



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

72nd Session of the General Assembly - Fifth Committee

Closure of the work of the First Resumed Session

29 March 2018

Mr. Chair,

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

At the outset, let me thank you and all the members of your Bureau, as well as the coordinators for guiding us through the deliberations of the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee. Let me also thank the Fifth Committee Secretariat under the leadership of Mrs. Sharon Van Buerle for assisting us in our work. We also thank all other members of the Secretariat, the interpreters, and technical staff who facilitated our work.

We thank all groups and Member States for their engagement and cooperation. We commend the Bureau, ACABQ and the Secretariat for the timely issuance of all documentation. However, the last weeks have also demonstrated that improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee is an issue that continues to require our full attention. Unfortunately, we had too many timeslots that remained open. Also, consensus is a shared responsibility that demands continued engagement from all sides.

We reached consensus on several items, in particular the management of air travel, JIU and the Arusha branch construction. On air travel, we adopted a resolution that finally eliminates all staff entitlements to first class standards of accommodation. However, we regret we could not secure proportionality on first class for non-staff across the UN system. We strongly encourage members of the ICJ to refrain from travelling first class. We believe that an efficient management of air travel at the UN is an important element of modern management in the framework of reform. And we believe this resolution is a first step into that direction.

However, we regret that, once again, no consensus could be found on the use of the contingency fund and we believe that established budgetary procedures should be more closely followed.

Finally, we deeply regret the continued lack of consensus on the regional restructuring of the OHCHR, especially because this exercise is very limited in scope, cost neutral and of a purely administrative nature. We remain strong supporters of the approach outlined by the Secretary-General in his reports, and we remain convinced that in the future we will be able to take a decision based on the merits of the proposals. We recall that the 5th Committee is a technical committee and we regret the politicization of this item.

Mr. Chair,

The agenda of the second resumed session is challenging. The preparations for May should start today. More than ever, the preparedness of documents should be closely monitored. We are, of course, committed to finishing by true consensus through continued engagement. We are convinced that you and your Bureau will guide us effectively through the agenda and the programme of work.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.