



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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As delivered

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Frantisek Ruzicka, for opening this formal meeting of the Fifth Committee, for your introductory remarks on the organisation of work and for your stewardship of this Committee. We also wish to welcome the UN Controller Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas to our Committee and thank her for her remarks today. Our thanks also go to the bureau and the secretariat for all their hard work.

Mr. Chairman,

We have a number of important items on our agenda during this session, including issues which have been deferred from previous sessions, such as human resources management, the Capital Master Plan, Umoja, the Partnership Facility, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and recosting. We have already expressed our position on these items, and we will further elaborate on them during the informal consultations. The other items on our agenda also, of course, deserve our full attention, including such issues as procurement, air travel, flexible workplace strategies and accountability, especially the presentation of the outcome of the Secretary-General's risk management approach. It is clear that we have, once again, a busy session ahead of us. Nonetheless, it is our duty and our goal to complete our programme of work by 27 March and, if we all engage constructively in discussions, we can achieve this. In doing so, we would send a positive and much needed signal – not least to ourselves – that we are capable of finishing our discussions within the agreed timeframe and in compliance with the normal procedures of work.

In this context, and in the wake of a main session where we experienced an unprecedented delay in the release of documentation, with a heavy impact on our deliberations, we wish to reiterate the importance of timely submission of all required documentation in all official languages for the quality and speed of our discussions, and urge all those involved in the production of the documents to redouble their efforts to this effect.

Mr. Chairman,

As already noted, we will have more to say on the position of the EU Member States on all the items on our agenda as and when we get to them. Allow me, however, at this stage to say a bit more on a couple of specific issues:

* *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

On the issue of procurement, we welcome the Secretary-General's comprehensive report. In particular, we are pleased to note the evolutionary progress being made in a number of areas by the Secretariat, such as: utilising Umoja to enable more strategic management of UN procurement; in air charter procurement; and in securing greater efficiency and economy via improved Mission critical contracts. In addition the Member States of the European Union believe that the UN's procurement activities should also be sustainable and integrate requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible with and supportive of the protection of the environment, of social progress and economic development. We look forward to discussing these and other issues related to UN procurement with our partners.

Another important topic to be discussed is recosting. The decisions that were taken last December must now be honoured: the General Assembly must act on the recommendations of the Panel. We are ready to engage in this discussion in a constructive manner, fully aware of the concerns previously expressed by some Member States. But we believe that the time has come to make some progress on this issue.

We look forward to resuming our deliberations on human resources management and hope we can build on the progress we made in the main session to reach a speedy conclusion. On the issue of the personal status of UN staff, which we note is not formally on our agenda we would just like to reiterate our firm view that the Secretary-General, as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organisation, was acting well within his purview in issuing his most recent bulletin .

Regarding the Capital Master Plan, we look forward, as during the last main session, to engaging constructively on this important agenda item. Now that the project is coming to an end, it is time to agree on a final settlement that encompasses all aspects of the issue.

Finally, we welcome this afternoon's informal briefing on Umoja as a useful opportunity to update members of the Committee and provide additional information on this ongoing project. We hope to reach during this March session a swift conclusion of this agenda item and intend to work fruitfully to solve any outstanding issues. We reiterate our support for Umoja, as an essential tool to help the Organisation better pursue its goals more efficiently and effectively. Considerable and substantial progress has been made already and in this regard we look forward to ensuring the full realisation of benefits from the project and to continuing our efforts to protect the investment already made by Member States.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that the Member States of the European Union remain committed to working closely with all partners in a spirit of openness, transparency and constructive cooperation in order to reach decisions by consensus at the end of this first resumed session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.