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STATEMENT BY ADV DOCTOR MASHABANE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE ORGANISATION OF WORK OF THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Monday, March 4, 2013, New York

Mr Chair

It is a pleasure to see you back in the Chair after our intense deliberations during the Main Session. We trust that you will preside over this session and the matters before us with your usual vigour and attention to detail. We would also like to welcome the Secretariat and Interpreters and trust that they too had a well-deserved break.

South Africa has the honour to align itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China and would like to make use of this opportunity to congratulate them as the Chair of the G77 and China and wish them all the best during their term.

Mr Chair

South Africa would like to use this opportunity to thank the members of the Bureau for a balanced programme of work and the status of preparedness of documentation as contained in document A/C.5/67/L.21. We acknowledge the time and effort that went into this. The Bureau's efforts in adjusting the programme of work throughout the session to keep pace with the state of the negotiations in maintaining the preferred working methods of the Committee, will, as always, be appreciated.

Although all the issues are of importance to South Africa, particular attention will be given to the Report of the Senior Advisory Group, the issue of Civilian Capacity as well as issues relating to the Programme Budget.

On the report of the Senior Advisory Group, South Africa welcomes the opportunity to engage in negotiations on the recommendations relating to the reimbursement to troop-contributing countries and trust that this will lead to a more predictable manner in reviewing the troop cost in future. It is trusted that any new processes will not be hampered by procedural challenges, but rather focus on substantive outcomes. As a troop contributing country, South Africa has always co-operated in providing the necessary responses to the initial surveys and will again do so when required.

With reference to communication and information technology, it is important that we have a uniform system in place which provides us with the best technology available in order to deliver on the mandates given by the Member States. Modern technology can act as an early warning system especially during natural disasters and can assist in our preparations in dealing with them as well as with disaster recovery planning. Reliable back-up plans, a secure information environment and proper training would thus be important issues to address when dealing with this particular issue. Attention should also be given to the communication and information technology needs of persons with disabilities.

Proper measures need to be maintained in order to strengthen accountability and oversight. We should also guard against duplication. Creating parallel structures is not cost effective and might diminish the ability to achieve the mandate. Currently there seems to be a challenge in harmonising cross cutting issues – this need to be addressed, as it might lead to duplication which would have a negative impact on the budget.

The capacity of the United Nations, to deal with a natural disaster, was recently put to the test when the New York area was hit by Hurricane Sandy. South Africa welcomes the appointment of a senior-level task force to examine lessons learned and the requirement for additional emergency response measures and trusts that here too; the needs of persons with disabilities will be addressed.

Mr Chair

The civilian capacity initiative is a cross-cutting effort aimed at improving United Nations support to capacity-building in countries emerging from conflict. A need has been identified to review how to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian experts to support the immediate capacity-development needs of countries emerging from conflict. South Africa welcomes the initiative to develop proposals relating to civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict, affirm the fundamental principle of national ownership and will continue to participate in consultations on this matter.

Mr Chair

As a developing country South Africa is fully aware of the difficulties of matching up proposals with a limited budget and look forward to addressing the challenges which we will face during this resumed session. Mr Chair, you, as well as the Chair of the G77 and China, can be assured of South Africa's continued support for constructive deliberations during this Resumed Session.

We also look forward in receiving the updates on the Capital Master Plan and Umoja/ERP to be presented later during this session.

Thank you