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Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 1 October 2021, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Frazier (Malta)

Contents

Statement by the Chair

Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the Chair

1. **The Chair** said that the list of items allocated to the Committee had been issued as document [A/C.2/76/1](#), and informed the Committee that the members of the Bureau had agreed on a division of responsibility for the agenda items, which was reflected on the e-Delegate portal.

2. She drew attention to the guidance of the General Assembly regarding the work of the Main Committees set out in the report of the General Committee ([A/76/250](#)). All meetings would start and end on time. Delegations were reminded that the General Assembly had decided to continue its practice of waiving the requirement that at least one quarter of Committee members should be present in order to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed.

3. The list of speakers for both the Committee's general debate and the agenda items allocated to it was open. Delegations were requested to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible, using the e-Delegate portal. Given the gradual lifting of restrictions on in-person meetings, she welcomed the fact that the majority of delegations had opted to deliver their statements in person, and encouraged delegations to do so when circumstances allowed. However, and in accordance with the modalities foreseen in the Committee's organization of work, delegations wishing to do so would have the opportunity to deliver their statements via live video link. The list of speakers for the following day would be posted on the portal on the business day before the general debate or discussion, based on the inscriptions received by 4 p.m. on that day. If a delegation was not in the room when its turn came, it would automatically be moved to the end of the list.

4. In accordance with General Assembly decision 65/530 and in view of the special circumstances of the current session, the time limits for the general debate would be nine minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States and six minutes for individual Member States; seven and five minutes, respectively, for the general discussions when two items were being considered jointly; and six and four minutes, respectively, for the general discussion of individual agenda items. Introductions of Secretariat reports should be limited to six minutes.

5. In accordance with previous decisions of the General Assembly and the Committee's established practice, explanations of vote would be limited to five minutes, delegations would be entitled to two rights of reply per agenda item, first of five and then of three

minutes, and points of order would be limited to three minutes. She took it that the Committee wished to approve those time limits for statements in explanation of vote, rights of reply and points of order.

6. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work ([A/C.2/76/L.1](#) and [A/C.2/76/L.1/Add.1](#))

7. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to the organization of work, as contained in document [A/C.2/76/L.1](#). Recalling the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly in its decision 65/530 on improving the working methods of the Committee, she said that the Bureau would keep multiple mandatory deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions, to which the Committee would need to adhere strictly. Requests for extensions made prior to the expiration of a deadline would be considered on a case-by-case basis, bearing in mind that the Secretariat required a minimum of 96 hours to process and issue documents in all languages before their scheduled consideration.

8. Pursuant to General Assembly decision 65/530, draft resolutions should be concise, focused and action-oriented, and preambular paragraphs should be kept to a minimum. In accordance with General Assembly decisions 74/537B and 75/548, Member States were also requested, when submitting draft resolutions, to provide a version with any changes since the last iteration marked and to provide references to the sources of the language used. The agreed modalities for the preparation and negotiation of draft resolutions were outlined in [A/C.2/76/CRP.1](#). The appointment of facilitators for "informal" informal consultations was nearly complete and a coordination meeting for facilitators would be held later that morning. As had been done at previous sessions and in the interests of planning and predictability, the Bureau would take a coordinated approach to the convening of "informal" informal consultations on draft resolutions. Delegations were urged to do their utmost to conclude negotiations in time in order for action on draft resolutions to be taken on the scheduled dates.

9. Delegations were encouraged to engage in an active debate with distinguished academic, adviser and economist Ms. Mariana Mazzucato, who would deliver the keynote address at the beginning of the first in-person meeting, on 5 October. The Committee's joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council would now be held on 20 October, a change to the previously circulated organization of work, on the theme "Building productive capacities in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island

developing States as well as middle-income countries for more resilient recovery and sustainable development in the post-COVID-19 era". The annual dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of regional commissions would be held on 18 October, with a focus on inequality, resilience and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. On 19 October there would be a side event on energy transition for sustainable development and climate action, for which interpretation services would be provided on an "as available" basis.

10. As delegations were aware, the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would be held from 4 to 7 October. With a view to increasing synergies with UNCTAD, she proposed to invite the UNCTAD Secretary-General to brief the Committee on the outcome of the session at the beginning of the Committee's joint general discussion of agenda item 18, macroeconomic policy questions and agenda item 19, follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on financing for development, which was scheduled for 13 October. If there were no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to proceed accordingly.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. In accordance with the organization of work of the Committee, the general debate was scheduled to begin on the morning of 5 October and conclude on the afternoon of 8 October. The target date for the conclusion of the Committee's work was 24 November, in order to allow time for the Committee's reports to be processed and issued in time for consideration by the General Assembly before its scheduled recess.

