

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR MOHAMED TRAORE, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE CLOSING MEETING OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE, SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE 75th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 29 June 2021)

(Please check against delivery)

Mr Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group at this closing session of the second part of resumed seventy-third session of the Fifth Committee.
2. At the outset, The African Group would like to commend your personal efforts and commitment as well as your positive yet virtual presence during the negotiations, encouraging delegations to come up with constructive ideas to face the constraints of time and for the sake of compromise.
3. We also wish to thank the members of your Bureau who tirelessly contributed to the process.
4. The crucial role of the facilitators deserves an acknowledgement, that extends to Mr. Borgar Tormodsgard, from Norway who had the responsibility to ease the final negotiations on Peacekeeping missions.
5. We appreciate the presence of Mr Abdallah Bachar Bong, the Chair of the Advisory Committee to our meeting today.
6. The Group aligns itself with comments and remarks expressed by the Representative of the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and we have few additions to make.

Mr Chair,

7. The Group notes the continued challenge posed by the working arrangements due to Covid, and particularly regrets the lack of interpretation during the meetings.

8. In addition, virtual meetings negotiations somehow prevent the creation or strengthening of the natural bond coming from in-person meetings. The group is confident that the gradual return to normal working arrangements will benefit the Committee.

Mr Chair,

9. Besides the punctual difficulties due to Covid, the Group reiterates its appeal for a structural change of the working methods of the Fifth Committee. Indeed, the official allocation of a month to conclude the session, while the practice for several years now of a 2 month-long session calls for an assessment of the situation.

10. Parallely, the African Group trusts that the membership of the Committee will benefit from an adjustment of its longstanding habit of starting the session in a moderate fashion, to then concentrate all its energy on the last weeks or days, which bears the consequence of having consecutive days and nights of negotiations, with unnecessary and avoidable time pressure.

11. We commend the sincere cooperation of all delegations and groups, who accepted to engage in good faith in the renewed Mission by Mission approach of PKOs budget proposals consideration. Despite the limitation of the approach during this session, mainly due to time constraints, good results have been reached and pose a basis for next sessions.

Mr Chair,

12. The African Group salutes the outcome of negotiations, concluded just a few hours ago. Achieving the adoption of an overall gross envelope of 6,3 billion dollars for the Missions, as well as agreements on posts and necessitated hard compromises and sacrifices from all sides.

13. As the Second Resumed session is mostly about Peacekeeping Missions, the African Group pays tribute to all the men and women active in the field and working in difficult situations, for international peace and security.

14. As representatives of Member States, of contributing countries, of TCC/PCC, of Host countries, we owe them safety and security as well as all necessary resources to fulfill the duties that they are tasked, for the benefit of the populations.

15. In that regard, we deplore the "natural" trend of the Committee to cut resources, despite the best efforts of the Secretary general to present the most sincere and disciplined budget possible.

Mr Chair,

16. The African Group deeply regrets that serious and grave concerns regarding the United Nations Support Office in Somalia were not taken on board by the Committee during the negotiations.
17. The African Group trusts that the situation on the ground, as depicted in several languages proposals didn't meet the agreement of the membership of the Committee.

Mr Chair,

18. In few days, there will be new coordinator and Bureau of African Group in the Fifth Committee. I would like to thank all those who facilitated Mali's coordination of the African Group during this session, starting with the Vice-Chairs of the African Group Bureau, Mr Felix Eboa from Cameroon, Mr. Joseph Masila from Kenya and Mr Katlego Mmlane from Botswana, the brothers and sisters from the African Group, colleagues from the G77 and China, colleagues from the Russian federation and colleagues from the likeminded group.
19. We hope our efforts related to representing African interests contribute to the work of the Committee, and we take responsibilities for any shortcomings during this term.
20. I wish to conclude, Mr Chair, with special appreciation remarks to the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee, under the able guidance of Mr Lionel Berridge, to the Field Operations Finance Division, led by Mrs Vivian Van de Perre and to Mr Chandru Ramanathan, the Assistant Secretary-General and Controller. who all have provided an exceptional assistance during the session.
21. Your constant expertise and professional support, always provided in a convivial manner, despite all the pressure you are facing, call for a special expression of gratitude on behalf of the African Group.
22. The African Group wishes all delegates departing New York or the Committee, the best of luck and success.

I thank you Mr Chairman.