



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

53rd plenary meeting
 Tuesday, 14 January 2020, 10 a.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria)

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Agenda item 139 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 7 January 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/74/642)

Letter dated 9 January 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/74/642/Add.1)

The President: Before proceeding, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/74/642 and A/74/642/Add.1. Document A/74/642 contains a letter dated 7 January 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 11 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations, within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

“A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly ... The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.”

In document A/74/642/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/74/642, Suriname has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

I should also like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/74/642/Add.1, Lebanon has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. That information will be reflected in document A/74/642/Add.2, to be issued.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 123 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/74/L.5)

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.5.

Mr. Bamya (Palestine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.5, on the enlargement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), under agenda item 123, “Strengthening of the United Nations system”.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

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The ACABQ has undergone successive enlargements to take into account the increase in membership of the United Nations. However, the last of the enlargements took place in 1977. As all the members know, the United Nations membership has grown by 25 per cent since then. The current distribution between regional groups within the Committee is incompatible with the objective of broad geographical representation enshrined in the successive resolutions on enlargement and constitutes an unfair situation that should not have lasted this long.

The draft resolution put forward by the G-77 and China addresses this important matter, which has been discussed in plenary in previous years without being resolved. It is an overriding consideration that cannot be conditioned or be subject to any other. Previous resolutions adopted since 1977 were focused solely on enlargement, and this draft resolution is no exception. Other matters, including the working methods of the Committee and the conditions of service of its members, can be dealt with separately. In that regard, the Group stresses its willingness and readiness to engage in the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee on those issues and is confident that an agreement taking into account an increased and more representative membership of the ACABQ can be reached.

Previous resolutions regarding ACABQ enlargement referred explicitly to increasing the participation of developing countries, without ensuring, however, that the regional groups of which developing countries are part are duly represented in the ACABQ. The draft resolution presented by our Group offers a more balanced and just distribution that corresponds to the reality of the United Nations membership in each regional group and ensures increased participation of developing countries. As such, it is fully in line with previous resolutions adopted by the Assembly on the matter and furthers their implementation.

The Group welcomes all statements made in support of broad geographical representation. Action on those matters is long overdue and will only strengthen the United Nations. Given the importance of the ACABQ and its role for the entire Organization, broad geographical representation should not be denied or further delayed. We therefore call on all delegations to vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.5.

The President: I call on the representative of Japan on a point of order.

Mr. Hoshino (Japan): Before we move forward, Japan would like to raise a point of order under rule 71 of the rules of procedure.

As the members can see, draft resolution A/74/L.5, which is before us, proposes to amend rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Rule 163 stipulates that the rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the General Assembly after a Committee has reported on the proposed amendment. In this case no Committee has had an opportunity to consider the draft resolution, and the General Assembly does not have before it the report of any Committee on the proposed amendment. Therefore, the General Assembly should not take action on draft resolution A/74/L.5 until a Committee, or at least the Fifth Committee, reports on the proposal. Accordingly, Japan proposes to postpone action by the General Assembly on the draft resolution.

The President: I call on the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on a point of order.

Mr. Bamy (Palestine): I take the floor in response to the motion put forward by Japan. Our understanding is that the purpose of rule 163 concerns how we draft an amendment to the rules of procedure and ensuring that it is legally sound. That is evident when reading annex II, paragraph 1 (c), of the rules of procedure. It is our belief that in this case the amendment to the rules of procedure we are proposing only changes a number — from 16 to 20 members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions — and does not pertain to drafting. Therefore, we do not consider that the plenary is precluded from taking action on the draft resolution presented by the Group of 77 and China.

Before we proceed to the voting, may I ask the President to clarify what a “yes” vote would entail and what a “no” vote would entail?

The President: I shall now put to a recorded vote the question of whether draft resolution A/74/L.5 should be postponed until the Fifth Committee has reported on the proposed amendment in accordance with rule 163 of the rules of procedure.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece,

Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Belarus, Costa Rica, Russian Federation, Serbia

The motion was rejected by 50 votes to 114, with 4 abstentions.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/74/L.5.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of draft resolution A/74/L.5, the General Assembly would first decide to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 16 to 20 members, beginning from 1 January 2021; secondly, also decide that seats shall be distributed as follows among regional groups — five from the Group of African States, five from the Group of Asian and Pacific States, two from the Group of Eastern European States, four from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and four from the Group of Western European and other States; thirdly, further decide to amend, with effect from 1 January 2021, rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to read:

“The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions consisting of twenty members, including at least three financial experts of recognized standing.”

Pursuant to the decisions contained in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the draft resolution, it is envisaged that an increase in the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 16 to 20 members would lead to an extension of the meeting time of the Committee by four weeks per year, as it is expected that a higher number of queries would be raised at each hearing of the Committee, making the sessions longer. A higher number of questions would need to be answered in writing and the executive sessions of the Committee would be longer, with further information to be synthesized to produce the reports of the Committee. As a result of the increased workload of the Advisory Committee, it is envisioned that there would be an increase in resource requirements starting in 2021, under section 1, “Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination”, section 2, “General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management”, section 29, “Management and Support Services”, and section 36, “Staff Assessment”.

