



**Remarks of H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly
at the Third Formal meeting of the Fifth Committee**

6 October 2017

Good morning Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be here today at the third formal meeting of the Fifth Committee - the engine room of the UN General Assembly.

I want to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Tommo Monthé on his election as Chair of the Fifth Committee. This year the Fifth Committee is in the hands of a veteran. Also, we have an excellent Bureau and skilled Secretariat team ably led by Ms. Buerle so I am confident that this session will be successful for the Fifth Committee.

As you look to the packed session ahead, I would like to share three main messages with you.

First, and you know it of course, the Fifth Committee plays a critical role in the UN system.

The work across all three pillars is shaped by this Committee. This is a serious responsibility that I trust you will exercise thoughtfully, carefully and in earnest.

As we are all aware, the resolutions of the Fifth Committee are binding on member states insofar as they express a commitment of the membership to share the financial burden for the activities of the United Nations. From approving budgets, to monitoring expenditures and approving the administrative framework of the United Nations, the Fifth Committee's work affects us all, both within and outside this building.

Second, good working methods, timely decision-making and maintaining a spirit of collegiality will lead to a successful 72nd session.

The agenda this session is very heavy. Programme budget for the next biennium, UN Management reform, review of the troop reimbursement rate and the peacekeeping budgets are just a sample of the complex issues you will be tackling.

I encourage you to further examine and improve the working practices of this Committee. Hold different parts of the system accountable for providing you, on time, the reports you will need to take informed decisions. Continue to be diligent in seeking necessary information.

I particularly acknowledge the challenge posed by the late availability of documents and reports for this session, and resolutions with budgetary implications arising late from the other Main Committees. I had a meeting with Chairs of Main Committee on Tuesday and I encouraged the Main Committee Chairs to keep Ambassador Monthé informed on developments in other Committees. Also, I will remind the General Committee of the deadline of 1st December they recommended for any resolution with budgetary implications. I stand ready to use my authority to speed up issuance of documentation, should the Chair request.

I am confident that the Fifth Committee will continue to operate under the spirit of collegiality and strive for timely and consensual outcomes.

My third point is that the Administrative and Budgetary Committee impacts the lives of people.

The resources available and the management of these resources affects this Organization's ability to do its job – namely, to improve the lives of people.

United Nations staff are directly affected by decisions of the Fifth Committee. These men and women are an invaluable asset. You should aim for timely decision-making so that staff members have time to prepare for and adjust to any changes.

Let us not forget also, you the Fifth Committee delegates are people, too! Despite your proven superhuman talent for going days and nights without sleep, you still deserve to spend holidays with you family and friends, outside of the UN basement. So I hope we will achieve this very humane goal this session.

Dear colleagues, let me end by reassuring you that I will follow the work of the Fifth Committee with keen interest and remain at the disposal of the Chair and Bureau.

Good luck and thank you.