



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR SIMON CARDY,
PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 127:
PATTERN OF CONFERENCES, BEFORE THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 11 April 2006)**

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China following the adoption of resolution A/C.5/60/L.36 on agenda item 127, 'Pattern of Conferences'.

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to ensuring the equal treatment of the official languages of the United Nations, as well as the timely publication of documentation, the provision of adequate conference facilities to Member States and the integration of information technology across duty stations.

The Group therefore expresses its deep appreciation to Mr Alejandro Torres Lepori of Argentina for the successful co-ordination of the negotiation process in the 5th Committee on this agenda item.

Mr Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China reiterates the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies. In this regard, the Group is disappointed that some Member States are still not ready to provide the additional resources that are needed to address the decline in interpretation services for meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States. The time has come to solve this problem.

The Group also considers that timely, easy and rapid access to documents in the six official languages of the United Nations is an essential element for the success of intergovernmental processes. The resolution before us, regrettably, does not attach sufficient importance to addressing the backlog in summary and verbatim records in the six official languages, which is necessary for maintaining the institutional memory of the Organization.

Furthermore, the Group is of the view that the measures that have been taken thus far to address the chronic problem of late issuance of documentation are inadequate. We are pleased that the Committee on Conferences will conduct a thorough analysis on this issue in order to recommend concrete proposals on an accountability framework to ensure full compliance with the established rules on submission processes and issuance of documents.

Mr Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts to bring about parity among duty stations in terms of information technology and to fill vacancies in the interpretation and translation sections at the United Nations Office in Nairobi. The Secretariat should take further measures to address these problems, including conducting a special competitive exam to fill vacant Arabic language posts in Nairobi.

The Group acknowledges the important work of the Committee on Conferences and reiterates its full support for the Committee's mandate. The Committee has an important role to play in the UN reform process through its ability to modify the Calendar of Conferences and it will also contribute in future during the implementation of the Capital Master Plan.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China wishes to emphasize that any reduction in the length of reports originating from the Secretariat should not negatively affect the quality of presentation or the content of the reports and should be conducted in a non-selective, flexible and case by case manner. The Group reaffirms that the current mandates of the General Assembly encourage intergovernmental bodies to abide by certain voluntary page limits. However, page limits on inter-governmental reports cannot be enforced and we share the opinion of the Bureau of the C34 that the recent attempts by the Secretariat to impose a page limit on the C34 report are unacceptable. The Group expects the Secretariat to carry out its mandate and to present the C34 report in full.

I thank you, Mr Chairman