For section 1, “Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination” for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, resources estimated at \$1,173,300 would be required in 2021 to cover the cost of four additional members to the

existing 16 members, the cost of four additional weeks for existing and new members, and two additional posts for the Committee's secretariat — one P-3 and one GSOL — and associated non-post resources.

For section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management", resources estimated at \$336,000 would be required to cover the cost of four additional weeks of meetings, with interpretation in all six official languages.

For section 29, "Management and Support Services", under subsection 29 B, "Department of Operational Support", resources estimated at \$125,700 would be required in 2021 to cover the one-time cost of modifications needed to the existing office space of the Advisory Committee to provide for four additional Members of the Committee and two additional staff of the Committee's secretariat, which would include the installation of new workstations with power and data cabling, ceiling work connected to a possible relocation of sprinklers and finishing work such as patching, repainting and flooring.

In addition, resources estimated at \$19,200 would be required under section 36, "Staff Assessment", to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, "Income from Staff Assessment".

The draft resolution, if adopted, is also expected to require additional support from the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, related to longer Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Question sessions of its expanded membership. The extent to which those requirements can be absorbed, however, would be further assessed in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

For information purposes, resource requirements for 2022 are also reflected in the table contained in the document that was distributed to Member States in November, reflecting the cost of the new posts, with continuing vacancy rates and the removal of non-recurrent requirements.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/74/L.5, additional resource requirements estimated in the amount of \$1,635,000, net of staff assessment, would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2021 — \$1,173,300 under section 1, "Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination"; \$336,000 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs

and Conference Management"; \$125,700 under section 29, "Management and Support Services", under subsection 29 B, "Department of Operational Support". For section 36, Staff assessment is estimated at \$19,200 for the year 2021.

The proposed programme budget for 2021 would be considered by the Fifth Committee during its main seventy-fifth session, as per the established budgetary procedures.

A copy of this statement will be made available on the PaperSmart portal.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/74/L.5.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Croatia to introduce a draft oral amendment.

Mr. Dogan (Croatia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 28 States members of the European Union (EU). In that capacity, let me state that the States members of the EU would like to introduce the following draft oral amendment to draft resolution A/74/L.5. The draft amendment would delete paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 and replace them with a new paragraph, to read:

"Decides that the Fifth Committee shall discuss in the first part of its resumed seventy-fourth session the membership and functioning of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions."

The member States of the EU strongly believe that issues pertaining to the functioning and expansion of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) should be considered in the Fifth Committee, as was the case in the past. The member States of the EU continue to believe that issues pertaining to the membership and functioning of the ACABQ belong entirely and exclusively to the Fifth Committee and that the proposed text in draft resolution A/74/L.5 is not in line with established procedures, rules and regulations.

The member States of the EU are resolved to engage constructively on the issue of ACABQ expansion during the first part of the resumed seventy-fourth session of the Fifth Committee in March. We therefore

hope that this draft amendment will be adopted by the General Assembly.

Mr. Fifield (Australia): I take the floor on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia. Our delegations attach great importance to the questions of membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and its working methods and overall functioning.

Let me be very clear at the outset. Our delegations do not support the expansion of the ACABQ. But let me be equally clear that we acknowledge that equitable geographic representation is of great importance to many delegations and that we are willing to engage in dialogue on the proposal in draft resolution A/74/L.5. I should emphasize that none of our delegations has a national representative serving on the Committee. We have no vested interests either way. A well-functioning Committee and United Nations effectiveness, writ large, are our principal interest and concern.

We have deep concerns about the way in which this proposal in draft resolution A/74/L.5 has been brought forward for consideration by the General Assembly. We appreciate that informal consultations were held on Friday, but we regret that those consultations were held so close to taking action in the General Assembly today. Bear in mind that the draft resolution has been in circulation since 7 October 2019, but there has been no substantive or inclusive discussion through the Fifth Committee.

It is important to note that previous expansions of the ACABQ went through the Fifth Committee. An enlargement of the ACABQ, as proposed in draft resolution A/74/L.5 and highlighted by the oral statement, would have a significant impact on the United Nations budgetary process and the overall functioning of the Organization. Those are matters rightly within the purview of the Fifth Committee.

The current process clearly undermines the rules of procedure as well as the long-established principle that the Fifth Committee work on the basis of consensus. Not all forums in this building operate on the basis of consensus. Those that do need to be protected, not undermined. We do not have such a high level of consensus in this place that we can afford to take it for granted.

Every Member State has an interest in both the effective operations of the Organization and

accountability for the use of its taxpayers's money. We therefore understand the intense interest here, but consensus is vital to ensure that the budget reviews of all Member States — whether they be developed, developing, large, medium or small — are taken into account. The Fifth Committee works by consensus so that it can achieve the broadest possible agreement that reflects diverse views. Let me reiterate that we are willing to engage constructively and in good faith in that forum.

Expanding the ACABQ will have impacts on the Committee's working methods as well as the Organization at large. Our delegations appreciate the hard work and the recommendations provided by the ACABQ representatives and its secretariat. We acknowledge that their workload is immense. However, in recent years the ACABQ has not been working as effectively as it could be. That is reflected in the frequent late-issuing of reports, which contributes to delays in the work of the Fifth Committee. Expanding the Committee will not alleviate those problems. To the contrary, it runs the real risk of exacerbating them. Accordingly, we think that it is timely to consider the ACABQ as a whole in order to see if we might be able to make some incremental improvements that we think should enjoy consensus.

