

**Statement as delivered by
H.E. Mr. Miguel Berger
Chair of the Fifth Committee
15 March 2013**

Dear colleagues, after consultation with the members of the Bureau and speaking to a number of delegations, I would like to make the following statement in my capacity as Chair of the 5C:

Following our formal meeting on the 4th of March we have seen a broad public coverage on how budget negotiations are supposedly conducted in the 5th Committee. As Chair I would like to state that the public perception created does in my view not reflect the professional and dedicated work that is done by this Committee.

The 5th Committee being the Main Committee of the General Assembly for all budgetary and administrative questions bears a high responsibility for the functioning of the United Nations.

Delegates in the 5th Committee are working very hard and in a professional manner in order to achieve the outcomes which keep the United Nations working. Many colleagues are sacrificing part of their family life. It is for this reason that I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you, the delegates of the 5th Committee, for the work you have done and the long hours invested in the negotiations, and for the results achieved.

Having worked in parliament for many years, I know that budget negotiations are difficult everywhere. Our additional challenge and objective is to reach a consensus outcome. Last December this Committee, despite all the differences, has proven again that it is capable of achieving the necessary results.

On Tuesday the Bureau was informed on the position of one regional group that negotiations in the 5th Committee should not be extended after 6 p.m., that they should not be held on weekends and that there should be no extension of this session. In my view this opens an important discussion on how we want to conduct negotiations. But we all know that this is also a very challenging proposal, because it would mean that in order to achieve the same results, the Committee would have to reorganise the way it's doing business.

Given the special nature of the 5th Committee, the working methods are different from those of other Committees. They will never be perfect, but I do believe that we can improve the way in which we conduct our negotiations and I am looking forward to a serious discussion about it.

In this first resumed session we have ten more working days in order to finish on the 28th of March and we still have 16 items on the table. I would like to take this opportunity to call all delegations to work together – like usual – in a spirit of compromise and to make the best use of the available time.