the session, the Group is of the view that the following key priorities will have to be tackled. We look forward to engaging on these issues during the Committee's deliberations. They are as follows:

- i. To ensure that the formulation, presentation, and approval of peacekeeping budgets is done on the basis of their mandates and the real situation on the ground, and not as an arbitrary, across-the-board cost-cutting exercise;
- ii. To explore options to achieve a fair solution for unpaid assessments, accounts payable, and other liabilities of closed peacekeeping missions, so as to settle claims outstanding in the missions with cash deficits;
- iii. To ensure that the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations on the ground is reduced to the minimum. While adequate rules and regulations exist, there is a need for technical support to ensure that these are translated into concrete steps, applied consistently across all missions;
- iv. To consider systematically addressing the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations, in particular, on the measures to prevent such occurrences. In this regard, the Group welcomes the report of the Secretary General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, which underlines a number of concrete measures to be taken; and
- v. To make efforts to reduce unfilled vacancies to the minimum, including measures to facilitate the recruitment of personnel from all the different regions.

Madam Chair,

11. In conclusion, let me once again reassure you of the Group of 77 and China's commitment to engaging actively and constructively during the Committee's deliberations on all issues under consideration during this session. We look forward to an open and fruitful discussion in our mutual effort to find solutions, in the best interests of the United Nations and the people whom it represents and serves.

I thank you Madam Chair.