



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. DHISADEE
CHAMLONGRASDR, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA 137: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES, AT THE MAIN
PART OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
FIFTH COMMITTEE (New York, 28 October 2016)**

Madam Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 137: Pattern of Conferences.
2. At the outset, allow me to thank Ms. Aba Ayebi-Arthur, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Conferences for 2016, for introducing the Committee's report as contained in document A/71/32. We would also like to thank Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing related reports, contained in documents A/71/166 and A/71/549 respectively.
3. The Group would like to take this opportunity to also thank Ambassador Katalin Annamária Bogyay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, for her able leadership as the Chairperson of the Committee on Conferences for 2016. It is with a great pleasure to note that like the Fifth Committee, the Committee on Conferences also observed gender balance and was in the hand of able female leadership this year.

Madam Chairperson,

4. The Group of 77 and China commend the Committee on Conferences for the good work conducted during the substantive session for the year 2016 and we appreciate the continued high quality of its reports. The Group is of the strong view that our consideration of this agenda item will benefit from the outcome of the Committee on Conferences deliberations and that the proposed draft resolution will guide and form a basis for our efficient conclusion of this agenda item.
5. The Group of 77 and China continue to attach great importance to the effective delivery of quality conference services in line with the principles of multilingualism. The Group believes that the matters related to the utilization of conferences services, documentation and publication, translation and interpretation as well as the calendar of conferences and meetings are crucial to the effective and efficient functioning of the deliberations of the intergovernmental and expert bodies of the United Nations.

Madam Chairperson,

6. With regard to the meeting management, the Group of 77 and China note that the overall utilization factor for all calendar bodies in the four main duty stations has met the established benchmark of 80 per cent in 2015. The Group would like to encourage those bodies that have performed below benchmark to continue their efforts in order to achieve optimal utilization factor.
7. Turning to the leveraging technology and measuring the quality of conference services, the Group of 77 and China acknowledge the continued efforts of the Secretary-General in the context of integrated global management initiatives to establish and implement common performance indicators and single information technology systems at all four main duty stations. The Group expects that lessons learned and best practices will be shared with regional commissions and other United Nations conference facilities.

8. With regard to documentation and publications, the Group of 77 and China would like to stress the need for the timely and simultaneous issuance of documents in all official languages, as well as improving the quality of documentation, to facilitate effective and efficient deliberations of the intergovernmental and expert bodies, in particular, the Fifth Committee. The Group encourages all stakeholders under the interdepartmental task force to continue their efforts to ensure all challenges related to documentation are addressed in a timely manner.

Madam Chairperson,

9. The Group appreciates the funding support by the Government of the State of Qatar for digitization project. The Group, however, would like to register our disappointment that the Secretary-General did not present the proposal on the matter as requested in paragraph 86 of the General Assembly resolution 70/9. The Group notes that more than US\$ 4.6 million will be required to implement this exercise which is in addition to existing voluntary contribution. The Group would like to emphasize the need for presentation of the requested proposal as a matter of priority.

10. The Group of 77 and China also continue to value the role of ICT in facilitating the work of the intergovernmental bodies. We welcome the ongoing initiatives by the OICT and DGACM including the introduction of 'portable ODS' as well as improvement of services at the documentation center. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard in all duty stations and regional commissions. The Group would like to also stress the need to ensure that all Member States are provided with documents without any delays, restrictions or conditions.

11. While we note that the Capital Master Plan is at the final stage, the Group remains of the strong view that a number of errors and omissions including those related to physical communication and technological accessibilities are yet to be rectified. The Group will be interested to receive feedback on the planned activities on these matters before the books of account of the Capital Master Plan are closed.

Madam Chairperson,

12. The Group of 77 and China note that a number of intergovernmental bodies including the Fifth Committee has extended their meetings beyond allocated timeframe in the calendar of conferences. While the Group acknowledges the challenges experienced in this regard, we are of strong view that these matters cannot be addressed in the calendar of conferences and meetings but rather, it is in the hands of Member States on their approach and the willingness to work expeditiously and effectively.

13. The Group of 77 and China would like to once again underscore that the United Nations facilities must be used consistent with the principles and purposes of the Organization that promotes multilateralism. We, therefore, calls for measures to ensure that the nature and content of events, especially those conducted by non-governmental organizations, are vetted and approved prior to the use of the venue to ensure compliance with the principles of the Organization.

14. The Group of 77 and China would like to reassure you of our readiness to engage in positive deliberations on this important agenda item with the aim of concluding in a timely manner.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.
