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**Statement by Ms. Megayla Austin (Guyana),
Chair, Committee on Conferences, at the Seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly**

13 November 2019, Conference Room 3

Agenda item: Pattern of conferences

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is my privilege to introduce the Report of the Committee on Conferences for 2019 in my capacity as Chair of the Committee. The CoC report, as contained in document A/74/32, covers the work of the Committee in 2019 and was adopted at its substantive session held from 3 to 9 September 2019. The report includes a draft resolution and a draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings for 2020 and 2021 for your approval and recommendation for adoption by the General Assembly.

During its substantive session of 2019, the Committee on Conferences considered the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/74/121) together with the statistical data presented as supplementary information. The CoC report (A/74/32) reflects the discussions on all the items in its annotated agenda.

The CoC's substantive session offered Member States an opportunity to engage with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) in New York, and the other three duty stations: Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

On **organizational matters**, at its organizational session, the Committee adopted the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2020 and 2021 (E/2019/53) and recommended it for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

On **matters related to the calendar of conferences and meetings**, the Committee reviewed the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2020 and 2021 and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/266 A, in which the General Assembly approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget cycle on a trial basis, beginning with the programme budget for 2020, the Committee examined the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2020 and 2021 and decided to adopt the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2020, as contained in A/AC.172/2019/L.2.

In addition, the Committee made recommendation to the General Assembly to approve eight bodies to meet exceptionally during its main part of the 74th session. The Committee also approved six requests for intersessional departures.

On **meetings management**, the Committee reviewed the statistical data on the utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities.

All four duty stations made efforts to improve the interpretation utilization factor, in accordance with section II, paragraph 18, of resolution 73/270, by engaging relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, as appropriate.

During the past year, letters were sent from me to the presiding officers of calendar bodies that have utilized less than the applicable benchmark of their allocated resources in each of the past six years between 2013 and 2018, with a view to improving the utilization of conference-servicing resources as much as possible without prejudice to the substantive work of a body.

On **documents management**, the Committee noted the improvement in the submission, processing and issuance compliance of slotted documents.

On **staffing**, the Committee expressed support for expansion of the practice of signing memorandums of understanding with education institutions and, as reflected in the General Assembly resolutions on multilingualism, highlighted the importance of ensuring equal treatment and equally favourable working conditions and resources to all language services.

On the **improvement of facilities and accessibility**, the Committee on Conferences proposed that the General Assembly welcome the measures related to conference services for persons with disabilities and requested the Secretary-General to continue to address those issues as a priority.

On **measuring the quality of conference services**, the Committee was informed by the Secretariat on the feedback received from the global e-survey.

I would like to thank the Bureau, the members of the CoC, and the Observers, for participating actively and constructively during the CoC's substantive session, which enabled the Committee to have meaningful and productive discussions in an open and friendly manner. I would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Secretariat of the CoC and all the staff of DGACM, including the conference management staff at the other duty stations, for providing substantive and technical support to the Committee throughout the year, and especially during its substantive session.

I hope and believe that we can continue to work in the same spirit during the Fifth Committee's consideration of the item on the pattern of conferences.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.