



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Closing statement

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Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

Two years ago, halfway through the negotiations of our first resumed session, the world plunged into the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past two years, through these unprecedented challenges, the United Nations were front and center in the fight against the pandemic, and proved more relevant than ever. By adopting the UN programmes, and deciding on the UN budgets, our Committee made it possible for the Organization to continue its work and, execute its mandates.

For two years, our Committee complied with its mandate - for the most part - though negotiating entirely remotely. Over the same period, however, our working methods have gradually deteriorated and consensus dangerously eroded, as evidenced by the meek outcome of this session.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union and its Member States are deeply worried that consensus based decision-making, a cornerstone of our working methods, is increasingly challenged, as evidenced by the worrisome vote called on budgetary matters. Of course, all delegations and Groups answer to objectives and national priorities. However, consensus requires that we work together to find an acceptable compromise. Though unsuccessful, we are sincerely encouraged by the remarkable engagement, and the exceptional eagerness shown by many delegations to build a balanced compromise on the HRM package; we would like to pay tribute to all these delegations, which did sincere efforts in this regard.

We are equally concerned with the number of agenda items for which – despite your guidance – our Committee took no action, or deferred consideration. Often, our debates on the substance of items were diverted by too complex ACABQ recommendations, impeding us to agree on how to address these issues. We bear, however, the biggest responsibility in our own inability to cast aside our divergences and truly work towards common goals. Indeed, in a vast majority of the issues on our agenda, and despite the high quality of interaction with the Secretariat the Committee benefits from, we have been unable to find common grounds to provide adequate guidance in return. As staunch supporters of the Management Reform launched by the Secretary-General, we find most unfortunate that these include reform topics like the strengthening of the culture of accountability in the Organization, or the reform of supply chain management. Our inertia is even more worrying considering that, this session, our Committee was tasked with important decisions for the Organization, from ASHI to Financial Situation, the financial regulations of UNHCR, and the reform of Human Resources Management, none of which led to a resolution.

Mr. Chair, dear colleagues,

The outcome of this session should be our wake-up call, if we want our Committee to remain relevant, and able to fulfill its duty. A key to the best possible outcomes lies in our ability to uphold transparency in our proceedings: active engagement, inclusive proceedings, and good faith debates make qualitative decisions. On many agenda items however, we saw with deep regret short-term tactics, dry transactional focus, and artificial linkage of items – which came in the way of agreements, much to the detriment of the Organization and its mandates. We also heard deeply concerning expressions of distrust and inappropriate qualifications towards the Secretariat, which give in no way justice to the remarkable work of all Departments involved in our discussions. We call on all our partners to their sense of responsibility and accountability. Every Member State has national priorities and red lines, but within these limits, we need to consider the interest of the organization and the people it serves.

As the First Resumed session is one largely focused on Human Resources, allow me to finish by paying tribute to the staff of the UN around the world, wherever they may serve, in these extraordinary and challenging times – we trust them, and we owe them, the mandate they execute, and the people they serve to do better. We sincerely hope that colleagues, who will share this assessment, will join us in our pledge to uphold better working methods, having at heart to ensure delivery of mandates.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.