13. She wished to draw the Committee's attention to three paragraphs contained in chapter II of the report of the General Committee, document [A/76/250](#), in which the General Assembly provided guidance regarding the work of the Main Committees. In paragraph 11 of its report, the General Committee recalled paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution [75/325](#), containing the recommendation that the Assembly and its Main Committees, at the seventy-sixth session, in consultation with Member States, continue their work to biennialize, triennialize, cluster and eliminate agenda items. In paragraph 12, the General Committee drew attention to paragraph 39 of resolution [75/325](#), in which the Assembly and its Main Committees, and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, were invited to strengthen synergies and complementarities in their respective work and outcomes; and to paragraph 41 of the same resolution, in which the Assembly requested the General Committee to consider discussing gaps, overlaps and

duplication and to make relevant recommendations to Member States. In paragraph 13, the General Committee took note of paragraph 35 of resolution [75/325](#), in which the General Assembly invited the General Committee to consider how best to conduct the discussions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic within the agenda of the Assembly, and to make recommendations to Member States in that regard.

14. With regard to the programme budget, she drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 70 to 86 of the report of the General Committee ([A/76/250](#)), and in particular to paragraph 74, in which the General Committee had drawn attention to paragraph 12 of decision 34/401, in which the Assembly had indicated that the Main Committees must allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. With regard to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and paragraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee had drawn the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that, in most cases, more than 48 hours were required for the Secretary-General to review the programme budget implications of proposals before the Assembly. Furthermore, all draft resolutions with financial implications should be submitted to the Fifth Committee no later than 1 December.

15. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that economic and financial issues were of particular importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. For many years, the Second Committee had provided a platform for consensus among Member States that was an example to others. Unfortunately, that was no longer the case and there was now a lack of unity in the Committee even on its own working methods. His delegation continued to support the approach taken by the Bureau of the Committee to ensure that its work ran smoothly and efficiently during the current difficult conditions with a view to holding socially distanced in-person meetings. A return to the Committee's normal, traditional work was both necessary and possible. His delegation therefore welcomed the Chair's position on that matter and considered it unacceptable to violate the Committee's rules of procedure, which would set a very dangerous precedent for the United Nations in general. Moreover, the option to deliver statements by video link during the general debate would be a violation of the General Assembly rules of procedures and would run counter to the practice agreed upon for the high-level week of the General Assembly, at which Member States had agreed that statements delivered by video link would not be included in the report of the general debate.

16. A second key issue was the fact that the Committee was not fulfilling the provisions contained in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution [75/243](#): namely, programmes of the proposed budget not agreed in the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) must be considered by the plenary or relevant Main Committee of the General Assembly. As the Committee had an agenda item on programme planning, a mistake had been made that needed to be corrected. There were no technical barriers preventing the Committee from implementing the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly.

17. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was imperative that the Committee spoke and delivered on the overall development agenda and addressed the outstanding issues facing the international community, including the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for stronger multilateral support for developing countries' implementation of their national recovery plans. The Group of 77 and China was pleased to join the consensus on the Bureau's paper on the work of the Committee at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/C.2/76/CRP.1), which contained slight improvements on the modalities agreed for the seventy-fifth session and reflected several of the main concerns raised by delegations. The modalities for the current session were however exceptional and would not set a precedent.

18. The Group of 77 and China appreciated the fact that resolutions and reports would all be given equal treatment and that an equal number of consultations had been allocated to each resolution. Advancing the Committee's agenda holistically was critical, particularly for developing countries. Since each of the Secretary-General's reports was relevant to a specific area, the Group was pleased that they would also be considered on an equal basis. It welcomed the decision to hold the current meeting, general debate and sessions for action on draft resolutions, as well as the annual joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council, in person. The Group likewise supported the proposed modalities for the consideration of draft resolutions, and in particular the leeway to add up to two paragraphs, including, but not limited to, aspects related to COVID-19.

19. As delegations were aware, in its resolution [75/243](#), paragraph 9, the General Assembly stipulated that in the event that CPC could not provide conclusions and recommendations on a programme of the proposed programme budget, the relevant programme should be reviewed by the plenary or the Main Committee or Committees responsible for those mandates – and that

such review should be done in a timely manner to enable the Fifth Committee to approve the related budget. At its sixty-first session, CPC had not recommended the approval, for the 2022 programme budget, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, which contained mandates under the purview of the Second Committee. Accordingly, the Committee had a responsibility to discuss programme 7 under agenda item 139, on programme planning. The Group looked forward to a constructive discussion in that regard.

20. **Mr. Walter** (United States of America) said that the Committee's decision to hold its organizational meeting in person sent a clear signal of its dedication to its mandate and to achieving consensus. As the return to normalcy began, however, the Committee must keep abreast of the evolving pandemic situation and be guided by consideration for the health and safety of delegates and Secretariat staff. In that regard, he welcomed the decision to continue with virtual informal negotiations, which also meant that the discussions would be as inclusive as possible. Although his delegation would have liked there to be more full technical rollovers in order to better focus the Committee's work, the modalities set out in the Bureau's paper on the work of the Committee (A/C.2/76/CRP.1) represented the best possible compromise in the circumstances and would enable the Committee to move ahead with its agenda.

