



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement on the organization of work

Before the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee

During the second part of the resumed sixty-sixth session of the UN General Assembly

Monday, 7 May 2012

Mr. Chairman.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to provide some comments regarding the heavy agenda before us. These are for the most part preliminary observations, however, given the delayed issuance of many documents, including the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on some of the agenda items scheduled for consideration this week.

During previous sessions, my delegation has repeatedly emphasized the need for the Secretary-General to exercise greater fiscal discipline in preparing his budgets. It appears that the Secretary-General has taken steps to rationalize and streamline the budgets presented for our consideration this session. While we appreciate this positive development, we believe that these efforts are a step in the road toward improved management of peacekeeping operations, not a final destination. We continue to encourage the Secretary-General to go further, not just in seeking one-time savings, but structural and sustainable efficiencies in peacekeeping and indeed across the UN. At the same time, my delegation will continue to closely scrutinize each of the budgets over the course of the session.

Turning to cross-cutting issues, the United States emphasizes the need to further strengthen measures against sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping, and concurs with the Secretary-General that "any substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse is one case too many." We note the steady and continuing progress in the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy and underline the need to stay the course, rather than repeating the deliberations of previous sessions, in order to realize all of the potential benefits that the GFSS can yield to all stakeholders in United Nations peacekeeping. We also believe that there is significant scope for improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, and that the observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors provide a starting point for such an endeavor.

Finally we recall that the extraordinary measures agreed to by the General Assembly last year in resolution 65/289 to address the concerns of troop-contributing countries—despite significant financial pressures—have been implemented. These measures include a provision, on an exceptional basis, a one-time supplemental payment, and establishment of a Senior Advisory Group, whose deliberations on troop reimbursement and related issues are ongoing.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States reaffirms its strong support for United Nations peacekeeping and for the global partnership that lies at the heart of United Nations peacekeeping. This is burden-sharing at its best, a practical demonstration of what is possible when Member States work in concert to address common challenges.

Yet, over the course of the past few sessions, the global partnership has been under increasing strain here in this Committee. My delegation especially hopes to avoid the experience last year during the second part of the resumed sixty-fifth session, which was prolonged into the first of July. Although we were ultimately able to reach a compromise, the brinkmanship involved put all peacekeeping operations—and, by extension, the credibility of the Organization—in jeopardy.

The United States strongly affirms the principle of consensus-based decision-making under which the General Assembly has directed this Committee to operate, and as such we remain deeply concerned by the outcome of the first part of the resumed session just one month ago, during which an L-document was submitted before consensus was reached on the resolution on accountability.

Mr. Chairman,

Forcing a decision on an administrative and budgetary matter on a basis other than consensus will not be a victory for any group, but rather a defeat for the global partnership, with repercussions for the entire Organization. And if peacekeeping budgets are jeopardized by our inability to achieve consensus, it will be the vulnerable populations in the affected countries who are put at risk.

As such, my delegation is committed to engaging partners in a cordial and collegial spirit with a view to reaching decisions by consensus on all items in our agenda this session. We will not, however, participate in a negotiating process incompatible with the principle of consensus-based decision-making. We remain convinced that, through constructive dialogue and open-mindedness, the Committee will be able to achieve a positive outcome to the work of its second resumed session, to strengthen the global partnership, and to sustain the important work of United Nations peacekeeping.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.