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Seventy-fifth session

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Chair: Mr. Rai (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 126: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (continued) (A/C.2/75/L.63)

Draft decision A/C.2/75/L.63: Revitalization of the work of the Second Committee

1. **The Chair** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

2. *Draft decision A/C.2/75/L.63 was adopted.*

3. **Mr. Diane** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the adjustments made to the Committee's programme of work in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic should not set a precedent for future sessions. The Group would continue to engage constructively in the revitalization of the Committee's work, with a view to increasing its impact and relevance. Through its engagement, the Group sought to enhance international development and accelerate the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a primary focus on the overarching objective of the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

4. Solidarity and a multilateral approach centred on the United Nations were critical to collective efforts towards improving the Committee's work. The COVID-19 pandemic had caused severe disruptions to societies and economies, reversing development gains achieved over decades and presenting increased challenges for all developing countries. The socioeconomic fallout from the pandemic would directly influence the Committee's work during the remaining years of the decade of action and delivery.

5. Regarding the Group's position on the revitalization of the Committee's work and the proposals in the draft decision, the Group wished to maintain the Committee's business continuity modalities for the immediate future. Delegations should be able to make statements in both the general debate and the debates on individual agenda items, because statements in the latter had a different and complementary focus and were of great importance for developing countries. The Group reaffirmed the inalienable right of all delegations to submit proposals for the introduction of additional agenda items or new draft resolutions under existing items as a fundamental and crucial element in the discussion on the revitalization of the Committee's work.

6. The work of the Committee and the United Nations extended beyond the 2030 Agenda, and any attempt to focus the Committee's work solely on the 2030 Agenda represented a grave misconstruction of the intended purposes of the Committee. The relevance and

periodicity of agenda items and draft resolutions should be considered carefully, on a case-by-case basis. The draft decision contained a reference to beginning discussions to determine a common definition of technical rollovers, given the lack of a common understanding thereof. Such reference in no way constituted an agreement or willingness on the part of the Group to apply technical rollovers to draft resolutions at future sessions, in particular those submitted on behalf of the Group.

7. The Committee should be afforded sufficient time to adjust to the mandates contained in the draft decision and decision 74/537 B, some of which had yet to be implemented. The impact of the changes to the work and working methods of the Committee should be properly evaluated before any further changes were made. The decision to follow up on the implementation of the draft decision at the seventy-seventh session was welcome.

8. **Ms. Visser** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that a revitalized, fit-for-purpose Committee was essential to effectively and efficiently address new and emerging challenges. The European Union had hoped to reach a more ambitious draft decision that would constitute not a tiny step, but rather a leap towards revitalizing the Committee, allowing the Committee's work and resources to be committed fully to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was important to keep the revitalization of the Committee's work on the agenda for the forthcoming session and beyond. While it was deeply regrettable that no concrete steps could be agreed upon, the draft decision contained many important proposals that would serve as a good basis for further progress at the forthcoming session.

9. The European Union would continue to focus on making the 2030 Agenda the driving force behind the Committee's agenda. The Committee's discussions of agenda items should contribute directly to the decade of action. Improvements could be made by refocusing, merging, discontinuing or widening the periodicity of some resolutions, which would allow the Committee to focus on issues that truly made a difference to the well-being of citizens and the planet. To do so, the Committee should examine the possibilities of co-authorship of zero draft resolutions and co-facilitation of draft resolutions. The European Union would continue to carefully assess the need for every draft resolution to call for a report and would examine the possibilities of joint reports under agenda items of a similar nature. The European Union hoped that the forthcoming session would provide an opportunity to negotiate a definition of technical rollovers to allow them to be used for specific draft resolutions in the future and lower the

Committee's workload, enabling it to focus on the most important draft resolutions in a certain year.

10. The Committee should build upon the dedication to efficiency and the level of trust demonstrated by all during the main part of the seventy-fifth session when continuing discussions on the revitalization of its work and maintain its consensual character.

