



United Kingdom
Mission to the
United Nations

Statement by Richard Croker, Minister-Counsellor of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations at the Opening of the First Resumed Session of the Fifth Committee of the 75th General Assembly

Monday, 1 March 2021

Thank you Mr Chair,

Firstly, let me congratulate Guinea for assuming Chairpersonship of the Group of 77 and China. We look forward to working constructively with you and we thank Guyana for their engagement as the previous Chair. Congratulations also to the newly appointed ACABQ members. We trust that the newly-expanded ACABQ will continue to provide us with timely, technical and evidence based advice to inform our deliberations.

Mr. Chair,

The UN's 75th year has brought with it unprecedented challenges, many of which the organisation is still grappling with. The response to those challenges has been enhanced by many of the reforms that have been shaped and authorised by this Committee in previous years. Once again, in this session we will have the opportunity to take decisions that will ensure the UN is equipped to respond to current and future challenges it will face, and I hope we are able to do so.

Like any organisation, the UN's greatest asset is its people. It is our responsibility as a committee to do what we can to ensure they are provided with the framework in which to thrive and deliver the mandates that we as member states entrust to them to the high standard we expect. Strengthening the UN's human resources framework - to ensure a truly modern, agile, mobile and diverse workforce - will help us achieve this goal, especially as the UN seeks to build back better after the COVID pandemic.

UN staff need to be provided with opportunities for skill and career development through a modern approach to mobility, along with training and effective performance management, so they can achieve their potential and deliver for the organisation. Having the best staff, with expertise from across UN operations, who are well trained and motivated, in the right place and at the right time, will help ensure the organisation is able to deliver high quality results. This must go hand in hand with fostering a culture of respect, wellbeing and inclusion, where all staff feel valued and diversity is celebrated. We know that delivery improves and credibility increases when organisations have staff who understand the people they serve. The GA has a crucial role to play in making decisions that enable the organisation to manage their staff better and in a more modern way. For these reasons we very much hope the committee can come together to support the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the UN's human resources framework in this session.

We must also ensure that our seconded military and police personnel, who bring much needed expertise to help the UN deliver on some of its most vital mandates, are able to do their jobs without risk or concern for their standing. This matter affects member states from across regions and delegations, including those that have secondees and those that would like to in the future. It is crucial that we work together as a Committee to reach a long-term agreement for this long-running issue: one that enables all member states to participate, and does not jeopardise the position of currently serving secondees.

Mr. Chair,

Strengthening a culture of accountability is central to a more effective United Nations. We look forward to discussing the continued implementation of these initiatives and the early results of their progress, including on delegation of authority, results-based management, and enterprise risk management.

We also look forward to discussing ways to improve the efficiency and administration of the organisation's use of air travel. We heard in the main session how the new working methods we have all relied on over the last year can help make the UN a more inclusive, accessible place to work, expanding opportunities for all staff, not decreasing them. We encourage the Organisation to continue to employ these methods where appropriate to enhance opportunities, and reduce the organisation's costs and carbon footprint. This is important as the world seeks to recover from the economic impact of COVID, and address Climate Change.

Mr. Chair,

This session may feel a little like déjà vu for some delegates. I know many of the same reports have been negotiated in previous years. But if the past year has taught us anything, it is that we must be prepared in advance for the unexpected and not

wait. Now is the time to take the decisions that will set the organisation up for the future. If not the ultimate impact will be on the ground, felt by the people the UN serves. We look forward to working together with you all to achieve solutions to these important agenda items.

Thank you.