



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR KINGSLEY MAMABOLO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON THE
ORGANISATION OF WORK: SECOND RESUMED SESSION OF THE FIFTH
COMMITTEE OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY (New York, 4 May 2015)**

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the Organisation of Work for the second part of the resumed 69th Session of the Fifth Committee.

2. The Group wishes to reiterate our support for the work that you, Mr Chair, and the other Members of the Bureau are doing to ensure the smooth functioning of the Committee. We would also like to express our support for the work done by the ACABQ and the Secretariat to facilitate the negotiations of the Fifth Committee and look forward to being able to count on them again during this Session. The Group, furthermore, expects constructive engagement and frank dialogue with our partners during this Session.

3. We would also like to welcome Mr Yukio Takasu the Under-Secretary General for Management, Ms Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Assistant-Secretary General, Controller, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and Mr Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the ACABQ to the meeting today.

Mr Chairman,

4. The Fifth Committee has a very heavy workload to be dealt with during the month of May. Member States have to consider a large number of reports during the next four (4) weeks. It is therefore regrettable that we once again have to register our concern with the late submission of a substantial number of reports. The unfortunate situation impacts on the ability of Member States to consider the reports in detail and prepare adequately in advance for the session. Having to deal with reports that have not been translated into all the official languages of the United Nations, also present challenges to a number of delegations.

5. The Group of 77 and China is concerned with the tendency whereby budgets for peacekeeping operations are submitted late and in breach of the six-week rule set by the General Assembly. The size of the peacekeeping budget of the United Nations has increased significantly over the past few years. Member States however, are put in a position where we have less and less time each year to complete our consideration of the resource requirements and policy aspects of peacekeeping operations. This undermines the oversight role of the General Assembly and does not provide us with the necessary assurances that the resources are used in the most effective manner. We expect that the Secretariat will continue their efforts to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions, which ultimately should be part and parcel of the efforts to increase the accountability of the Secretariat to the Assembly.

6. Another concern for the Group is the fact that the ACABQ is expected to deal with an increasing number of reports within the same number of scheduled work weeks allocated to them a number of years ago.

Mr Chairman,

7. On the provisional programme of work, the Group of 77 and China wishes to stress the tentative nature of the programme of work and our expectation that the Bureau will amend it throughout the session to reflect progress made in the negotiations. The Group intends to carefully examine the budgets of the peacekeeping operations and ensure that they are adopted in Plenary so as to enable the Secretariat to issue assessment letters in time for the start of the new financial period. We are fully cognisant of the fact that the budgets are time-bound but expect that the programme of work will provide Member States with adequate time to complete a thorough consideration thereof.

8. As mentioned, the workload ahead of us in this session is considerable and demanding. Undoubtedly all the administrative and budgetary aspects of financing peacekeeping operations, including the Support Account for peacekeeping operations and the closed peacekeeping missions will have to be addressed carefully, whilst keeping in mind the importance of concluding our work in a timely manner.

9. Regarding the agenda item relating to cross cutting issues, it must be taken into account that the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations is currently undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations Peace Operations as well as on the emerging needs for the future. This review will, among others, consider the managerial, administrative and financial challenges relating to this process. Thus we propose that these matters be addressed with a practical approach bearing in mind that a more comprehensive analysis may be necessary when the outcome report from the High-level Panel is presented in the forthcoming 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

10. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that during this session, the following key areas will have to be tackled and looks forward to engaging on these issues during the informals:

- I. to ensure that the formulation, presentation, and approval of the peacekeeping budgets is done on the basis of their mandates and the real situation on ground, and not as an arbitrary, across-the-board cost-cutting exercise;
- II. to explore options to achieve a fair solution for the unpaid assessments, accounts payable and other liabilities of closed peacekeeping missions, so as to settle claims outstanding in the missions with cash deficit;
- III. to assess the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy of the Secretary General, in particular the proposal to shift the financial model for the Regional Service Center and the discussion on the post-GFSS; and
- IV. to comprehensively address the systemic and unresolved issues and difficulties faced by the Troop- and Police Contributing Countries including their under-representation in the relevant Departments of the Secretariat dealing with Peacekeeping missions.

Mr Chairman,

11. Referring to previous informal discussions and your endeavours to move forward the discussions on the Working Methods of the Committee, the Group would like to again emphasise that when discussing working methods, it is important to recall the fundamental principle of sovereign equality of Member States. In our view, a more effective and efficient Fifth Committee is strongly related to its degree of inclusiveness, transparency and openness of the decision making process. Previous attempts to favour closed-door debating and negotiations and to restrict the number of delegations that can participate in discussions and negotiations have backfired and ended up contributing to the intensification of mistrust among negotiating groups. The same can be

said for deliberately forcing discussions and negotiations to Ambassadorial level, a trend which has been occurring with increased frequency. An easy first step to improving the working methods of this Committee would be to ensure that our experts are empowered to craft compromises and to make concessions at the early stages of the negotiating process. The first resumed session of the Committee demonstrated the veracity of this hypothesis.

12. Bearing this in mind the Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to improving the working methods of the Fifth Committee and is eager to actively engage on this very important issue. As mentioned in our recent communiqué to you Mr Chairman, we will submit a common position in the form of written inputs to the Chair of the Fifth Committee in due course. Nevertheless, the Group will do so after the conclusion of the Second Resumed Session as it is of the utmost importance that we focus our undivided attention on the critical issues on the agenda during this session, with the view of completing our deliberation within the allocated timeframe. In view of the above, the Group again requests the Chair not to produce any compilation document on his behalf regarding the Committee's working methods until such time as the Group has provided its written inputs.

13. The Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively during the Committee's deliberations on all issues under its consideration during this session.

14. In conclusion, let us not forget the men and women in the field who carry the brunt of the burden and have made many sacrifices in order to achieve the mandates as set out by the United Nations. Our thoughts and prayers also go out to the families and friends of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice during their turn of duty.

I thank you Mr Chairman.