

# Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the organization of work of the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly

New York, 5 March 2002

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the organization of work of the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.
2. Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to you for your excellent leadership at the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the Fifty Committee of the General Assembly for bringing it to a successful conclusion. As we begin the first resumed session of the Fifty Committee, I would like to wish you well in guiding our discussions and to assure you of our full cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China also takes this opportunity to thank you for the draft programme of work and status of documentation for the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the Fifty Committee of the General Assembly as contained in document A/C.5/56/L.40/Rev.1.
4. The Group reiterates its view that late submission of documents disrupts the smooth functioning of the Committee. The Group is concerned also that as a result of late submission of documentation, some items that should be considered during this session do not appear in the programme of work. As a result, the Committee has not been provided with all the relevant reports from ACABQ in writing. Furthermore, there are items on the agenda scheduled to be considered this week, the complete documentation of which is still not available. The Group also notes with concern that reports that were requested by General Assembly resolutions have not been prepared by the Secretariat and are not even listed in the programme of work. The Group would like to receive an explanation from the Secretariat for the lateness and non-issuance of documentation.
5. The Group reiterates its request that this chronic problem be addressed seriously to ensure that the Secretariat complies with the six-week rule, which is reaffirmed every year by the General Assembly. In this context, we emphasized implementation of the relevant provisions of the General Assembly resolution 54/248 and rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
6. With regard to the recently announced cutbacks in conference services and other support service reductions, the Group of 77 and China would like to request that this matter be considered under agenda item 123 on the programme budget for 2002-2003. The Group of 77 and China intends to make a statement on this important question which is having a negative impact not only on the work of the Organization but particularly on the functioning of the Group.
7. Without prejudice to the comments that the Group intends to make on particular agenda items such as human resources management and others, the Group would like to make the following preliminary remarks:
8. The Group would like to seek clarification with regard to the reference in the programme of work to the special briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Management scheduled for the morning of Thursday, 14 March 2002. In previous sessions the Under-Secretary-General used this occasion to brief the Fifth Committee on the financial situation of the United Nations. If that is going to be the case on this occasion, the Group of 77 and China would like to request that the briefing be made to the Committee this week so that

delegations can have an opportunity to comment on it next week as it has been the practice. The Group concurs with the views expressed by the European Union on the importance of this issue and expects that the current procedure will be followed in dealing with this subject.

9. The Group welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/672) and the Advisory Committee (A/56/711) on the construction of additional office facilities at ECA, Addis Abeba. Indeed, in the last few years the relocation of the regional, sub-regional and country offices of the UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes in Addis Abeba to the United Nations compound, and the expansion of the UN humanitarian and development activities in the region, have led to increased demand for office space and to taking measures compromising security and safety standards.

10. As indicated in para. 8 of the Advisory Committee's report, delay in approving the funds might lead to higher costs in the long run. In this regard, the Group is in favor of taking a decision on this issue based on the proposals of the Secretary-General approved by the Advisory Committee.

11. On the issue of standards of accommodation for air travel, an important issue deals with modalities of air ticket issuance and reimbursement for UN travel. It has come to the notice of many delegations that ticket purchased from the capitals cost much less than the tickets arranged by the Secretariat through designated travel agency. We have several instances in this regard on record. The Group would like to request that a detailed statement showing the difference in the cost of air tickets issued by the designated agency and those available in various capitals be prepared. The Group has also noticed with regret undue delays in reimbursement of the cost of ticket purchased in the capital that are not procured through designated travel agency due to paucity of time. The Group would appreciate if a statement showing the procedures of reimbursement of such tickets is circulated for our information, and if possible some improvement. In this regard, the Group would like to express its support to the recommendations of ACABQ on standards of accommodation for air travel.

12. The Group attaches particular importance to the financing of the two tribunals and MONUC, gratis personnel, and IMIS. In this regard, the Group expects that the Committee will give proper consideration to these issues. As regards the report on public information activities, the Group would be willing to consider it in the framework of the comprehensive review that is to going to be undertaken in its fifty-seventh session

13. In the case of the report on the arrears of the former Yugoslavia under the agenda item of scale of assessments, the Group looks forward to the additional information as well as the views of other delegations on the proper way to approach this issue, taking into consideration its political, legal and technical dimensions.

Mr. Chairman,

14. In concluding, the Group of 77 and China would like once again to pledge its support and cooperation for the successful conclusion of the work of this session.