



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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Mr. Chair,

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

At the outset, we would like thank you, the members of the Bureau, and all the facilitators for guiding us through our deliberations, and the challenges we faced in the main part of our 76th session.

Despite a heavy programme of work, which included the triennial revision of the scales of assessment, our Committee completed its session successfully and on time. This collective success owes a lot to your able leadership and the dedication of the Bureau members, whom we wish to thank for their efforts and guidance throughout the session. Let me also express our utmost gratitude to the members of the Fifth Committee Secretariat and to all the devoted staff-members of the Organization, whose contribution has been instrumental in the successful completion of this session.

Mr. Chair,

Against all odds, virtual meetings proved not to hinder our work or hamper the outcome of our session, but rather enabled us to continue our negotiations in a safer environment. While these working arrangements cannot become the norm, they can have added value, which would be even greater if interpretation was made available, to improve the inclusivity of our proceedings.

The European Union and its Member States are pleased that we complied with our responsibility and adopted a programme budget for 2022 on time, so that the Organisation can operate without discontinuity, deliver on all its mandates, and continue to serve the people who need it the most.

The programme budget for 2022 reflects a wide array of different priorities, and epitomizes the merits of cooperating to achieving greater result: we work best when we work together. We therefore believe that our assumptions and deliberations should always be based on resourcing requests made by the Secretary-General, and avoid arbitrary decisions, further politicization and fragmentation of the budget. Of course, there are still further ambitions that the European Union and its Member States feel could be better reflected, and we will continue to advocate for them. We will also continue to be vigilant for adequate financing of all mandates across the pillars of the UN, notably so Human Rights and Development, considering their complementarity: none can be fully achieved without achieving the other.

This session also demonstrated that our Committee can approve simultaneously and by consensus, resolutions on scales, programme planning, programme budget, and many other important agenda items. If proof was still needed, this confirms that, at its third and last year under trial, the annual budget is now robust and fully functional. We welcome its upcoming review next year. The annual budget cycle makes the Organization more efficient, nimble and agile. It delivers on its promise to bring closer together the generation of mandates and the allocation of resources to implement them.

For instance, the annual budget drastically improved the responsiveness of the United Nations to the pandemic, and we commend the work and dedication of all the staff in the Organization, despite these challenges.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union and its Member States would like to reiterate our strong commitment to reaching decisions by consensus. We continue to believe that consensus needs to remain the fundamental creed of our Committee. It requires that each of us engages in a spirit of good faith, collegiality and constructive cooperation to find common positions that we can all support, even when they do not correspond to our preferred choices.

The resolutions on programme planning or on the scales of assessment, which were approved at a timely moment in our session, demonstrate that this Committee has the capacity to find agreement even on complex technical issues with important political ramifications.

We are therefore concerned with the trend we see developing, where our Committee is unable to bridge gaps between divergent views. In a growing number of instances, we resort to adopting so-called “skeletal resolutions” or “agreed language” and, as a result, fail to provide further political guidance to the Secretariat on the implementation of mandates. The quality of our decisions is anchored in our ability to understand each other and rally on reasonable compromise. It is therefore of utmost urgency to restore this ability, otherwise we face the risk of being permanently stuck in *status quo*, and relegating our Committee to a technical expert subsidiary organ. We also need to reflect on our working methods and find ways to start our substantive engagement earlier during the sessions.

In closing, the European Union and its Member States reaffirm our commitment to serve the core values and principles of the Organization and to continue to work for their realization with you, Mr. Chair, and all members of the Fifth Committee in a spirit of constructive cooperation, consensus and collegiality.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.