



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

SIXTH COMMITTEE 19 November 2020

Revitalization of the General Assembly – Item 126

Statement by Mr Cary Scott-Kemmis, Legal Adviser, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

Check against delivery

Chair,

We wish to make three observations today.

First, we have seen, this session, how efficient and effective it has been to set time limits on national and group statements in our debates.

This has enhanced the predictability and focus of our work, and provided more time for informal consultations.

For the ILC Cluster debates in future, statements could be capped at 8 minutes for national statements and 14 minutes for groups.

Allowing delegations to submit longer versions of their statements for uploading, permits delegations to put a complete and comprehensive recitation of their position on the record.

We strongly urge the Committee to continue to implement this good practice, next session and beyond.

Chair,

Second, and on a complementary matter, it is critical that statements submitted by delegations in this Committee – in this and in previous sessions – are made

available, electronically and on an ongoing basis, by the Secretariat to all delegations.

The reasons this is important are many. Let me touch briefly on a few.

First, it facilitates a better understanding between delegations of respective positions, which assists, inter alia, efforts to identify common ground.

Second, statements delivered in this Committee, often more so than in other Committees, have a particular value with respect to international law and, in certain circumstances, state practice.

Third, the ability to access written statements made by States on its work, is essential for the proper operation of the International Law Commission, which has previously included citations, in its reports and other material, of statements by States on the now defunct 'Papersmart'.

We commend the work of the Secretariat this session in including – in the 'summaries of meetings' section of the UN's Sixth Committee website – links to statement submitted by delegations. We strongly urge the continuation and refinement of this practice, in dialogue with member States.

We also urge the Secretariat to upload the material submitted to PaperSmart in previous sessions to the relevant Sixth Committee websites for previous sessions, mirroring the format it has employed this year and for this session.

Third, and finally, we think that the work of this Committee would benefit, in future, from an enhanced rotation among the coordinators of our resolutions.

Rotations between delegations could occur at regular intervals, such as every three to four years – in line with the regular duration of postings for delegates.

While I have served as a co-coordinator of the item on 'crimes against humanity' this year. Neither I, nor Australia, will continue in this capacity next session.

Such a rotation would more evenly share the workload across our Committee and allow our discussions to benefit from different perspectives and approaches.

Thank you.