



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. KAREN LOCK,
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON
THE ORGANISATION OF WORK OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE FOR THE MAIN PART OF THE
61ST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 29 September 2006)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the organisation of work of the Fifth Committee for the main part of the 61st session of the General Assembly.

The Group of 77 and China wishes to congratulate you and the other Members of the Bureau on your election. The ability of the Committee to successfully conclude the work before us will be greatly enhanced by your skillful leadership. We wish to assure you that you can count on the support and co-operation of the Group throughout the 61st session. The Group of 77 and China also wishes to express its appreciation for the invaluable work done by the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat in facilitating the negotiations of the Fifth Committee and look forward to being able to count on them in this session.

The 60th session has shown that by respecting the existing mechanisms for negotiations and the sovereign right of every Member State to pronounce on budgetary and administrative matters, we are able to adopt decisions that are in the interest of the Organisation. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to building on the positive atmosphere in which we ended the second resumed session in July 2006 by engaging constructively with our partners and carefully listening to the concerns and views of all delegations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Fifth Committee in the coming weeks will face the challenge of dealing with a workload that is becoming increasingly heavier from one session to the next. Member States have to consider more than 200 reports, or as many as 8,000 pages, in the next three months, which, we have been told, amount to nearly half of the workload before the General Assembly. It is, therefore, becoming crucial for the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee alike to ensure that Member States receive the reports well in advance and, in accordance, with the guidelines set by the Assembly for the Secretariat. Whilst we appreciate the improvements, as well as the efforts by the Secretariat to deal with the numerous demands before it, we wish to stress that the ability of Member States to consider the reports and prepare for the negotiations is being undermined by the late issuance of reports.

We are unfortunately still witnessing a situation where the issuance of reports is determining the priorities of Member States and thus, the work programme of the Committee. We believe that the reverse should be true. We consequently look forward to reaching a stage where the programme of work is determined by the importance accorded to an item by Member States and not by the date on which reports are issued and made available for introduction to Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the provisional programme of work, the Group of 77 and China appreciates the efforts of the Bureau to prepare a programme aimed at balancing the numerous items before the Committee. We recognise that the Bureau, as in previous sessions, will amend the programme throughout the session to mirror the progress made by the Committee in the negotiations. The Group trusts that careful consideration will be given to the scheduling of items so as to ensure, to the extent possible, that the introduction of items consisting of a large volume of reports will be distributed evenly. We also trust that the Bureau will continue to strive towards ensuring that the programme of work is realistic and reflecting the interests of the collective membership. We further trust that sufficient time will be allocated for the effective consideration of important items.

The Fifth Committee will consider numerous items that are important for the effective functioning of the Organisation. Among these are the various proposals aimed at strengthening the United Nations, the budgets of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the performance reports of the Tribunals and the regular budget, the revised estimates and other budget-related items, and the respective reports of the Committee on Conferences and the Committee for Programme and Coordination. We also have to conclude our consideration of the financing of the Capital Master Plan, act on the requests of Member States for exemption under Article 19 of the United Nations Charter, and adopt the scale of assessments for 2007 to 2009.

The Group of 77 and China therefore at the outset wishes to state that we stand ready to consider and conclude the items before us. We wish to caution against a preoccupation with items that are considered “time-bound” at the expense of other important items that are not budgetary in nature but, in our view, are important for the effective functioning of the Organisation. This Committee has shown in the past that it is able to deal with numerous and complex issues in an expeditious and considered manner. We believe that as Member States, we have a collective responsibility to take decisions that are beneficial to the Organisation and enable it to perform its mandates effectively and efficiently. The Group of 77 and China is ready to play our part towards ensuring a successful outcome of the session.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

