

Canada

Fifth Committee Second Resumed Session: Statement on behalf of CANZ

Delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN,
H.E. Ambassador Richard Arbeiter

New York, 03 May 2022

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Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and my own country Canada.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Chair,

CANZ would like to begin with thanking the Secretary-General for the Proposed Peacekeeping Budget for 2022-2023, and to Mr. Bong and the members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their reports and recommendations.

As the Second Resumed session focuses largely on UN peacekeeping operations, we would like to pay tribute to the men and women who serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. All peacekeepers – whether it be military, police, or civilians – demonstrate their selflessness in the pursuit of peace and security.

In this regard, let me note the commitment of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to engage in the spirit of constructive engagement and to seek consensus on all UN peacekeeping policy and budgetary issues.

As we consider the resources to allocate to UN peacekeeping, Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine continues unabated. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to ceasefire and end the humanitarian catastrophe it has created by withdrawing its forces from the territory of Ukraine. As long as Russia continues its war, growing humanitarian needs and financial pressures will complicate the UN's work around the world and strain our capacities to maintain and promote international peace and security, human rights and development.

Peacekeeping Policy Priorities

Mr. Chair,

The Committee has not been able to achieve consensus on its cross-cutting policy resolution since 2016. To ensure important policy elements can be consistently implemented across all peacekeeping missions, we welcome efforts by all delegations to adopt a cross-cutting policy resolution this year.

This session, CANZ will continue to prioritize:

- (1) the women, peace and security agenda, emphasizing the need for the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping;
- (2) accountability to – and of – peacekeepers, including strengthening the Secretary-General’s zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse to ensure adequate and timely response mechanisms are centered on victims and survivors; and,
- (3) adequate resourcing for the full and effective implementation of mandates to protect civilians and children, prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, promote and defend human rights, and ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Investment in Prevention and Peacebuilding

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on investing in prevention and peacebuilding and his proposal for an assessed contribution towards the Peacebuilding Fund. It could not be timelier as the prevention agenda is strained by conflict, COVID-19 and climate change.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand strongly support UN peacebuilding efforts and are major voluntary contributors to the Peacebuilding Fund. The reason is simple: investing in peace now, reduces costlier responses to crises and conflict later. It is a proven investment from Cote d'Ivoire to Papua New Guinea to Colombia, as shared at the High-Level Meeting last week.

Despite the Peacebuilding Fund's impressive results, driven by its flexibility and responsiveness, a critical funding gap exists between peacebuilding needs and the funding available. There are a growing number of Member State requests for peacebuilding support which cannot be met. While we urge all Member States to consider providing voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, an assessed contribution would provide more adequate, sustainable and predictable resources to deliver results over the long-term.

We were heartened by the overwhelming support shown for the Peacebuilding Fund at the High-Level Meeting last week and we are confident that Fifth Committee can find a way to deliver greater investments in peace this session.

Improving the UN Financial Situation

CANZ wants an effective and efficient United Nations, doing work that is relevant to the collective goals of Member States, in a manner accountable to us. In order to do this, the UN must have the cash on hand to implement mandated and budgeted activities.

CANZ believes that the committee has a crucial decision to make this session on improving the UN's financial situation. Negotiations on measures to increase liquidity reached a very advanced stage during the first part of the resumed session, with the committee very close to reaching consensus.

We know, from the Controller's briefings, that the UN will again face liquidity shortfalls in 2024 if we do not agree measures this session. We urge all Member States to seize this rare opportunity to increase liquidity, without additional assessments to Member States, and will work constructively with all colleagues to reach this goal.

It is also important to underscore that late and non-payment of assessed contributions by some Member States remains to be the biggest driver of the liquidity issues facing the UN, which in turn, causes significant challenges to mandate delivery. CANZ's long-standing record of paying our assessments in full, on time and without conditions is an indication of our commitment to the UN. We want the UN to have the resources to deliver on the mandates that we, the Member States, set. We continue to urge Member States to pay their assessments in full, on time and without conditions.

Enhancing accessibility of persons with disabilities

Mr. Chair,

Our group places great importance on the mainstreaming of disability inclusion across the system. A global pandemic has shown us just how vital it is that the United Nations has the right systems in place, to ensure persons with disabilities can access, participate, and contribute to the work of the United Nations in a meaningful way.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, and the improvements made so far to accessibility for persons with disabilities. We note, however, there is still much to do in this area, including due to delays in implementation as a result of the pandemic, and welcome the opportunity to engage with the Secretary-General on this important matter. We encourage the UN system to continue to work collaboratively on disability inclusion and accessibility.

Conclusion

We look forward to working with all colleagues this session to reach a timely consensus on the peacekeeping budget, as well as other key agenda items, to provide the necessary resources to implement mandated activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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