At both the sixty-eighth and seventieth sessions, the Secretary-General and the Chair of the ACABQ, respectively, put forward ideas and recommendations concerning the operational arrangements of the ACABQ. Our delegations believe that it is timely to consider new ideas and proposals that would improve the efficiency and functioning of the Committee and would enhance its accountability and independence.

For instance, we could look at the expertise level, which has not increased despite multiple membership expansions since the Committee's establishment. Is it appropriate that so few Committee members are required to have relevant expertise in finance? In addition, the gender balance of the Committee is embarrassingly lopsided for an Organization that champions gender equality. Only two out of 16 representatives are women. We are confident that there are qualified women from all regional groups who could be put forward as candidates. We could also consider ways to improve the working methods of the Committee to enable the timely issuance of reports to help improve the Fifth Committee's working methods.

In conclusion, our delegations would be open to discussing and reaching consensus on the issue of ACABQ enlargement, working methods and overall functioning. I restate that our preference remains for this discussion to take place in the Fifth Committee. That is the most relevant body to consider this important matter. That is the best place to reach consensus. That is where previous enlargements were discussed and agreed. We therefore support the draft oral amendment proposed on behalf of the EU, namely, that this matter be put before the Fifth Committee. We encourage all delegations to support it. In the event that does not occur, we would encourage all representatives to vote against the substantive draft resolution.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): The United States attaches great importance to the work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The ACABQ's technical expertise and recommendations have formed the basis for decisions by the Fifth Committee on many complex issues. All Member States have a vital interest in the work of the ACABQ and its overall functioning, composition and working methods. With that in mind, we do not support an enlargement of the ACABQ. We further reject the assertion by the Palestinian observer that geographic representation overrides all other principles, including the good of the Organization.

Furthermore, historically, all decisions to make changes to the functioning, composition or working methods of the ACABQ have been taken up in the Fifth Committee. This key fact has been left out of the justification of draft resolution A/74/L.5. We have a regular standing agenda item in the Fifth Committee for that purpose, and that is where the discussion of the issues raised in the draft resolution introduced on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China should have taken place. An expansion of the ACABQ would impact the United Nations budgetary process and overall functioning of the Organization, and those matters are clearly within the purview of the Fifth Committee.

My delegation wishes to express our deep concern regarding the action of the G-77 and China to put forward this draft resolution in this forum, ignoring the clear prerogative of the Fifth Committee and with no attempt to reach consensus. That action demonstrates bad faith on the part of the penholders and sets the precedent that any group of Member States may circumvent consensus when it suits them. That undermines the spirit of trust, compromise and consensus that underpins

budgetary and administrative decisions and serves as a disincentive to reach consensus on difficult issues in future negotiations. That, in turn, puts at risk the orderly financing and functioning of the Organization.

When the ACABQ was previously enlarged — in 1961, 1971 and 1977 — the Fifth Committee deliberated and decided on those enlargements by consensus. There is no legitimate reason to change precedent, particularly when all other delegations, including the United States, have repeatedly expressed our willingness to engage on this issue in the next Fifth Committee session, which begins in seven weeks. The only rationale from the penholders has been that this is a priority issue for the G-77 and China, which thereby precludes the need for consensus. My delegation does not accept that argument.

Considering the expansion of the ACABQ in isolation, without any discussion of how that will impact the ACABQ's functioning, is also irresponsible. At a minimum, this expansion will further delay the issuance of ACABQ reports, which will, in turn, negatively impact the already lengthy decision-making process in the Fifth Committee. The proposed expansion also maintains the requisite number of financial experts at three, further diluting the expertise and administrative acumen currently held in the ACABQ.

My delegation is open to discussing all issues related to the functioning, composition and working methods of the ACABQ, with a view to achieving a consensus-based outcome, consistent with the working methods and procedural mandate of the Fifth Committee. In that regard, my delegation supports the draft oral amendment proposed on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) on agenda item 123, "Strengthening the United Nations system", in connection with draft resolution A/74/L.5, entitled "Enlargement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: amendment to rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly".

At the outset, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to thank the Secretariat for providing the General Assembly with the oral statement issued on 15 November 2019, in connection with the draft resolution A/74/L.5.

We would like to underline that the eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the

Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku on 25 and 26 October 2019, formally expressed its full endorsement of this initiative and called for its adoption. In that context, NAM would like to stress the following points.

First, the composition of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has been reviewed three times in order to progressively correct that situation. The main criterion that is involved in achieving that objective is the growing number of Member States in the United Nations, given the fact that 46 new Member States have joined the United Nations since the most recent decision was taken on the issue, in 1977.

Secondly, enlarging the ACABQ is a matter of political nature rather than a technical issue. Therefore, no rule of the rules of procedure impede the General Assembly from examining and adopting the draft resolution on the enlargement of the membership of the ACABQ.

Thirdly, the initial proposal for the enlargement of the ACABQ was submitted by NAM during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, before the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and before being taken up by the Group of 77 (G-77) and China.

