



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. MEGAYLA AUSTIN, MINISTER COUNSELLOR OF THE PERMANENT
MISSION OF CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
ON THE CLOSING OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE FIRST RESUMED PART OF THE
SEVENTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 30 March 2020)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to convey this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the closing of the Fifth Committee for the first resumed part of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

2. This has been one of the most unusual and challenging sessions this Committee has ever faced. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to find new ways of conducting the business of this Committee. Our working methods during these past weeks, including the method of delivery of this statement, though temporary in nature, enabled us to continue reaching out to one another and discussing our positions in order to attempt to deliver on the work entrusted to us.

3. The Group would like to express its appreciation for you Mr. Chairman, your Bureau members, and all facilitators, for your continued engagement to keep us all apprised of the steps to be taken in these exceptional circumstances.

4. We furthermore wish to recognize the always efficient and non-stop work of Mr. Lionelito Berridge and his team, and especially the ICT technicians who have worked tirelessly to support this Committee, even at their own risk.

Mr. Chairman,

5. We are pleased that we have managed to reach consensus on some agenda items. The Group appreciates the efforts made by all negotiators to finalize agreements, in particular for the Arusha Construction and for the Accountability of the Secretariat. We believe that under different circumstances, these could have been better outcomes.

6. Unfortunately, not all agenda items could reach a conclusion this session. Some were left to a no action and others have been deferred. We look forward to discussing them again at different moments in time and to try and achieve what we could not

do at present. Despite these setbacks, we believe the Committee proved that as a part of the United Nations, even in the face of adversity we are still open and doing our best to help this Organization deliver on its mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group looks now to what the future may hold in these uncertain times. We are mindful of the letter issued last Friday, March 27th by Dr. Jillann Farmer, United Nations Medical Director and her recommendation that current arrangements for business continuity at headquarters should remain in place until the end of May. This will inevitably have a large impact on the work of our Committee during its second resumed session. As you know we are called to deliver on important agenda items during that session, many of which are time bound.

8. Bearing this in mind, we trust that solutions will be developed as soon as possible as to how this Committee will conduct its business during these challenging circumstances, while still observing the traditional practices and working methods of this Committee, including but not limited to the availability of interpretation services, the transition of meetings from formal to informal and then informal informal settings, as well as compliance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

9. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China remains committed to working with all delegations in an inclusive, transparent and effective manner.

We wish all to remain healthy and safe.

I thank you.