21. With regard to transferring CPC business to the Second Committee, there was no formal procedure that required that the plenary or any Main Committee should review proposed programme plans in the event that CPC was unable to agree on conclusions or recommendations. CPC had referred programmes without conclusions or recommendations to the General Assembly for the previous two years, and the plenary and Main Committees had chosen not to take them up – a decision that was within their rights and not affected by resolution [75/243](#). It remained for each Committee to decide whether to review the programmes of CPC in the light of wider considerations about its programme of work. It bore repeating that the mandates for programme 7 had been agreed and were not open to discussion; CPC had simply recommended that the General Assembly review the proposed programme plan to ensure that the proposed activities were aligned with those mandates. Apart from the fact that the Committee did not have sufficient time for such a technical discussion, the proposal gave rise to procedural, practical and substantive issues. The Committee had a heavy programme of work, and, in some cases, the mandates covered by proposed programme plans were relevant to multiple Committees, complicating matters further. In

any case, the Fifth Committee would consider the programmes as part of its review of the annual budget.

22. If the Committee chose to discuss CPC programmes it would have to make sacrifices: the membership would have to deprioritize certain issues and resolutions. Furthermore, time was of the essence; the Fifth Committee must be able to consider the regular budget in a timely manner to ensure that United Nations entities could plan for the new fiscal year.

23. **Ms. Visser** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as an observer) said that her delegation welcomed the Bureau's paper on the work of the Committee, as it provided a clear path for the session ahead. However, it would have preferred the Committee to hold in-depth negotiations on a limited number of resolutions; such a decision would have sent a strong signal acknowledging the improved pandemic situation. Prime candidates for full-fledged negotiations included the draft resolutions entitled "Towards global partnerships", "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" and "Operational activities for development of the United Nations system"; while other draft resolutions could have benefited from short procedural texts.

24. The Committee must give due consideration to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Her delegation would do so within the limitations of the modalities agreed by the membership of the Committee, and would enforce strict adherence to the Bureau's paper on the work of the Committee, for all resolutions. Although the Committee was not in a position to move forward as it would have wished in the wake of the pandemic, given the existing constraints, it was fortunate that other major ongoing United Nations processes related to issues on the Committee's agenda were under way, such as the upcoming meetings of the parties to the three Rio conventions and the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the modalities for the seventy-sixth session did not impede those important processes.

25. With regard to the unfinished business of CPC, although it was true that the Committee was entitled to review planning, it did not traditionally do so – at least not formally. Such a review would add time-consuming negotiations to an already substantial programme of work and duplicate Fifth Committee discussions, to the detriment of the Committee's substantive work.

Moreover, if the Committee did decide to review programme 7 of the proposed programme budget, it would be obliged to do so before addressing other issues, in order not to delay the Fifth Committee's approval of the budget for the Organization. Yet another argument against the proposal was that holding such discussions would weaken the legitimacy of CPC, a body whose decisions must be made by consensus, unlike the Second Committee.

26. **Mr. Black** (Canada) said that the Second Committee had been the most pragmatic of all of the Main Committees with regard to the organization of its work, including such considerations as the timeline for its work, working hours and the emphasis placed on professionalism and respect. Revitalizing the Committee for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was of the utmost importance. Its annual agenda did not serve to deliver effectively on the Goals and the Committee could do better – only the political will was lacking.

27. On the matter of CPC programme 7, Economic and social affairs, his delegation fully supported the views expressed by the representatives of the United States and the European Union. Mandates had indeed been agreed, and the Committee's busy agenda would not allow for additional work. Also, it was essential not to delay the Fifth Committee's consideration of the budget.

28. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) added his delegation's support for the opinions voiced by the representatives of the United States, the European Union and Canada.

29. **Ms. Stewart** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation fully supported the proposed modalities for the upcoming session as set out in document A/C.2/76/CRP.1. With regard to the CPC issue, she wished to echo the arguments made against the Committee discussing programme 7. Resolution [75/243](#) did not affect the Committee's right to choose whether to take up the unfinished work of CPC.

30. **Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil) said that his delegation was opposed to the proposal of the European Union to limit the Committee to negotiating three draft resolutions. Although it was true that all of the discussions about revitalizing the work of the Committee revolved around reducing the number of resolutions it discussed and adopted, to restrict the Committee to only three resolutions would undermine its purpose and be the opposite of revitalization.