Fourthly, in line with the flexibility regularly expressed by NAM in various opportunities, particularly during the different sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group, we have accepted the alternative proposal made by the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the seventy-second session. Unfortunately, that alternative proposal was opposed — and I can say, strongly — by partners. However, the enlargement is in line with the United Nations principle of broad, equitable and balanced geographical representation, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations legal instruments, including, inter alia, the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1659 (XVI), adopted on 28 November 1961, and reaffirmed in resolution 32/103, adopted on 14 December 1977, which amended rule 156 of the rules of procedure to state that

“The members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, no two of whom shall be nationals of the same State, shall be selected on the basis of a broad geographical representation”.

We also wish to recall that NAM organized in December 2018 and January 2019 two open informal meetings to discuss and negotiate the draft resolution, but a group of Member States maintained its inflexibility on the issue.

Finally, and in the light of that, NAM reiterates its full support to the G-77 and China and calls on all Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamya (Palestine): In line with our introduction of draft resolution A/74/L.5, on the enlargement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Group of 77 and China reiterates that the objective of broad geographical representation, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, is required to be implemented and not to be conditioned or subjected to other considerations.

The current situation in the ACABQ does not uphold or reflect that principle. There are regional groups with many more members that have fewer members in the ACABQ than other groups. That situation needs to be remedied, and the draft oral amendment put forward on behalf of the European Union again brings together the issue of membership, which we want to be able to tackle here, as well as the issue of the working methods. We are ready to discuss the working methods and conditions of service during the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee, and we hope that we can arrive at consensus on those important matters. But our intention is to ensure that, in the meantime, there is broad geographical representation, which is both required and enshrined in the text that we all adopted together. We therefore call on all delegations to vote against the draft oral amendment.

Mr. Favre (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland and Liechtenstein would like to underscore the importance of the work of the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). We are very grateful for the technical advice that it gives Member States.

The smooth functioning of the ACABQ is essential to the work of the United Nations in general, and that of the Fifth Committee in particular. Our delegations understand the concerns of the proponents of equitable geographic distribution and the importance

of the issue, on which we stand ready to engage constructively. However, given the nature of the work of the ACABQ, such discussions must take place within the appropriate body. Given its impact on the work of the Fifth Committee and the budgetary implications of the proposed enlargement, the appropriate forum is the Fifth Committee. According to established procedure, any amendment related to the functioning and size of the ACABQ entailing substantial and significant budgetary modifications must first be considered in depth and agreed upon during informal consultations of the Fifth Committee, before being presented at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

The search for consensus is the cornerstone of all processes involving States Members of the United Nations in deciding budgetary issues; it must not be hastily cast aside. We regret that the current process chosen by the proponents fails to accord sufficient attention to a process that would be more fitting for Member States. We wholeheartedly disagree with the approach adopted by the authors of draft resolution A/74/L.5, and we foresee that it will have unprecedented and far-reaching consequences that will have a negative impact on reaching agreements on budgetary issues and the future functioning of the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly.

An increase in the membership of the ACABQ would negatively affect the functioning of the Advisory Committee. Even at its current size and make-up, the timely publication of reports is not always a given and is made possible only through the commendable efforts of the members of the Advisory Committee. The proposal to expand the ACABQ would increase the time needed to hold Advisory Committee meetings to four weeks, which would even further compromise the timeliness of publications.

We therefore believe in the need to hold a comprehensive debate on the composition of the ACABQ in tandem with a debate on its working methods, conditions of employment and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Advisory Committee. Gender parity and the strengthening of the purview of the Committee must also be duly taken into account during such a debate.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the willingness of Switzerland and Liechtenstein to constructively participate in debating both the legitimate concerns addressed in draft resolution A/74/L.5 and the many

other relevant issues related to the working methods of the ACABQ in connection with the Fifth Committee. In that regard, our two countries support the draft oral amendment proposed on behalf of the European Union.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): Allow me to join some of the previous speakers in expressing our deep concern about today's proceedings. While we understand the need to address concerns about geographic representation, we believe that bringing the issue directly to the General Assembly creates a dangerous precedent on budgetary issues that should have been discussed in the Fifth Committee, as has been done in the past. In addition, we also agree that limiting the discussion to solely enlargement issues does not address many other important issues relating to improving the work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, such as gender parity and working methods.

We therefore support the draft oral amendment proposed on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Glanois (France) (*spoke in French*): France of course associates itself with the draft oral amendment introduced on behalf of the European Union and the reasons underpinning it, as well as the arguments made by a number of our colleagues. Nevertheless, given the importance of our discussion today and the precedent that draft resolution A/74/L.5 seeks to establish, I would like highlight the following points.

At the outset, we must say that we very much regret the process that led us here today, namely, to consider in a General Assembly plenary meeting the issue of the composition of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) without having had an opportunity talk about it in the body — the Fifth Committee — to which it obviously pertains.

As others said earlier, we are thereby contravening own rules. But, beyond the question of strict adherence to procedure, it is most regrettable that the path that the Group of 77 and China chose is one that we should proscribe. It is the path of majority rule rather than that of seeking consensus, which has long prevailed in the work of Fifth Committee with regard to all administrative and budgetary considerations, which are so vital to the functioning of the Organization.

As everyone knows, that principle, established by Member States, is of crucial importance. It ensures that no Member State, or group of Member States,

monopolizes the administrative and budgetary decisions in an Organization to which all Members contribute financially. Reaching consensus is therefore essential to ensuring that the goals of Member States are taken into account, as every Member has an interest in both ensuring the welfare of the Organization and responsibly using its taxpayers' money.

