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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 30 September 2021, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. González López (El Salvador)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Statement by the Chair

1. **The Chair** said that the important issues and global challenges covered by the Committee, ranging from eradicating colonialism and attaining peace in the Middle East to ensuring the peaceful use of space technology for the benefit of humankind, could only be addressed through a revitalized multilateralism. An efficient and effective General Assembly fulfilling its duties under the Charter of the United Nations was key to preserving the Organization's legitimacy and impact on standard setting. Revitalization of the Committee's work would, in turn, be vital for strengthening the functioning and effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole.

Organization of work (A/76/250; A/C.4/76/1; A/C.4/76/INF/1/Rev.1 and A/C.4/76/INF/4; A/C.4/75/L.1/Rev.1)

2. **The Chair**, drawing attention to the documents relevant to the organization of work of the Committee, and in particular to its proposed programme of work (A/C.4/76/L.1), noted that, as a result of physical distancing guidelines and constraints related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Committee would be unable to hold a full-fledged session for the second year in a row. The alternative modalities proposed constituted a temporary measure applied during the extraordinary situation resulting from the pandemic and would in no way set a precedent for the work of the Committee at future sessions.

3. **Ms. Sharma** (Secretary of the Committee) read out oral revisions to the programme of work (A/C.4/76/L.1).

4. **Ms. Feisthauer Silveira** (Brazil) said that in paragraph 9 of its resolution 75/243, the General Assembly had confirmed that programmes of the proposed programme budget in respect of which the Committee for Programme and Coordination had not provided conclusions and recommendations should be reviewed by the plenary or the Main Committee responsible for those mandates in a timely manner, for consideration and approval by the Fifth Committee. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its June 2021 session, had not recommended the approval of two programmes of the proposed programme budget for 2022 whose mandates fell under the purview of the Fourth Committee, namely, programme 4 on peacekeeping operations and programme 24 on global communications. Those programmes should therefore be discussed by Committee members under agenda item

139, in accordance with resolution 75/243. Her delegation looked forward to a constructive discussion of the two open programmes during the current session.

5. **Ms. Fernández Fernández** (Cuba) said that her delegation supported the proposal to include discussion of agenda item 139 in the programme of work. The Main Committees had a duty to address substantively programmes and subprogrammes of the proposed programme budget that lacked specific conclusions and recommendations from the Committee for Programme and Coordination, given that the aim of those programmes was to implement the mandates of the Committee. Implementing paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 75/243 would assist programme administrators by providing clear and accurate guidance on how to carry out their work as promptly as possible. Cuba therefore hoped that the Bureau would make room in the programme of work to address that important matter.

6. **Mr. Devyatkin** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation agreed that in line with General Assembly resolution 75/243, the Committee should include in its programme of work a discussion of the programmes in respect of which the Committee for Programme and Coordination had not reached consensus in June 2021, so as to provide the Fifth Committee with conclusions and recommendations on those programmes at the earliest opportunity.

7. **Mr. Mohamed** (Egypt) said that his delegation reiterated the request that the Committee's programme of work include a discussion of the relevant open programmes under the agenda item on programme planning.

8. **Ms. Wang Tao** (China) said that her delegation echoed the position expressed by the representatives of Brazil, Cuba, Egypt and the Russian Federation.

9. **The Chair** said that the Bureau was committed to finding the optimal forum for the Committee to have a genuine discussion on and address the outstanding questions, which were of the utmost relevance to the work of the Committee.

10. She took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work (A/C.4/76/L.1), as orally revised.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chair** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under agenda item 53, entitled "International cooperation in the

peaceful uses of outer space". She took it that the Committee wished to establish the group.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **The Chair** said that the Working Group was traditionally chaired by the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. She therefore took it that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Piso (Romania) as Chair of the Working Group.

15. *It was so decided.*

Requests for hearing

16. **The Chair** informed the Committee that she had received 138 communications containing requests for hearing relating to the questions of American Samoa, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Turks and Caicos, United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara under item 63. She suggested that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communications should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at the subsequent meeting.

17. *It was so decided.*

18. **The Chair** said that she had also received communications from the Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands, the President of French Polynesia, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar and the Lieutenant Governor of Guam, who wished to address the Committee under item 63. Their statements would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.