

Statement at the 74th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 84: Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
Emily R. Pierce, Counselor
United States Mission to the United Nations
October 17, 2019

Thank you, Chair.

We welcome this opportunity to provide a few observations on the report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, and the Committee's work in 2019. Overall, the Special Committee's work lacks the flow and movement of years past. The Committee has considered at least two of the proposals on its agenda every year, for more than twenty years. Committee members may have legitimate disagreements over the substantive issues before them, but we share an interest in the need to rationalize the Committee's work. The Special Committee should take steps in 2020 to improve the efficiency and productivity of the Committee, including giving further scrutiny to proposals with an eye toward updating its work and making the best use of scarce Secretariat resources. Committee members should also give serious consideration to biennial meetings or shortened sessions. In the current reform-minded environment in which we operate, with tighter budgets and increased focus on improving the efficiency of the United Nations, the Special Committee should recognize that these steps are reasonable and long overdue.

With respect to items on the Committee's agenda regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, the United States thanks the Department of Political Affairs for its briefing on sanctions during the Committee meeting in February, which we attended with interest. The United States emphasizes that targeted sanctions adopted by the Security Council in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations remain an important instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. We would support further discussion on options to strengthen implementation.

Regarding other topics under the maintenance of international peace and security, the United States continues to believe that the Committee should not pursue activities in this area that would be duplicative or inconsistent with the roles of the principal organs of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter. This includes consideration of a long-standing working paper that calls for, among other things, legal study of General Assembly functions and powers. This also includes a long-standing proposal regarding

UN reform, as well as the question of the General Assembly requesting an advisory opinion on the use of force from the International Court of Justice, a proposal that the United States has consistently stated it does not support. As we have noted before, if a proposal such as that of Ghana could add value by helping to fill gaps, then it should be considered.

With respect to items on the Committee's agenda regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes, the United States again welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Special Committee's second debate on this issue. We look forward to the third debate in 2020 on state practices on the use of conciliation. Regarding other topics under this agenda item, the United States does not support the allocation of resources to build a website for information that is already widely available online.

The United States continues to be cautious about adding new items to the Committee's agenda. While the United States is not opposed in principle to exploring new items, they should be practical, non-political, not duplicate efforts elsewhere in the United Nations, as well as respect the mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations. With this in mind, the Special Committee is not the appropriate forum to debate the sufficiency of communications submitted pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter, nor to debate the role of the Security Council with respect to such communications.

Finally, we welcome the Secretary-General's report A/74/194, regarding the Repertory of Practice of the United Nations Organs and the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. We commend the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to reduce the backlog in preparing these works. Both publications provide a useful resource on the practice of the United Nations organs, and we much appreciate the Secretariat's hard work on them.

Thank you.