In undermining the spirit of trust, compromise and consensus that, until today's discussion, has prevailed, the proposed process is therefore creating a precedent the scope and consequences of which should not be underestimated. For my delegation, it is sufficiently clear that its repercussions will be felt in a number of future budget debates, and I say once again that this situation is altogether regrettable. We should reject succumbing to it in unison. I say this all the more stridently given that, in our view, choosing this path is senseless, as a serious, honest and credible alternative has been proposed.

No solid argument was made to explain why the current session of the Fifth Committee, scheduled to resume for the first time in several weeks, could not have included this item on its agenda. We have underscored on several occasions that we are open to constructively discussing the matter. The question of geographic representation within the Organization and its bodies and committees is of the utmost importance for France. To suggest the contrary, or even that we are incapable of hearing out our partners as they express their ambition in that regard, is an insult.

Moreover, to postulate that enlarging the ACABQ will have no direct affect on its functioning and effectiveness, or that the issue of the number of its members, for example, could be addressed separately from the issues concerning the number of experts among them, or of gender diversity, shows, in my delegation's view, a glaring level of bad faith.

In conclusion, the ACABQ is a body that is vital to the Organization, but apart from it, our negotiation methods themselves and the culture of seeking consensus are undeniably the most precious asset at our disposal. Draft resolution A/74/L.5 and the entire process that led us hear today carelessly run roughshod over that asset. For that reason, my delegation calls on all who attach importance to the smooth functioning of the Organization to return to their senses, support the draft oral amendment introduced on behalf of the European Union, sit with us around the table of the Fifth

Committee for a transparent, inclusive and constructive conversation and find a mutually satisfactory consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

Before we proceed to take action on draft resolution A/74/L.5, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, we shall first take a decision on the draft oral amendment proposed by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the European Union.

With regard to the required majority for the draft resolution and the oral amendment thereto, may I take it that a simple majority of members present and voting is required for the adoption of draft resolution A/74/L.5 and the proposed oral amendment?

It was so decided.

The President: A recorded vote on the proposed draft oral amendment has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic

Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The draft oral amendment was rejected by 52 votes to 115, with 3 abstentions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In view of the situation, we would like to make an oral amendment to draft resolution A/74/L.5.

(*spoke in English*)

In paragraph 2, replace the number "two" with the number "three", as applied to the seats for the Group of Eastern European States.

In paragraphs 1 and 3, replace the number "twenty" with the number "twenty-one".

The President: In connection with the oral amendment just put forward by the representative of the Russian Federation, I propose to suspend the meeting for 30 minutes to ask the Secretariat to circulate the oral amendment to draft resolution A/74/L.5 in the Hall for review by Member States.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The following statement is made in accordance with rules 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of draft resolution A/74/L.5, as well as the draft oral amendment introduced at the 53rd plenary meeting by the representative of the Russian Federation, the General Assembly would decide to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 16 to 21 members, beginning from 1 January 2021, and would also decide that seats shall be distributed as follows among regional groups: five from the Group of African States, five from the Group of Asian and Pacific States, three from the Group of Eastern European States, four from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and four from the Group of Western European and other States.

The General Assembly further decides to amend, with effect from 1 January 2021, rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to read:

"The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions consisting of 21 members, including at least three financial experts of recognized standing."

Pursuant to the decisions contained in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the draft resolution, it is envisaged that an increase in the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 16 to 21 members would lead to an extension of the meeting time of the Committee by for weeks per year, as it is expected that the higher number of queries would be raised by at each hearing over the Committee, making the sessions longer. A higher number of questions would need to be responded to in writing and executive sessions of the Committee would be longer, with further information to be synthesized to produce the reports of the Committee.

As a result of the increase in the workload of the Advisory Committee, it is envisaged that there would be an increase in resource requirements starting in 2021 under section 1, "Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination"; section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management"; section 29, "Management and Support Services; and section 36, "Staff Assessment".

For section 1, “Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination”, for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, resources estimated at \$1,377,500 would be required in 2021 to cover the cost of five additional members or to the existing 16 members, the cost of for additional week weeks for existing and new members and two additional posts for the Committee’s secretariat, one P-3 and one GSOL, and associated non-post resources.

For section 2, “General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management”, resources estimated at \$336,000 would be required to cover the cost of four additional weeks of meetings, with interpretation in all six official languages.

For section 29, “Management and Support Services”, under sub-section 29 (b), “Department of Operational Support”, resources estimated at \$125,700 would be required in 2021 to cover the one-time cost of modifications needed to the existing office space of the Advisory Committee to provide for five additional members of the Committee and two additional staff of the Committee secretariat, which would include installation of new work stations, including power and data cabling, ceiling work connected to a possible relocation of sprinklers and finishing works such as patching, repainting and flooring. In addition, resources estimated at \$19,200 would be required under section 36, “Staff Assessment”, to be offset by the corresponding amount on the income section 1, “Income from Staff Assessment”.

