

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**FIFTH COMMITTEE**

Statement by  
Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan  
Assistant Secretary-General, Controller

29 June 2022

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

Let me start by thanking the delegations for successfully concluding this session before the end of the budget year, and for approving the budgets for peacekeeping operations just in time.

I wish to thank all the delegates who have been interacting with me personally, as well as with my team, led by Mr. Kelvin Ong, throughout the session and especially in the hectic closing days of the session. I thank them for their openness and for their understanding as we gently urged greater speed in deciding on the difficult issues at hand.

We are very relieved that several long standing issues have been addressed in this session. I am referring in particular to the closed Peacekeeping Operations, whereby the decisions will now enable the settlement of long outstanding dues to troop and police contributing countries as well as the return of credits to Member States in many of these missions. We are also grateful that Member States have heeded the repeated calls of the Secretary-General for some structural adjustments to address the systemic problems impacting the financial situation of the United Nations. We trust that these decisions will allow the Organization to channel its energies to mandate delivery instead of liquidity management.

The adoption of a cross-cutting resolution is also another very welcome development during this session.

I would like to thank the Committee for its support of our critical mine action positions, which have been established at the appropriate levels we requested across missions. This decision will save lives and also allow us to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, even whilst we conduct the independent review of United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). However, I would like to clarify that the cost-sharing recommendation of the ACABQ, that you endorsed, for a support account post in the Conduct and Discipline Service in DMSPC is not implementable. This position provides support only to peacekeeping operations, and there are simply no other entities in the UN system to cost-share the position with.

For the second year in succession, we have embraced a practice where by my team finalizes 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 the agreement on the overall budget levels agreed and communicated to us in relation to peacekeeping missions. In other words, the financial impact of abolition of posts, conversion of GTA into positions, etc. would be accommodated within the respective agreed budget levels. This step has 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, since you have now approved cash pooling for an additional 5 years.
- 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 2021/22 period including review of unliquidated obligations and redeployments; this could delay the return of such funds to Member States by a full year.

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.