



United Kingdom  
Mission to the  
United Nations

## **Statement by the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Mission to the United Nations on the Closing of the United Nations 76<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Fifth Committee Main Session**

**23 December 2021**

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom thanks you and your Bureau for steering the Committee's work to a timely conclusion. Many thanks also to the Fifth Committee Secretariat and representatives from across the Secretariat for their remarkable support.

Despite challenges, including the continued risks presented by the COVID19 pandemic, we have completed the session in good time. We are pleased that last year's late finish, which hindered UN operations, remains an anomaly. We also overcame issues created by the lateness of reports from both the Secretary-General and Advisory Committee. These reports underpin our discussions, and so it is crucial we receive high quality, evidence-based reports in a timely manner.

Mr Chair,

This session saw a number of important items agreed.

While we welcome its timely conclusion, we are disappointed that on the Scales of Assessment we were unable to address technical flaws in the regular budget methodology, which would bring it up to date, and that we persist with a Level C discount in the Peacekeeping Scale, though there is no justifiable evidence base for it. We continue to call on those who benefit from it to relinquish it.

We also regret that once again we did not fully endorse all the Secretary-General's proposed programme plans for 2022. We welcome that this Committee recognised the need to address the challenges faced by the Committee on Programme and Coordination in carrying out its work and look forward to the Secretary-General's proposals.

We are pleased the Committee adopted an annual programme budget that provides the UN with the resources to deliver its important mandates fully, effectively and efficiently. We look forward to seeing ever-more realistic, adaptable resource estimates and a greater focus on results in future budget proposals. We encourage the Secretariat to be ambitious as it builds on lessons learned and new ways of working from the COVID19 pandemic to achieve better, more cost-effective mandate delivery. In that regard, we are pleased to see the Committee was able to move beyond the GSDM proposals and allow the Secretariat to start to develop new and innovative ways to deliver administrative support functions. We also welcome the Committee's call for UNWRA to improve internal governance and oversight, and enhance transparency and accountability. We look forward to seeing an update on progress in its next budget proposal.

Mr Chair,

On Special Political Missions, we are disappointed that we ended without a negotiated outcome. The UK worked hard with like-minded partners to put forward many compromises, and we welcome the efforts of those partners who engaged constructively. While disappointed, we recognise that in the circumstances your intervention was necessary.

On the Revised Estimates for the Human Rights Council, we are pleased to agree funding for this important work. However, it should be of great concern to all that there were attempts to defund entirely a number of agreed mandates. This not only undermines the importance of human rights but the decisions of an elected UN body. The Fifth Committee is responsible for Administrative and Budgetary matters, not re-negotiating mandates, or seeking to undermine them through complete budgetary cuts. I would note that although the UK voted against the creation of the Commission of Inquiry in the OPTs in the Human Rights Council due to concerns about the scope of its mandate, we agreed funding for it, despite our continued concerns. In this regard, once again we regret that funding for the important mandate of the Syria Accountability Mechanism will have to be agreed by a vote.

Mr Chair,

We hoped to have more of the session in person. You, and the bureau, took the correct, but difficult, decision not to do so due to health concerns. This is a reminder of the difficulties we all face as we go about our work.

In that regard, let me finish by thanking the staff of the United Nations, across every duty-station, for their commitment and hard work. We wish them the greatest success in fulfilling United Nations mandates in the year ahead.