The draft resolution, if adopted, is also expected to require additional support from the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance related to longer Advisory Committee sessions of its expanded membership. The extent to which those requirements can be absorbed, however, would be further assessed in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

For information purposes, resource requirements for 2022 are also reflected in the table contained in the document circulated earlier today, reflecting the cost of new posts with continuing vacancy rates and the removal of non-recurring requirements.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/74/L.5 as well as that proposed draft oral amendment by the Russian Federation, additional resource requirements estimated in the amount of \$1,839,200, net of staff assessment, would be included in the proposed programme budget

for 2021: under section 1, “Overall Policymaking, Direction and Coordination”, \$1,377,500; section 2, “General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management”, \$336,000; and section 29, “Management and Support Services”, under sub-section 29 (b), “Department of Operational Support”, \$125,700. For section 36, staff assessment is estimated at \$19,200 for the year 2021 the proposed programme budget for 2021 would be considered by the Fifth Committee during its main seventy-fifth session as part of the established budgetary procedures.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested on the draft oral amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.

I give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on a point of order.

Mr. Banya (Palestine): Before we proceed to the voting, I have a few words to say on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China regarding the draft oral amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.

The draft oral amendment proposed by the Russian Federation is compatible and consistent with the objective of broad geographical representation pursued by the G-77 and China in introducing draft resolution A/74/L.5. We therefore call on all delegations to vote in favor of the draft oral amendment.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Who requested a recorded vote on our draft oral amendment?

The President: A recoded vote on the draft oral amendment was requested by Australia.

I shall now put to the vote the draft oral amendment.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic,

Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala

The draft oral amendment was adopted by 118 votes to 50, with 2 abstentions.

The President: I shall now give the floor to delegations that wish to make statements.

Mr. Dogan (Croatia) I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 28 States members of the European Union to present our unified and principled position reflected in all actions taken today on the procedure, the oral amendment and draft resolution A/74/L.5 as a whole.

The member States of the European Union attach great importance to the question of the membership

of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as its working methods and overall functioning, through the prism of both the effectiveness and relevance of the work of the Fifth Committee. We would like to reiterate our firm view that those issues pertain exclusively to the agenda of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. We deeply regret the circumventing of its working methods, despite our willingness to exchange views constructively in that forum on the basis of consensus during the upcoming first resumed session of the Fifth Committee.

The Fifth Committee functions on the premise that no effort should be spared in the pursuit of consensus. That principle carries crucial importance for the functioning and orderly financing of the United Nations. In an Organization where all Member States contribute financially, it is our responsibility to strive for shared ownership of administrative and budgetary decisions and to ensure that the views of all Member States are taken into account. In that context, we would also like to express concern that the draft resolution under consideration is not in line with established procedures, rules and regulations. As well, we regret the lack of an inclusive, substantive discussion among all parties prior to its submission for consideration during a General Assembly plenary meeting.

We are deeply concerned that the adoption of the draft resolution under consideration would not only undermine the spirit of trust, compromise and consensus in the Fifth Committee, but would also serve as a disincentive for reaching the broadest possible agreement on difficult issues in future negotiations. It would leave an unwelcome legacy, jeopardizing the ability of the Organization, our common home, to continue to manage its administrative and budgetary matters in the appropriate forums based on maximum efforts towards unity — as has been the case for many years and should continue to be so.

For those reasons, we will vote against the draft resolution as a whole, and we call on other delegations to follow suit.

Mr. Bientzle (Germany): We fully align ourselves with the statement just delivered by the representative of Croatia as current president of the Council of the European Union. Please allow me to make some additional remarks.

First, any item with budgetary implications needs to be discussed in the Fifth Committee. Anything else is completely unacceptable.

Secondly, a well-functioning and highly qualified Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) is of crucial importance to the United Nations. Past experiences show that we must make the Committee more efficient and effective. Enlarging the Committee would have the opposite effect. The ACABQ is supposed to serve Member States through its expertise on budgetary, financial, administrative and management matters. We will continue to use the technical quality of its work as a yardstick for its relevance.

Thirdly, we need to address issues like the qualifications, experience and expertise of members, term limits, a cooling-off period, gender parity, a code of conduct and working methods.

Fourthly, introducing a draft resolution on enlarging the ACABQ goes against our understanding of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and constitutes a breach of the Fifth Committee consensus approach to administrative and budgetary matters. All past ACABQ enlargements were discussed in the Fifth Committee. Not trying to find consensus is a breach of trust.

Finally, we strongly regret that today's debate will further increase the politicization of the work of both the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): It is unusual for individual States members of the European Union to take the floor on matters related to Fifth Committee budgetary management issues. Given the importance of the issue before us today, however, I must make an exception and speak out in my national capacity. This is in addition to the European Union statement read out earlier by the representative of Croatia, with which we align ourselves.

We have three objections to the draft resolution (A/74/L.5) before us: first, the undesired politicization of the work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ); secondly, the circumvention of the long-established precedent and principle that budgetary and management issues are decided upon by consensus; and, thirdly, the undermining of the functioning of the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee.

On my first point, we regret the politicization of the work of the ACABQ. We attach great importance to its independence, which should serve to safeguard the impartiality and technical nature of the advice given to Member States in their deliberations. By introducing a draft resolution here today to address perceived geographical misrepresentation directly through the General Assembly, thus circumventing the Fifth Committee, the matter of the composition of the Committee is being politicized. That process breaks established practice of past ACABQ enlargements. The future functioning of the ACABQ is being jeopardized by that process.

