



REMARKS BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR LYLE DAVIDSON,
COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH
AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 23 December 2015)

Mr Chairman

Although we are all eager to start implementing our long anticipated, and may I add well deserved, vacation plans, I would like to make a few remarks in my last appearance as in the Fifth Committee as Chair of Group of 77 and China.

Mr Chairman

Let me begin by reflecting on some achievements of this Main Part of the Seventieth Session of the Fifth Committee of General Assembly. We have considered numerous items that are essential for the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations, including the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, revised estimates and programme budget implications for resolutions, the scales of assessment, the United Nations common system, various capital projects, international tribunals and reports from the Committee on Conferences and the Committee on Programme and Coordination.

As a result of our intensive negotiations over the past few months, we have adopted a budget of \$5,4 billion, focused on enhancing the ability of the United Nations to deliver on its mandates more effectively and efficiently. We have adopted a common system package that is "fit for purpose" after a comprehensive review by the International Civil Service Commission. The Group of 77 and China has placed a particular focus on protecting the development pillar of the United Nations in all its aspects and welcomes the policy guidance we have given to the Secretariat across the resolutions.

Mr Chairman

The Group would like to express its sincere appreciation for your guidance during this main session that resulted in us finishing our work before the holidays, and in a constructive and positive spirit. Your constant engagement on all levels was highly appreciated and we trust that it will continue to motivate the Committee in the coming first and second resumed sessions.

We also wish to extend our appreciation to all members of the Bureau for supporting the Committee and providing us with an ambitious but ultimately successful Programme of Work. We would like to recognize the invaluable contribution made by all facilitators and burden sharers who carried a heavy burden of ensuring that the interests of all member states are reflected in often difficult negotiations.

Our sincere thanks goes to the Fifth Committee Secretariat, Conference Services, Interpreters, Sound Engineers, and everyone else who survived the often moody delegations and all our unreasonable and urgent demands and therefore helped all of us in creating a positive and conducive atmosphere in which we could complete our work in time. We really would like to express our sincere appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work which facilitated the successful conclusion of our negotiations. The Group would further like to thank the Secretariat of the Group of 77 and China for its dedicated and tireless support to the Group. I would also like to thank our negotiating partners. We wish to thank you for your constructive engagement during this session and look forward to building on this positive momentum during the rest of the seventieth session.

Mr Chairman,

I realise that many in this room have grown tired of my voice and my many television appearances in this room. I have been blessed by a very supportive and constructive group of scriptwriters who have drafted beautiful language for the Chair. I have been guided by a large group of experienced and knowledgeable negotiators in this complex committee. I have been blessed by a group that is supportive and constructive in all their engagements. I have also been blessed with the prime seat in the house throughout the negotiations.

Mr Chairman,

It would be amiss of me not to recognise that many of the Committee only know me as "Mister Chair". As this title is not hereditary, I would like to inform the Committee that I can henceforth be addressed as Lyle, or apparently David to certain members of the Africa Group.

Mr Chairman

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to wish everyone happy holidays and to reiterate its commitment to returning in the new year under the able leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand to engage constructively in the resumed parts of the Seventieth Session with the same tenacity, zeal and vigour as during this session.

I thank you Mr Chairman.