



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. AICHA AFIFI, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORK ALLOCATED TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE 58TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 23 December 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, following the adoption of all the draft resolutions and at the conclusion of the work allocated to the Fifth Committee during the main part of the 58th Session of the General Assembly.

2. At the outset, allow me to express the Group's profound appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman and the other members of the bureau for the crucial role you played to ensure the successful conclusion of our work. Our sincere thanks also go to Under-Secretary-General, Mrs. Bertini; the Controller, Mr. Hawlbwacks; the Budget Director, Mr. Sach and the Staff in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee, as well as all other Secretariat Officials and support staff who were present around the clock to facilitate our deliberations.

3. The Group of 77 and China also commends all the coordinators for their tireless facilitation efforts to achieve a successful outcome of our session. We wish to specifically express our profound gratitude to our dear friends and colleagues, Mr. Aizais Chaudhury and Mr. Jaideep Mazumdar, the distinguished representatives of Pakistan and India, respectively, for the able manner in which they lead us to good results on the budget for 2004 - 2005 and the reform of the budget circle, as contained in documents A/C.5/58/L53 and A/C.5/58/L47.

4. Whilst the last few days had seemed very difficult, we appreciated the cooperation and constructive attitude displayed by our negotiating partners during the negotiations. I was personally deeply touched by the spirit of mutual respect that prevailed between me and Mr. Roberto Martini, the Presidency of the European Union. I congratulate him for his frankness, sincerity and exemplary leadership.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The successful conclusion of the budget negotiations in particular re-confirmed the outstanding credentials and esteem with which the Fifth Committee is held. We had a collective responsibility to approve funding for the Organization for the next two years, and it was incumbent upon all of us not to allow our divergence of views to detract our focus. We therefore consider the outcome of the negotiations on the budget to be a true reflection of the "broadest possible agreement" espoused in General Assembly resolution 41/213.

6. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to reaffirm the importance the Group of 77 and China attaches to the work of the Organization, and the need to ensure its effective and smooth functioning. We have consistently maintained the position that resources proposed by the Secretary-General, and approved by the General Assembly, must be commensurate with the mandates that we as Member States give to the Secretary-General. We are therefore hope that the resources we have just approved will be adequate for the proper discharge of the Organization's mandates.

7. Equally important, the Group will continue to play its effective contribution to the on-going reform process, with the view to ensuring that our Organization is able to effectively and efficiently discharge mandated programmes and activities.

8. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Group, I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy holiday season, and for those who are traveling, we wish them a safe journey.

I thank you.