



United Kingdom
Mission to the
United Nations

Statement by Richard Croker, Minister Counsellor of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Mission to the United Nations on the closing of the 74th General Assembly Fifth Committee Second Resumed Session.

4 August 2020

I am honoured to address the Fifth Committee on behalf of the United Kingdom for the first time.

The United Kingdom would like to express its warm thanks to the Chair of the Committee for his skilful leadership in guiding this session to a successful conclusion, and for his positive engagement throughout his Chairship in support of efficient and effective Committee working, building on the efforts of the previous Chair. We look forward to working with the incoming Chair and his team to build on successes achieved so far.

We thank the Bureau for their sterling efforts in supporting this, as well as the Fifth Committee Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their hard work. The Committee has once again demonstrated its resilience and adaptability in responding successfully to the unprecedented and challenging situation presented by Covid-19. We express particular appreciation to delegations for agreeing to work without interpretation at this exceptional time.

We are delighted that the Committee demonstrated it could successfully complete complex negotiations to ensure adequate and cost-effective financing for Peacekeeping operations by 1 July, so they can continue their vital support for international peace and security at this critical time. We wish to pay tribute to the dedication of uniformed and civilian personnel in responding to difficult situations resulting from the current pandemic, and to the sacrifices made by Peacekeepers in the course of their duties.

We regret that the session has only concluded now due to the silence procedures we are working with in this extraordinary time being used effectively as a veto on an agreement on seconded active-duty military and police personnel, in spite of the broadest possible consensus having been reached. We appreciate nonetheless the cooperation that led to an eventual agreement and look forward to working with the Committee on a long-term solution to this important issue.

We welcome the Committee re-affirming its commitment to support the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and to minimising environmental impacts of Peacekeeping operations. We are pleased that the Committee introduced more accountability and transparency over the use of assessed mission contributions to fund important programmatic activities. And we applaud the steps forward in measuring mission performance, which supports a more efficient, accountable, and well-managed United Nations.

The Committee agreed to new positions to support an enlarged ACABQ. The United Kingdom reiterates its strong concern over the absence of substantive discussion in this Committee of ACABQ enlargement before the General Assembly vote in January - despite this having been requested at a senior level. The United Kingdom considers it important that the Committee discuss the implications of ACABQ enlargement in the 75th Main session, including future resource requirements.

Looking ahead, the United Kingdom strongly encourages the Committee to carry forward lessons from this session, including efficiencies in ways of working, as a result of this enriching and challenging experience of remote working.

Meanwhile, we hope all colleagues will have a chance to relax, and will stay safe, this summer, and I look forward to meeting colleagues in due course.