



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. HAKIM MIHOUBI, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR BRAINSTORMING ON THE INTERNAL WORKING METHODS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (New York, 10 February 2012)

Mr. President,

1. It is an honour for me on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and on my personal behalf as well to participate in this event today. Having assumed the Chair of the Group of 77 at the beginning of this year, I take this opportunity to assure you of Group's full and constructive cooperation during the rest of the year.
2. Mr. President, we thank you for the opportunity that you have accorded us to reflect on how to enhance the work of the Fifth Committee and its internal working methods. The Group attaches great importance to the work of the Fifth Committee as it is the sole Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with administrative and budgetary matters.
3. As a committee of the whole of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee performs its functions in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. We believe its work must always reflect the intergovernmental, multilateral and universal character of the United Nations.
4. In seeking to enhance the work of the General Assembly and its main committees, it is imperative to reaffirm the United Nations founding principle of sovereign equality of Member States. The United Nations draws its legitimacy from the very fact that irrespective of their size, population or socio-economic development, Member States bear equal rights. The diversity of the United Nations membership, national interests and positions must be taken into account if we want to remain true to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. President,

5. The Group of 77 and China strongly believes that in seeking to enhance the role of the Fifth Committee, it is of utmost importance to ensure inclusiveness, transparency and openness of the decision making process.
6. Given the critical role of the Fifth Committee in UN's financial, administrative, and management affairs, it is imperative that it forges genuine dialogues in the spirit of partnership and in accordance with collegial decision making. Transparency in its decisions and processes will fortify inclusive character of the Committee. Equal sovereignty resides in the respect for, and in accommodation of varying points of view. Insular and singular approaches would progressively undermine the very essence of its constitution.
7. The Group recalls that, in accordance with Article 18 of the Charter, decisions of the General Assembly on budgetary questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority. The Group is also aware that the General Assembly by its resolution 41/213 considered it desirable that the Fifth Committee continue to make all possible efforts with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement.

This working method of the Fifth Committee might be at times construed as cumbersome and time consuming. Nevertheless, it grants all Member States equal opportunities to participate in the decision making process.

Mr. President,

8. Over the years, the Fifth Committee has made significant efforts to enhance its work. What remains to be done largely hinges on the Secretariat enhancing its efforts to abide by the mandates of the General Assembly. There are many instances where the Secretariat has not met its commitment to provide Member States with the requisite documents and information in a timely manner.

9. Indeed, the Group has observed that there are certain agenda items that are perennially introduced very late in the session. A case in point is the budget for Special Political Missions whose late introduction does not accord member states the opportunity to conduct a thorough examination of their requirements. This is unfortunate considering that the SPM budgets account for approximately 23 % of the regular budget.

Mr. President,

10. The Group recognizes that the General Assembly has previously mandated each of its main committees to consider their internal working methods. In this context, we remain convinced that our deliberation today will make helpful contributions to this issue in the Fifth Committee and contribute to promoting mutual trust and goodwill among the Member States as well as the Secretariat.

Thank you, Mr. President.

