

Opening Session of the UN General Assembly Fifth Committee

Mr Chair,

I would like to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election. We are confident that you will guide this Committee towards a successful and timely conclusion this session. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

Our sincere thanks to the members of the Secretariat and the ACABQ for your continued dedication and support to this Committee during these unprecedented times. And to Lionel Berridge, Acting Secretary of the Fifth Committee and his team, and the support staff who make possible our deliberations.

This is an important year for the United Nations as it marks its 75th anniversary. Yet, as a result of the coronavirus, 2020 has been a more extraordinary and challenging year than any of us could have imagined. We need a United Nations that can respond effectively and agilely to the challenges that lie ahead and deliver for the people it serves; not just this year, but over the next 75 years and beyond. The United Kingdom will continue therefore to be a strong proponent of a strengthened, effective and efficient United Nations.

Mr Chair,

This session we will consider progress made on implementing the Secretary-General's management and peace and security reforms. We look forward to hearing how these reforms are helping realise his vision of a reformed, responsive and accountable United Nations. And, how they are making a difference, including enabling a more effective response to COVID19 in support of many Member States around the world.

We will also consider for the second time an annual programme budget. We have a responsibility to the United Nations and the people it serves to ensure that the Organisation has the right level of resource needed to carry out the mandates given to it by Member States. But we also expect the United Nations to use those resources efficiently and effectively, and with a clear focus on delivering results.

We look forward also to engaging on the Common System, strengthening accountability and transparency in the Organisation, and special political missions, alongside a range of other important issues.

Mr Chair,

COVID19 continues to present significant challenges, including to how this Committee carries out its task. This Committee has risen to the challenge in its two recent resumed sessions and demonstrated to the wider General Assembly that it is possible to complete complex negotiations successfully and on time, operating remotely through online platforms. As I noted at the

closing of the last session, we recognise that this was possible due to the goodwill shown by many delegations agreeing to work without interpretation. We hope that new technology and innovation can rectify this situation for this session, and that we can continue to take a responsible approach to the health and safety of delegates and their families while completing our work.

Once again, the task before us is significant. We are confident that through our collective commitment, constructive engagement and genuine efforts towards consensus-based decisions, we will reach a good, timely outcome.