My second point, on breaking with consensus in decision-making, the introduction of the draft resolution before us sets a dangerous precedent. It undermines the Fifth Committee's working methods and breaks with the established practice of working on the basis of consensual outcomes — and this on a matter where that consensus is crucial. Consensus could have been achieved through adherence to normal procedures. For that reason, we joined others in pleading to hold the discussion on this issue during the upcoming first resumed session of the Fifth Committee, to be held in March. That would also have allowed for a debate on the necessary improvements to the working methods of the ACABQ. Such improvements are long overdue and would be even more critical if the ACABQ were to meet in an expanded composition of 20 or more members.

That brings me to my third point, namely, our concern about the functioning of an enlarged ACABQ. Even in its current composition, it is already very complicated and arduous to produce timely advice for the Fifth Committee. The number of questions asked by ACABQ members to the Secretariat has increased. The time it takes to reach consensus within the ACABQ has proven to be increasingly difficult. We cannot afford risking an ACABQ quagmire, given the bruising recent experiences in Fifth Committee deliberations. We cannot afford a practice where Committee deadlines are increasingly slipping. It does not make sense to increase the cost incurred with an ACABQ extension and, in return, get more muddled and delayed advice. In the view of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, we should all subscribe to the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and value-for-money.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly regrets that not enough time was allowed to weigh the pros and cons of enlargement. We also

regret that amendments put forward to improve the working methods of the ACABQ were not given serious consideration. The issue is rushed through for political reasons. If adopted, we see a system in need of an even-more urgent fix. We would prefer for other Member States to place the functioning of the system above national interests. We would prefer a review of the ACABQ, its effective functioning and composition holistically, during the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee. Given the fact that no room for such considerations has been allowed, we request other Member States to vote against this draft resolution. Let me very clear: we do not consider the process on the issue at hand a precedent for future decision-making on Fifth Committee issues. We will continue our efforts to make the United Nations system more efficient and effective. The financial contributions of Member States should benefit the poorest of the poor in the world and should not be used to create additional bureaucracy and red tape here in New York.

For those reasons, we will vote against this draft resolution. We call on other States to do the same.

The President: Since the draft oral amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation has been adopted, we shall proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.5, as orally amended.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States

of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Serbia

Draft resolution A/74/L.5, as orally amended, was adopted by 120 votes to 48, with 4 abstentions (resolution 74/267).

The President: Before giving the floor to those wishing to speak in explanation of vote after the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats

Mrs. Bernal Prado (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the adoption of resolution 74/267, which was introduced by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Chile would like to reiterate the importance of the goal of achieving equitable geographic representation within the United Nations, which is why my delegation showed its support by voting in favour of the resolution.

However, my delegation also would have liked to have seen a resolution as important as the one

that we just adopted enjoy broad support on the part of all the States Members of the United Nations. We are convinced that consensus is always the best way to reach understanding across the board. In the light of that, we hope that this will not set a precedent for the future to undermine consensus on the work of the Organization, and, in this case, of the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): Norway places strong emphasis on the importance of a well-functioning Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). We recognize its crucial role in providing advice to the General Assembly. We are therefore always open to consider proposals, including on adjustments to the membership, that may enhance the work of the ACABQ.

Norway is a consistent supporter of stronger participation by developing States in the United Nations. Consequently, we viewed the proposal introduced by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China positively. However, we have sincere concerns about the process. Norway is concerned about the precedents created by a plenary decision on this matter. We believe that issues related to the functioning of the ACABQ, including membership, should have been discussed in a consensus-driven Fifth Committee. That would have allowed for more thorough discussion on the issue and increased the chances of achieving a compromise proposal to be adopted by consensus.

Our vote should therefore not in any way be interpreted as a signal of Norway's recognition of the path being taken by the proponent of this particular issue, but rather a voice of support for an ACABQ that reflects the sizes of the various geographical groups at the United Nations.

Mr. Hoshino (Japan): Japan deeply regrets that resolution 74/267 was submitted directly to the plenary of the General Assembly and was put to the vote without prior deliberations in the Fifth Committee. The issue of the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) is clearly and critically related to the mandate of the Fifth Committee. There is no need to repeat that; it is obvious.

Japan has maintained that the issue must first be deliberated on in the Fifth Committee, ever since the idea of enlargement was first floated by the proponents of the resolution. The implication of bypassing the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary

Questions goes far beyond the Committee and extends to engendering risks to the overall delivery of the United Nations mandate and sound operation of the Organization.

On the three past occasions when the ACABQ membership was enlarged, the matter was deliberated in the Fifth Committee before it was forwarded to the plenary. The expansion of the ACABQ membership also entails financial implications, and therefore should be brought to the Fifth Committee as per rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The Fifth Committee makes every possible effort to achieve the broadest possible agreement on any of its agenda items. Building consensus may sometimes be difficult, but the Committee always exhausts its efforts to that end, in order to maintain the sound functioning of the Organization.

It is with that concern that Japan sincerely attempted to engage the proponents in good faith. We regret that, for all the rationale put forward, the Group of 77 and China did not respond to our repeated calls to bring the matter to the Fifth Committee. Circumventing the Main Committees on matters of such critical importance within their purview is a serious defiance of the central role of the Committees and to the long-established *modus operandi* of the Assembly.

