



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY AMBASSADOR NEIL PIERRE, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE CO-
OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT THE CLOSING OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE SECOND RESUMED PART
OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 4 August 2020)

Mr. Chair,

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 second resumed and final part of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.
2. Once more, we have managed to conclude our deliberations and decision-making process despite the obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since last March, the working methods of our Committee have shifted, and though temporary in nature, they enabled us to continue reaching out to one another to discuss our positions in order to deliver on the work entrusted to us. We hope for an improvement in circumstances that will enable us to resume our normal order of business and put behind us this exceptional way of conducting the work of the Committee.
3. The Group wishes to recognize your leadership Mr. Chair and that of your Bureau, as well as all facilitators. Furthermore, we wish to recognize the always efficient and non-stop work of Mr. Lionelito Berridge and his team.

Mr. Chair,

4. Peacekeeping is the largest and most visible representation of the United Nations' work and in that regard, the Group is pleased that despite the unusual and challenging session, and that once more the Committee extended its work beyond the official end of the session, we have managed to bridge the gap at an earlier date than in previous years and have delivered on the budget appropriations that the peacekeeping operations and their support components need to continue fulfilling their mandates. The Group commends the flexibility shown by all groups and delegations in reaching consensus on the global figure at 44 million below ACABQ recommendations. However, the Group reaffirms that it does not believe in arbitrary, across the board cost-cutting exercises that do not take into consideration the differences and peculiarities of each peacekeeping operation nor the situation on the ground, especially now in the context of COVID-19.
5. The Group appreciates the efforts made by all negotiators to finalize agreements, in particular for the Regional Service Center in Entebbe, the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi, the Support Account, the Contingent-owned equipment, and the report of the Board

of Auditors. We also welcome the milestone agreement reached regarding the accounts of closed peacekeeping operations, the first in nine years. Of course, we are still far away from our desired outcome for this item and look forward to its continued discussion.

Mr. Chair,

6. The Group would have preferred to see some issues have different outcomes. We especially regret that some items could not enjoy the consideration of the Committee. In particular, the Group would have preferred to discuss the Secretary General's report stemming from resolution 74/251. However, due to the late date at which the Secretary General's report was issued it became evident to the Group that flexibility was required from us in order to give priority to the peacekeeping budget and defer consideration of the aforementioned report to the 75th session. The Group complied with this, but we did so with deep concern, since introducing the report after the official finishing date of the Second Resumed Session is hardly complying with the General Assembly's mandate in this regard. We sincerely hope that when this item is considered, colleagues give it the due consideration it deserves, especially since the Group's objective is to give proper guidance to the Secretariat during the trial period of the annual programme budget, as opposed to arriving to the 77th session and having unfortunately to revert to a biennial programme budget.

7. The Group of 77 and China displayed additional flexibility during this session regarding UNIFIL. Our Group agreed to proceed based on the proposal presented by you, Mr. Chair, but we stress that it was only due to the exceptional circumstances that the COVID-19 pandemic has created. We look forward to the considering once more of this item as early as practicable, in order to guarantee an actual budget appropriation for UNIFIL, through a proper resolution on financing of UNIFIL and not just a commitment authority. Additionally, the Group of 77 and China stress that the commitment authority does not, in any way, affect or undermine the validity of previous financing of UNIFIL resolutions - in particular the provisions stressing that Israel shall pay the amount of 1,117,005 dollars resulting from the incident of Qana on 18 April 1996 - in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 38/227.

Mr. Chair,

8. As we look ahead and prepare for the seventy-fifth session, and despite the uncertainty of recovering our traditional conduct of business at the UN due to the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Group reaffirms its commitment to always engage constructively in the work of the Fifth Committee. We hope that the spirit of cooperation and flexibility will continue to prevail in the very difficult days we still have ahead of us. We wish all to remain healthy and safe.

I thank you.