

Closing Statement for the First Resumed Session of the Fifth Committee

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[As delivered]

Thank you Mr. Chair.

The world is facing a multitude of crises: climate change; conflict; food insecurity; repression; poverty; terrorism. Over the past year, these crises have grown in quantity and severity.

In the face of such adversity, the United Nations stands alone as the organization best able to confront these global challenges. For the UN to do its job, it needs every tool at its disposal, and the most important tool is its workforce.

That's why the Fifth Committee devotes an entire session to human resources management each year. This is a dedicated period of time that member states are able to engage in a serious conversation with the Secretariat about what policy and process changes are needed to ensure that the UN oversees its workforce in the most effective manner.

We in the Fifth Committee function like the board of directors of a large organization. If this organization were a company or a university or a government agency, it would be customary for the human resources policies to be reviewed and updated regularly – certainly at least once a year. However, when we are overseeing the most important organization in the world, this board of directors regularly fails to provide the necessary guidance and oversight.

It is true that we passed a comprehensive human resources resolution last year, so some might argue that a similar resolution isn't necessary this year. Let's remember, however, that last year's resolution was the first since 2016. So, despite global crises that are growing day by day, we have undertaken only one meaningful reform of the UN's personnel policies in the past eight years.

Over the next few months, we will spend countless hours negotiating... We've actually already spent countless hours... negotiating a Pact for the Future which will guide the UN for the rest of this century. Whatever lofty words are in the pact will require people and processes to implement them, and that's why the work we do is so important.

Yet, even by the low expectations going into this session, our output from the past five weeks has been dismal. In this session:

- We failed to exercise meaningful oversight of personnel compensation, which is the largest cost driver in the UN.

- We failed to extend measures for seconding active duty military staff to the UN, a failure that will directly impact the success of peacekeeping missions.
- We failed to take action to address the mental health needs and well being of the UN workforce.
- And once again, we failed to provide guidance on the UN's procurement policies and supply chain management, to ensure that it is efficient and in alignment with the 2030 agenda.

This first resumed session was truly exceptional in only one respect – it was one week longer than in previous years. We should admit that this extension was completely unnecessary and that we should go back to a four-week session. And so Mr. Chair, we certainly appreciate your support in reverting to our previous practice.

Thank you colleagues.