

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. KATLEGO BOASE MMALANE, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE FIRST RESUMED PART OF THE SEVENTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**(New York, 31 March 2020)**

**Mr. Chairman,**

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group at the closing of the 1<sup>st</sup> resumed part of the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly's Fifth Committee.
2. The Group wishes to express its appreciation for your guidance and leadership of the Committee during these unusual times where the novel coronavirus pandemic has tested our resolve and compelled us to be innovative as well as receptive of new working practices and methods. Our thanks equally go to the members of the Bureau who worked tirelessly and at odd hours to keep their members abreast with developments.
3. We are as well appreciative of all facilitators for their hardwork, delegations for their show of compromise and cordiality and the Secretariat of the Committee, under the leadership of Mr. Lionel Berridge, for their selfless work.
4. The African Group wishes to align its statement with that of the G77 and China.

**Mr. Chairman,**

5. Now more than ever, the Group welcomes the successful conclusion of this session where important decisions were taken for the effective and efficient functioning of the Organization. At this critical juncture, humanity increasingly needs the indispensable service of this Organization and we hope that our collective contributions during this session have added to that cause.

6. We managed to reach consensus on some items while the consideration of others, particularly those that were not time-bound, would be taken up in not too distant sessions. Disappointingly, we had to also take no action on a few items.
7. With particular regard to the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the Group wishes to thank delegations for their cooperation and compromise in approving the commitment authority for the quarter ending 30 June. Going forward, we anticipate that a more reliable and predictable budgetary mechanism would be adopted for the Mission. It is our hope that the Organization will remain on top of issues on the ground so that these uncertain times would not adversely impact the gains that the Mission has realized thus far.

**Mr. Chairman,**

8. Coming back to these special circumstances occasioned by the pandemic, we are cognizant that it may impact on the 2<sup>nd</sup> resumed session. With this consideration, the Group wishes to remind that the said session is one that is traditionally dedicated to a packed peacekeeping agenda. Time constraints usually experienced during the second resumed would be further exacerbated by the current limitations imposed on the working practices and methods of the Fifth Committee. Therefore as has just been noted by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, we highly request that in the best way possible the Organisation observe the traditional practices and working methods of this Committee including but not limited to interpretation services during both formal and informal meetings. Furthermore, the Group advises that, as much as possible, items that are not critically time-bound be not introduced during the upcoming session.
9. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the African Group wishes to assure you of our support during these trying times and to reiterate our commitment to working in a transparent and constructive manner with all.

**I thank you.**