



**Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union**

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## **Closure of Work – Formal Meeting**

**75<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly**

**Fifth Committee**

**Second Resumed Session**

**29 June 2021**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Monaco and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, allow me to thank you Mr. Chair as well as all the members of the Bureau for their continuous work and dedication during the last segment of our 75<sup>th</sup> Session. We would also like to express our utmost gratitude to the Fifth Committee Secretariat and to all the members of the Secretariat, whose contribution has been instrumental in the conclusion of this session.

Mr. Chair,

Today, we are adopting the peacekeeping budgets for the 2021/22 financial cycle. As the second largest collective contributors to UN peacekeeping budgets, the Member states of the European Union attach great importance to peace and security, a core pillar of the Organization. The UN peacekeeping missions deliver stability and protection to some of the most vulnerable people around the world and it is our responsibility to provide the sustainable and predictable resources that are necessary for the missions' to carry out their mandates. Ensuring that peacekeeping operations remain adequately financed and sufficiently equipped is key to serve the people who – now more than ever – need the United Nations.

Reflecting back on our session, we would like to point out three aspects of our working methods we believe our Committee should address going forward.

First, we regret that, for yet another year and despite our comprehensive and balanced approach to policy paragraphs, no substantive outcome could be achieved in the context of the *Crosscutting policy resolution*. In an increasingly complex environment, we are convinced that, in order to ensure peacekeeping remains fit for success, it is our Committee's responsibility to provide guidance to the Secretariat on a number of crucial issues such as environmental protection, sexual exploitation and abuse, safety and security of peacekeepers and mission performance to name a few. The adoption of horizontal policy language in individual missions' budget resolutions is only a temporary remedy, which *de facto* excludes many delegations from participating and thereby diminishes the quality, representability, and

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\* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

legitimacy of the outcome: we therefore look forward to reengaging and concluding on these issues next year under the more inclusive and transparent format of crosscutting.

Second, we are deeply concerned that our working methods challenged our ability to adopt this year's budgets on time, and that, as a result, the Secretary-General would have been compelled to shut down the UN peacekeeping operations. Our chronic inability to respect deadlines puts the entire peacekeeping architecture in unprecedented jeopardy. The exceptional circumstances under which we negotiated can only account for a part of this situation: last year's budgets were also entirely negotiated remotely and could be adopted on time. The core issue lies in our working methods: the Committee has extended its proceedings a full month beyond its supposed end-date. This resulted in conflicting injunctions and undue pressure on the Secretariat to cover, at the same time, the Board of Auditors, the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Committee on Contributions, and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, while closing financial statements. In these conditions, we wish to acknowledge here the outstanding efforts of the UN Secretariat staff to avoid a shutdown of peacekeeping operations. Going forward, and for the future negotiations, we owe it to ourselves, to the members of Secretariat whose work is instrumental for the implementation of our decisions, but also to the women and men in the field who carry out the peacekeeping mandates to finish our work in a timely fashion.

Third, we regret that the Committee did not honor the tentative agreement shaped for the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi and the Regional Service Center in Entebbe. In a body where consensus is the norm, and trust the key, we find "all-or-nothing" approach is neither fair nor balanced and disincentivizes the hard work and engagement towards bridging gaps and building consensus. We hope that to resume to more constructive approaches, and wanted to thank the delegations that showed openness and flexibility.

Mr. Chair, distinguished colleagues,

The EU and its member States would like to express our sincere appreciation to all colleagues for their continued political will to find negotiated and pragmatic solutions for the peacekeeping missions' budgets. Though tested by the circumstances, our ability to act together prevailed and we were able to meet our responsibilities in the interest of the Organization. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our continued and strong commitment to reaching decisions by consensus, a principle that underpins our working methods.

To conclude, and since this closing is also that of our Committee's 75<sup>th</sup> session, allow me to thank, once again, all Groups and Delegations for their continued effort and tireless work and salute the Bureau and commend your dedication and efforts.

I thank you Mr. Chair.