



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. MEGAYLA AUSTIN, MINISTER COUNSELLOR OF THE PERMANENT
MISSION OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF
GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE MAIN
PART OF THE 75TH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 30 December 2020)

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the closing of the main part of the 75th session of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

This has been perhaps one of the most difficult years in recent human history, and undoubtedly in the history of the United Nations. We have been called to serve our countries and the international community at large, under very challenging circumstances, where the day-to-day activities of the intergovernmental process of our Committee have drastically changed due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This session has proven that the increased use of virtual platforms and other technologies, while important, cannot replace the face to face engagement between delegations, the coordination among groups of countries, or the creation of in-person connections and relationships, all at the heart of multilateral negotiations. We believe that the lack of these have affected the proper, effective and efficient functioning of our Committee.

Despite this, the Group held true to its enduring commitment to always constructively engage to ensure that all items on the agenda reach successful conclusions. We have succeeded in adopting a programme budget that ensures an adequate level of resources for the United Nations to be able to fully deliver on all mandated programmes and activities. However, viability of this budget is contingent on our collective commitment to honour our legal and financial obligations to the organization to pay our assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

The Group has placed a particular focus on protecting the development pillar of the United Nations in all its aspects, including the budget of areas such as DESA, UNCTAD, the Economic Regional Commissions, the Development Account and the RPTC, so that the Organization can perform its role as an enabler of the development agenda.

Mr. Chair,

The Group wishes to once again underscore the high premium it places on reforms as we all would like to see an effective and fit-for-purpose United Nations that is well structured to fully deliver

on its intergovernmentally-agreed mandates. However, we should be mindful that these reforms do not erode accountability and transparency within the organization. Unfortunately, this year the Committee could not find consensus regarding the reviews of the implementation of the management reform and the peace and security pillar reform, including an unfitting proposal to change the funding model for DOS/DMSPC. Despite the very opportune and insightful recommendations the Advisory Committee put forward on those agenda items, the Committee was unable to take action.

In the context of an annual programme budget on a trial period, this year again the CPC was unable to provide the General Assembly with recommendations on the totality of the Programme Plan. This led to much loss of valuable time within the Committee trying to figure the best way to deal with the open programmes. We believe that the adoption of new language in this year's resolution will enable our Committee to avoid these discussions, by placing these open programmes, if there are to be any, under the consideration of the corresponding Main Committees of the General Assembly and not only under the purview of the Fifth Committee.

The Group wishes to reiterate its firm position that the sequential nature of the review processes of the proposed programme budget conducted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee should not be altered by the reforms. We also stress that the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination shall be preserved and further strengthened. In this regard the Group is disappointed that the Committee was unable to agree on the Sequencing report and that it has been deferred to the main part of the 76th session. We truly believe that the established regulations and practices whereby the request for resources is to be formulated on the basis of an intergovernmentally approved Programme Plan must be preserved. The Group therefore looks forward to continuing our discussions on this item, hopefully with a view to correcting this issue before the end of the trial period.

Further, the Group is pleased that we have successfully concluded deliberations on other important agenda items, including revised estimates and programme budget implications for resolutions, Pattern of Conferences, the United Nations common system, OIOS, Administration of Justice, and the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund.

While we joined consensus on the financing the IRM, the Group of 77 and China would like to place on record that we are not in support of the new formulation of the Objective of the Registry Component as contained in para 25 of the Secretary-General's report because it is not in line with established administrative procedures.

Mr. Chair,

Our hearts are warmed that delegations voted with the Group against the oral amendments put forward against the programme budget implications regarding the resolution on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Additionally, we are satisfied with the adoption of the resolution on UNIFIL that guarantees an actual budget appropriation for the Force and not just a commitment authority, as well as validating the traditional provisions in this resolution which stress that Israel shall pay the amount of

1,117,005 dollars resulting from the incident of Qana on 18 April 1996 - in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 38/227.

Mr. Chair,

The Committee would not have been able to conclude this session without the strong guidance of you and your bureau; the tireless work of the Fifth Committee Secretariat and all others who supported and facilitated our work. We thank our negotiating partners and all the facilitators for their constructive efforts to achieve a successful outcome this session.

The Group would further like to thank the Secretariat of the Group of 77 and China for the 5th Committee led by Mr Arturo Lozano, for its dedicated and invaluable support.

Importantly, Mr. Chair, my dear colleague Sondra Cheong and I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the 133 members of our Group for the confidence they have reposed in us to be the custodian and guardian of their highest priorities in the Fifth Committee this year. Your support and expertise, dear colleagues, have buoyed us through tough times and has preserved and strengthened the unity and solidarity of the Group. The achievements of Guyana's Chairmanship are attributable to the exceptional and high quality of the representatives in our group. It has been a privilege for Guyana to serve this group and the principles it stands for the second time in its history.

We look forward to continue working alongside you all in order to advance our United Nations. Happy New Year to all!

I thank you, Mr. Chair.