



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. KAREN LOCK, PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON EXPLANATION OF POSITION AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.5/61/L.8 (RENOVATION OF THE RESIDENCE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL) IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 21 November 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in explanation of position after the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.8.

The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the distinguished representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the manner in which he coordinated the negotiations of the Fifth Committee on the draft resolution. We also wish to thank our partners for the constructive spirit that prevailed throughout the negotiations. We trust that the Committee will be able to apply the same constructive approach to other negotiations and thereby enabling it to bring negotiations on other budget related items to an early conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

From the outset, the Group of 77 and China held the view that the renovation of the residence of the Secretary-General should have been addressed sooner, in order to avoid cost escalations and to ensure that the Secretary-General and his family live in a comfortable and safe environment. We consequently supported the approval of the project and the authorization of additional resources.

It will be recalled that the Group was initially concerned by the observation of the ACABQ expressing the hope that the Secretariat may be able to absorb the costs of the project. We, however, joined the consensus on paragraph 2 of the draft resolution after we had received assurances from the Secretariat that attempts to absorb the cost will not lead to delays in projects that the General Assembly has approved under section 32 of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. Furthermore, we were assured that the expenditures will be reported on in the context of the second performance report when the expenditures pattern for section 1 and 32 of the programme budget will become clear.

We therefore wish to stress that we expect that the Secretariat will adhere to the time schedules for projects financed under section 32 of the current programme budget so as to avoid cost escalations for the Organisation in the longer term, as requested in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution. The Group also expects that every effort will be made to conclude the negotiations between the United Nations and the host country referred to in paragraph 2 of the ACABQ report.

Mr. Chairman, with the adoption of the draft resolution, the Group of 77 and China trusts that the Secretariat will be able to proceed expeditiously with long overdue renovations to the residence of the Secretary-General.

I thank you.