

**Statement to the Fifth Committee  
by H.E. Mr Peter Thomson  
President of the 71st session of the General Assembly**

**15 December 2016**

*Madame Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to address the Fifth Committee today.

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador King on her election as Chair of this Committee, and for the leadership she has been providing to your work.

Ambassador King is the second woman to have presided over the Fifth Committee, and the first to have done so since the turn of this Century.

In many ways, Ambassador, your work in this Committee is trailblazing, and I wish you all the more success as you steer the committee towards a timely and positive conclusion.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election, and for the gender balance reflected in its composition.

It is my sincere hope that in future sessions such parity will become so regular in this Committee, so as to no longer be noteworthy.

*Distinguished delegates,*

Three days ago, many of you would have watched the historic moment of UN Secretary-General-designate, Mr. Antonio Guterres, taking his Oath of Office.

In seventeen day's time when he assumes office, he will face an enormous set of complex global challenges that need his urgent attention.

With the scale of challenges facing the organisation, and the changes underway at the top, the work of the Fifth Committee in helping to facilitate a smooth transition cannot be overstated – particularly by ensuring that adequate resourcing and administrative frameworks are in place for when the new Secretary-General takes office.

*Distinguished delegates,*

As the Main Committee tasked with administrative and budgetary matters, you wield considerable influence over the work this organisation.

In addition to defining the financial responsibilities of Member States, the decisions taken by this Committee affect the lives of thousands of UN staff around the world, and shape the way the organization responds to the peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

you. It doesn't have to be that way for you this year. We are bureaucrats and we understand that the administration and budgetary provisions must be put in place in a timely fashion if our system is to function. And distinguished delegates, happily we are also