We therefore voted against the resolution and, for the record, we strongly believe that the whole process leading to today's voting should not be considered as a precedent on this matter. Japan reiterates its deep regret and disappointment that all opportunities to engage in the Fifth Committee were denied. Japan also expresses its serious concerns about the negative impact that this may bring forth.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Group of African States following the adoption of resolution 74/267, under agenda item 123, "Strengthening the United Nations system", entitled "Enlargement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: amendment to rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly", during the main part of the Assembly's seventy-fourth session. The African Group has taken note of the comments made today by all delegations and would like to make the following observations.

The Group wishes to recall that the African continent, with its 54 member States, was represented

only by three seats in this important consultative Committee. We believe that the resolution introduced today on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which was just adopted, is a step forward towards taking into account the historic progress that is being made at the United Nations.

While today the United Nations has 193 States Members, in 1977, the last time the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) was enlarged to represent the membership of that time, the Organization had only 148 Members. The Group recalls that the composition of the ACABQ was last considered in 1977, about 42 years ago, at a time when most current Member States had yet to achieve autonomy or independence. The number of Members has increased significantly since the adoption of resolution 32/103, which enlarged the composition of the Advisory Committee in 1977.

The status quo risks continuing to deny certain of today's Member States and regions that had no voice at that time the right to be heard and to continuing inevitably to deny those Members the opportunity to participate in and craft a United Nations agenda that works for all.

The goal of today's resolution is to recognize today's reality within the United Nations and move towards attaining full geographic representation in the United Nations system. The reasons that drove the expansion of the Advisory Committee in 1977 are not only still with us today: they are even more compelling. The General Assembly, in previous resolutions, including as recently as December 2019, has reiterated the need for Member States to be able to participate fully throughout the programme budget planning process. We believe that enlarging the Advisory Committee is a step in the right direction.

The Group recognizes that there are financial implications to enlargement of the ACABQ. We are not unaware of the fact. However, we reflect on the following question: what is a good price for fair and equitable representation in the United Nations and its bodies? In response, we believe that price should not come into it. That is why we welcome the adoption of this resolution as part of the reform seeking to strengthen the United Nations system.

The Group assures you, Sir, of our continued commitment to participating actively and constructively on this important agenda item and any related to it.

In conclusion, the Group of African States reiterates its full support to the Group of 77 and China and thanks the Group for having initiated and introduced this resolution.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions is an important technical body on which all Member States rely. There are a number of issues that we need to address around its effectiveness and efficiency, which need to be discussed holistically.

The United Kingdom was disappointed by the lack of consideration given to the risks of deliberately circumventing established decision-making procedures today. The United Kingdom, alongside other Member States, has repeatedly committed to engage constructively on issues of enlarging the ACABQ, including geographic representation, in the Fifth Committee, and express our confidence that a reasonable outcome could be achieved there. The United Kingdom and others expressed that position in person and through a letter to you, Mr. President, copied to all members. In response, there has been a total absence of meaningful, substantive or inclusive engagement with all parties in pursuit of consensus, despite this being the long-established principle for decision-making on budgetary and administrative matters. Our proposal to discuss these issues, in good faith and in short order, was ignored. Those behind this proposal did not even try to seek consensus. They did not even try.

We heard that taking this issue straight to plenary was justified on the basis that geographical representation is considered a political matter, described as paramount and overriding. Geographical representation is indeed a very important consideration, but it is always considered in balance with other considerations.

As the representative of Australia set out so eloquently, there is a reason that consensus is such a long-established principle on these matters. It serves to ensure that, for the issues with financial implications, the views of all Member States are taken into account, as every Member has an interest in the well-being of the Organization, its own State's national interests and the use of that taxpayers' money. Consensus ensures the smooth operation of a well-funded multilateral system.

Instead, those behind this proposal took an aggressive approach, which has driven apart Member States. I fear that those who pressed so hard to adopt resolution 74/267 without consultation risk serious

damage to cooperation and constructive outcomes in the Fifth Committee. The consequences could be far-reaching and very damaging. That is why the United Kingdom voted against it.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our delegation agrees on the importance of consensus in the General Assembly. It was only having understood that consensus would be impossible that we took these steps. At the same time, we can reconcile ourselves to the statements made by number of delegations about consensus, which are hypocritical and apply double standards in labelling as a precedent our bringing forth a confrontational proposal to the plenary. I would encourage them in future to refrain from such measures and from putting forth confrontational proposals. Otherwise, today's action will simply continue further. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those States that understood our approach.

Mr. Ham Sang Wook (Republic of Korea): My delegation fully understands the necessity of increasing the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), considering that the current membership does not

appropriately reflect the reality of the increase in States Member of the United Nations since the last expansion of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in 1977. However, my delegation voted against resolution 74/267, as we believe that this matter should be discussed in the Fifth Committee prior to being considered in plenary meeting. This issue clearly falls within the purview of the Fifth Committee, and all previous decisions on this question have been taken through that process.

Furthermore, we believe that an enlargement of the ACABQ membership needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner together with the working methods and overall functioning of the Advisory Committee. My delegation will continue to do its part to ensure a comprehensive reform of the Advisory Committee.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 123.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.