



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Organization of work

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Mr. Chair,

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

The Candidate Countries Montenegro*, Albania*, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia, Monaco and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

As we open our 77th session, let me begin by congratulating you upon your election as Chair of the Fifth Committee, and all newly appointed members of the Bureau. We are confident that, with your experience and under your leadership, our important negotiations throughout this session will reach a fruitful and timely conclusion. Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Margaryan, and his Bureau for successfully guiding us through the 76th session.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the members of the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee, for their unwavering support in facilitating our work, and to the Secretariat officials and programme managers for their continued dedication and support to our Committee. We would also like to thank the chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for his presence: the technical recommendations of the advisory committee remain crucial guidance for our discussion and inform our political decisions.

Mr. Chair,

We will deliver statements, as necessary, when individual items are introduced on our agenda. We would like however to make the following overarching comments:

The European Union and its Member States remain staunch supporters of the Secretary-General's efforts towards an effective implementation of UN reforms. In a world beset by unprecedented crisis, the need for effective multilateral governance is more acute than ever, and with it, that of a nimble United Nations orientated towards the delivery in support of people in need.

To that end, we reiterate our commitment to the reform of the budget cycle. An annual budgetary process facilitates more accurate resourcing of mandates, in line with evolving need, thereby improving implementation, and empowering programme managers who can better focus on results. An annual budget also increases accountability and intergovernmental oversight through the Fifth Committee. We would like to commend the efforts of the UN Secretariat and all programme managers to bring about this paradigm shift, and we stand ready to engage with all colleagues, to draw lessons from the trial period so we can finalize this cornerstone of the Management Pillar's reform, and founding basis for the Secretary-General's vision of a modern UN.

* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

We also remain steadfast supporters of global peacebuilding and conflict prevention. We continue to believe that new ways to fund UN peacebuilding have to be explored, including assessed contributions. We are encouraged in this regard by the recent adoption by consensus of resolution 76/305 on Financing for Peacebuilding and look forward to resuming our discussions on investing in prevention and peacebuilding in the Fifth Committee, so we can deliver on our shared commitment to provide adequate, predictable, and sustained financing for peacebuilding.

There cannot be an effective United Nations without a budget.

On the programming side, we note with satisfaction that, in its last session, the Committee on Programme and Coordination successfully approved by consensus recommendations on 23 of the 28 programme plans. We regret that consensus could not be reached on 5 outstanding programmes, and look forward to addressing them in the Fifth Committee, with any timely conclusions and recommendations of other main committees, in order to adopt the 2023 programme plan by consensus.

On the resources side, we will pay particular attention to the adequate resourcing of all mandates. The 2023 proposed programme budget still does not provide a comprehensive picture and requires a variety of add-ons, including on important matters such as the funding of construction works in UN headquarters and duty stations around the world.

We recall that the General Assembly instructed the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to reflect in its budget proposal the funding for the recurring mandates of the Human Rights Council and we are deeply concerned by the adverse recommendation of the Advisory Committee in this regard. We look forward to our Q&A session to engage with the Chair of the ACABQ and understand the technical assessment behind this recommendation. We also expect that adjustments will be made to avoid unintended consequences of this recommendation that would result in the unprecedented defunding of mandates.

We salute the efforts of the Secretary-General to reflect the newest mandates in his budget proposal. One of our priorities in this regard will be the establishment of the Youth Office, in the framework of Our Common Agenda: the new entity will have the crucial role of promoting full, equal, and meaningful involvement of young persons and youth partnerships across all three pillars of the UN and in humanitarian action; we will engage constructively in our upcoming discussions on this matter to ensure the sustainability of this initiative. Finally, a top priority in this regard is Global Food Insecurity. While we welcome wholeheartedly this initiative and reiterate our full support to its implementation, we are compelled to recall that there would not be a need for such mechanism had it not been for Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. It is a blatant violation of international law, of the UN Charter and of everything this Organization stands for, and we condemn it in the strongest possible terms..

Mr. Chair,

The unprecedented challenges our Organization faced over the past years have put our working methods through the test. We have demonstrated that we can learn, adapt, and improve. We believe it is essential to uphold some key principles, as guidelines to our proceedings. We welcome in this regard the excellent manual that you have prepared, and commend your efforts to invite all groups to jointly contribute to it: this collective and cross-regional endeavor is a perfect example of what 5C can do at its best.

The European Union and its Member States call for the preservation of work/life balance; while we stand ready to fully engage during working hours, working outside normal conference hours, during weekends or over nights, and extending the timeline of the session should be the exception and not the norm. It is our shared responsibility to use the Committee's time as efficiently and effectively as possible, engage constructively, uphold timelines and deadlines, conclude our programme of work in a timely fashion, and allow the Secretariat to implement our resolutions.

We insist that all documents should be submitted on time and in all official languages. We understand the constraints resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the strain on interpretation and translation resources, whose work we want to commend today. Still, we also strongly believe that multilingualism, a core value of the Organisation, ensures effective participation and is key to the much-needed inclusivity and transparency that will help us reach a successful negotiated outcome.

We reiterate our strong commitment to reaching decisions by consensus. Our Committee has proven time and again its capacity to find agreement on technical issues with important political ramifications. This requires each of us to engage in a spirit of good faith, collegiality and constructive cooperation to find middle-ground positions that we can all join and support, even when they do not correspond to our preferred choices. We commit to play our part, guided by the principles of openness and conciliation and reiterate our availability to foster dialogue with all delegations.

In closing, Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States endeavor to work constructively with you and every group and delegation. Despite the heavy agenda before us, we are confident that, under your stewardship, we can conclude our negotiations on time and by consensus.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.