



INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS KAREN LINGENFELDER, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 24 June 2015)

Mr Chairman

Although we are all eager to start implementing our long anticipated, and may I add well deserved, vacation plans, I would like to make a few remarks on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr Chairman

Let me begin by reflecting on the achievements of this Second Resumed session. The Group of 77 and China would like to welcome the successful negotiations on the resolution on cross cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations, which has been adopted in this session. We feel that the guidance provided in this resolution will give further impetus to the betterment and efficacy of the peace keeping operations in terms of budget presentation and financial management, personnel issues, operational requirements, special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, the global field support strategy and other issues.

The Group welcomes the establishment of an External Independent Review by the Secretary General to review and assess the response of the United Nations to the recent allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the Central African Republic and looks forward to receive and study the review as well as the lessons learned.

This initiative will strengthen the efforts towards the full implementation of the United Nations Zero Tolerance Policy towards sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The Group welcomes the efforts of the Secretary General in strengthening the measures in this regard and requests the Secretary General to maintain the current reporting methodology on SAE cases and continue to engage with member states, in particular, with troop and police contributing countries.

Mr Chairman

The Group acknowledges the increasing complexity of the peacekeeping operations and recognises the great sacrifices made by peacekeepers under difficult, harsh, complex and often dangerous situations. In this regard, the Group welcomes the agreement on the settlement of death and disability compensation claims, as well as its timely review. The Group stresses that the troop and police contributing countries make an invaluable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and would like to emphasize the importance for the Secretary General to continue to closely consult with the troop and police contributing countries on all matters related to peace keeping operations.

Mr Chairman

The Group would like to express its sincere appreciation for your guidance during the entire Sixty-Ninth session. The Fifth Committee started off with an intense Main Session in October 2014 and this momentum carried through both Resumed Sessions.

Your constant engagement on all levels was highly appreciated, even though it might not have seemed like it at the time. Your genuine efforts to have the Sessions concluded on time spoke of able Chairmanship conducted in a professional manner. We would like to wish you all the best in your future endeavors and look forward to any future meetings in the passages being on matters totally unrelated to the Fifth Committee.

We also wish to extend our appreciation to all members of the Bureau which endeavored, under sometimes difficult circumstances, to provide the Committee with a Programme of Work. We would like to recognize the invaluable contribution made by all facilitators and burden sharers who carried a heavy burden of ensuring that the interests of all member states are reflected in often difficult negotiations.

We cannot ignore the dedication of our Fifth Committee Secretariat which often goes beyond the call of duty. They answer calls for assistance no matter the time; are always ready with yet another rev X; provide hard copies on request and all this with a positive attitude. We really would like to express our sincere appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work which facilitated the successful conclusion of our negotiations. The Group would further like to thank the Secretariat of the Group of 77 and China for its dedicated and tireless support to the Group.

To all the staff from Conference Services, who ensured that the limitless supply of pencils, were always sharp, we wish to thank you for your tireless efforts and to encourage you to keep the pencils extra sharp during the forthcoming Main Part of the Seventieth Session. We also wish to applaud you for the effective management of the mounds of paperwork generated by this Committee. To the interpreters, we wish to apologize for the times we did not activate the microphones; spoke too fast; did not pronounce our words clearly and all the many things we as delegates do that does not make your work easy. We highly value your professionalism, although we often neglect to thank you and the sound engineers.

Last on our list, but not by any chance the least are our negotiating partners. We wish to thank you for your constructive engagement during this session and look forward to building on this positive momentum during the Main Session.

Mr Chairman

As always, there comes a time to wish some of our colleagues adieu as they venture into a different phase of their lives. In this regard, we would like to extend our warmest wishes to the distinguished and valued delegates who will be leaving after the conclusion of this session. We also wish to extend a warm welcome to all the new colleagues who have joined us and want to re-assure them that all the rumours about the Fifth Committee are true.

Mr Chairman

All this being said, we still wish to express our concerns relating to the current working methods of the Committee, which leads to the inability of the Committee to finish its work on time as structured in the original program of work. The fluid nature of the programme of work this session, which was constantly updated and amended, created an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding the way forward. Furthermore, this situation also constructs a far-from-ideal impression on the Committee as a whole.

To overcome this issue, will require the cooperation and commitment from member states as well as the secretariat. In this regard, the Group will in due course provide the Chair with our proposals

on how to take the issue of the Working Methods forward.

Mr Chairman

In conclusion, let me share the words of the former South African President, Nelson Mandela, and I quote : "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb". End quote. The Fifth Committee has successfully concluded its work in the Sixty-Ninth Session, but the Main Session of the 70th Session of the General Assembly is still before us. The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its commitment to engaging constructively in the Seventieth Session and to approaching this next hill with the same tenacity, zeal and vigour as during this session.

I thank you Mr Chairman.