31. With regard to the work of CPC, resolution [75/243](#), paragraph 9, was unambiguous: in the rare event that CPC could not provide conclusions and recommendations on a given subprogramme or

programme of the proposed programme budget, the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Committees of the General Assembly responsible for those mandates would have the subprogramme or programme before it in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations on the said subprogramme or programme to the Fifth Committee. Since 2019, CPC had proven unable to reach a consensus, making it the clear duty of the Committee to address programme 7, which related to issues within its mandate. The Fifth Committee did not have the competence to decide on the programmatic and substantive issues at hand, while agenda item 139, programme planning, provided the obvious space for the Second Committee to discuss them. While consideration of programme 7 might entail longer hours, or more meetings, it was important that the Committee implement resolution [75/243](#) and dedicate time to effective programme planning, which was, indeed, on its agenda.

32. **Mr. González Peña** (Cuba) said that his delegation agreed that the Committee should include agenda item 139, programme planning, in its programme of work. In particular, the Main Committees should substantively address the programmes of the proposed programme budget on which CPC had been unable to reach a consensus, provided those programmes fell within their mandated areas of activity. That was in keeping with paragraph 9 of resolution [75/243](#), the implementation of which would enable the Organization to carry out its work as quickly as possible.

33. **Mr. Kodama** (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported the proposed modalities for the session as set out in the Bureau's paper on the work of the Committee. Programme planning was best dealt with by the Fifth Committee, for the reasons articulated by other delegations, including the United States, the European Union, Canada and the United Kingdom.

34. **Mr. Kim Sungjun** (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation strongly supported the modalities for the session put forward by the Bureau, and emphasized that in-person meetings should take place only when physical distancing was possible to protect the safety of delegates and Secretariat colleagues.

35. With regard to the CPC matter, his delegation shared the view of the delegations of the United States, the European Union, Israel, the United Kingdom and Japan. Given the Committee's hefty programme of work, the restrictions arising from the pandemic and the insufficient time at its disposal, the Committee could not afford to waste any time in discharging its mandate – it must prioritize what mattered most, while respecting the mandates of the other Main Committees.

36. **Mr. Liu Yanming** (China) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of the Group of 77 and China. The Committee should make time in its programme of work for programme planning.

37. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that he would like to hear a response from the Chair to the issues raised regarding the delivery of speeches via video link. He also wished to ask the delegations of Canada, the European Union, Japan the United Kingdom and the United States what substantive reasons they had for not wishing to further discuss the programme. He had only heard procedural and time-based reasons, but nothing substantive. As their delegations had already agreed to the provisions of General Assembly resolution [75/243](#), that discussion was in fact closed and its provisions now needed to be implemented. Only the Committee could discuss the substantive matters within its purview.

38. **The Chair** said that of the approximately 100 speakers inscribed on the speakers' list, only seven or eight had opted to deliver their statements via video link. It was her preference for delegates to deliver their statements in person, but while the pandemic continued and real health concerns remained, it was not feasible to remove the virtual participation option. Delegations having registered to speak via video link should be aware, however, that it was not too late for them to opt to attend in person instead, or to have another member of their mission deliver their statement in person on their behalf.

39. She took note of all of the views expressed concerning CPC and agenda item 139, which had been allocated to all of the Main Committees. She intended to discuss the matter in the Bureau, bearing in mind all the possible implications for the work of the Committee.

40. She took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in document [A/C.2/76/L.1](#), as updated, and with the understanding that further adjustments would be made during the session if necessary.

41. *It was so decided.*

42. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to the status of documentation for the Committee, contained in document [A/C.2/76/L.1/Add.1](#). Almost all the Secretariat reports had been issued. If any reports were not going to be ready in time for the relevant general discussion, she would request the Secretariat to circulate an unedited version in advance.

43. She proposed a deviation from the standard practice whereby only reports or notes of the Secretary-General, which were issued in all six official languages,

were introduced in meetings of the Committee, in order to comply with the General Assembly's request to be updated, through three UNCTAD publications, on the implementation of its resolutions [75/206](#) and [75/207](#), respectively entitled "Promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices on assets return to foster sustainable development" and "Promoting investments for sustainable development". Since UNCTAD did not issue its publications in all United Nations languages, she suggested that the Committee invite representatives of UNCTAD to introduce the pertinent sections of the *Sustainable Development Goals Pulse* report, the *Trade and Development Report 2021* and the *World Investment Report 2021* under agenda item 18, on macroeconomic policy questions.

44. *It was so decided.*

45. **The Chair** said that, in a similar vein, in its resolution [74/240](#) of 2019, entitled "Natural plant fibres and sustainable development", the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to update it with regard to the implementation of the resolution on the basis of reports prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). She therefore proposed that the Committee invite a representative of FAO to brief it under agenda item 26, on agriculture development, food security and nutrition.

46. *It was so decided.*

47. **The Chair** said that she took it that the Committee wished to take note of the status of documentation for the session as contained in document [A/C.2/76/L.1/Add.1](#).

48. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.