11. **Ms. Compston** (United Kingdom) said that her country welcomed the consensus reached on the draft decision, in particular on the periodicity and streamlining of draft resolutions and on beginning discussions to reach a common understanding of technical rollovers. It was more important than ever for the United Nations to be able to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. In that regard, the Committee should play an important role and be fit-for-purpose.

12. The limited progress made in the draft decision and the discussions on the revitalization of the Committee's work was disappointing. If the 2030 Agenda was to be achieved, the valuable intergovernmental discussions within the Committee should provide clear guidance and ensure tangible implementation, but it was not clear whether every draft resolution and discussion of the Committee currently did so. During the seventy-sixth session, the Committee should work together to be bold and creative, merge and streamline draft resolutions to create space for new and relevant topics of discussion, and focus its deliberations on advancing the 2030 Agenda. The United Kingdom stood ready to work tirelessly to find solutions and produce a stronger outcome at the forthcoming session.

13. **Mr. Walter** (United States of America) said that the draft decision would empower the Committee to continue its important discussion on the revitalization of its work at the forthcoming session. The Committee must become more relevant and streamlined, be mindful of its resources and recommit itself to the fundamental principles of the United Nations. His delegation would therefore have preferred a more ambitious and action-oriented draft decision.

14. The Committee must address current challenges in its draft resolutions. Too many of its draft resolutions were outdated, obsolete and duplicative of the work of other international organizations. As the Committee's workload increased to unprecedented levels during unprecedented times, it was essential to rationalize the number of draft resolutions considered each year. The Committee must focus on issues of critical importance to States and their citizens and avoid repetitive debates that did not advance solutions to real-world problems or deliver tangible benefits to those furthest behind. The United States therefore welcomed the inclusion in the

draft decision of the importance of periodicity and streamlining updates to draft resolutions.

15. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Mexico) said that the adoption of the draft decision by consensus would not have been possible without the Chair's leadership or the efforts of the facilitators to produce a consensus text that built upon the progress already achieved and pressed forward, albeit in small steps. The Committee had moved away from inconsequential working papers towards actionable decisions that could be implemented to improve its working methods and efficiency. Only by doing so would the Committee be able to increase its impact on the lives of people, moving them towards sustainable development, and respond to emerging threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The revitalization of the Committee was an ongoing process, and Mexico could be counted upon to contribute to strengthening the Committee.

16. **Ms. Fisher-Tsin** (Israel) said that the Chair and the Bureau should be commended for achieving a consensual outcome and for pursuing the revitalization of the Committee's work. However, the draft decision was far from what was needed for an effective Committee, and much remained to be done. The people of the world rightfully expected the Committee to work tirelessly to realize the 2030 Agenda on time. Israel would continue to support the revitalization of the Committee's work and hoped that the incoming Bureau would maintain revitalization as a priority and continue to push for meaningful progress.

17. **Monsignor Hansen** (Observer for the Holy See) said that his delegation was particularly pleased that decision 74/537 B had been recalled in the draft decision, given its important and consensus-based language on the work and agenda of the Committee, and that its implementation was to remain high on the agenda. The recognition of the general debate and its broad scope was also welcome. It was crucial to maintain both the general debate and the general discussions on individual agenda items to allow delegations to address all issues and present their priorities in a more detailed manner. His delegation also welcomed the fact that discussions would begin during the seventy-sixth session to determine a common definition of technical rollovers.

18. Regarding separate discussions on cross-cutting issues in draft resolutions, care should be taken not to overload the first part of the main session. Nevertheless, early negotiations on cross-cutting language had proved beneficial to the overall work of the Committee during the seventy-fifth session, and his delegation therefore saw merit in the Bureau considering such discussions.

19. The incoming Bureau should carefully consider how to advance the faithful implementation of the two decisions on revitalization, including all issues related to the periodicity and drafting of, and negotiations on, draft resolutions. Any future draft decisions should be subject to paragraph-by-paragraph discussions and, if needed, negotiations, given that a number of proposals presented in the past had never been fully discussed by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.