

**FIFTH COMMITTEE**

Statement by
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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by thanking the delegations for successfully concluding this session, in particular, for approving the budgets for peacekeeping operations. I wish to thank all the delegates who have been interacting with me personally, as well as with my team, especially Ms Vivian van de Perre, throughout the session but more particularly in the hectic closing days of the session. I thank them for their openness and for their understanding as we appealed repeatedly for greater speed in deciding on the issues at hand.

We are very relieved that, in the end, we managed to avert a shut-down of peacekeeping operations on 1 July due to lack of spending authority. But this was not only a close call, but has had several consequences already. When the agreement on the final amounts for the mission budgets and support functions was communicated to us in the afternoon of Friday, the 25th, my team started finalizing the draft resolutions and the C5 notes on the financials, on the clear understanding that any subsequent decisions either on policy or on posts, would not affect these numbers. In other words, the financial impact of abolition of posts, conversion of GTA into positions, etc. would be ignored and the resulting adjustments accommodated within the respective budget lines, so that there is no overall adjustment to the financials. This step had become necessary due to the limited time available, in the concluding stages of the session, to reflect the financial impact of such decisions in the mission or support budgets; any changes to these budgets would then have to be apportioned across all the missions, and require us to do redo all the calculations and adjust the draft resolutions. This change saved us a significant

amount of time in preparing the final documents for adoption. Whether this will be a sustainable practice for the future, remains to be seen.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal again, formally, to this Committee to be mindful of the impact of the extension of its second resumed and main sessions into the last days of the budget period. It significantly impacts our ability to process year-end and beginning-of-year transactions, making it more difficult to comply with the financial regulations and rules governing such transactions.

Allow me to mention a few examples to illustrate the impact:

- Assessment letters will be delayed, and I can only hope that this will not have a knock on effect on collections and the first quarter payments to troop and police contributing countries.
- The preparation process for the budget instructions for the next cycle has been delayed, because resources were diverted to servicing the committee and also because the General Assembly's decisions have to be reflected suitably in these instructions. This impacts the timely preparation of the next cycle of budget reports.
- The Field Operations and Financing Division could not work on year-end financial closure activities of the 2020/21 period including review of unliquidated obligations and redeployments; this could delay the return of such funds to Member States by a full year.
- Support for the ACABQ for its July session on SPMs has already been impacted negatively.

The extension of the session(s) impacts our ability to service some of the intergovernmental processes due to concurrent meetings and requests for information. It also deprives many of our staff of the opportunity to avail their vacation due to the significant uncertainty about the timing of these sessions. This is not sustainable, and I would urge the Committee to give some serious consideration to how to alleviate these challenges.

For our part, we will continue to find ways to automate and provide information to the ACABQ and to this committee, in electronic format through portals to facilitate your deliberations. We will also reach out to you, including through the Bureau, to explore the improvements that would benefit you in concluding the negotiations earlier.

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity, and I look forward to engaging with the Committee as always, aided by my able teams both within the department and all other departments.