



Explanation of Vote by Director-General, Zane Dangor to the United Nations General Assembly regarding the debate of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in September 2022

16 September 2022

Mr President,

The upcoming general debate of the UN General Assembly is the first fully open Assembly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the context of the need to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism with the United Nations at its core, the General Debate is the primary platform to do so.

It is for this reason that South Africa supports the full participation of all UN member and observer states in this year's General Debate. No voice should be excluded unless, of course a State is suspended for participation in the GA for gross transgressions of the provisions and spirit of the UN Charter as was the case with the Apartheid government of South Africa in 1974 for their transgression of the Crime of Apartheid.

Ideally, this Assembly would benefit from the physical presence of the representatives of all member and observer states. Circumstances may however make it a challenge for physical participation. We should thus strive to use all available means to allow for all delegations to participate including through virtual means, under exceptional circumstances and without setting a precedent.

South Africa would have preferred that the decision tabled today would have had language addressing this matter without the politicisation of a purely procedural matter.

Politicisation of procedural matters, and the inability for us to reach consensus at the start of the new GA session, does not portend well for the rest of session. We, as members of the Assembly have a responsibility to work together towards achieving consensus. If we cannot even agree on procedural matters, how would we be able to reach consensus and agreement on the pressing global challenges that we face.

As participants in the assembly of humankind we have an obligation to all our people to work together moving forward.

It is in this context that South Africa voted in favour of the amendments that would have given rise to a resolution that dealt with the participation of all member states, including,

in this case Ukraine. It is unfortunate that the recommended amendments were not agreed to. We do not agree that the proposed amendments to the resolution were hostile and it is unfortunate that it was characterised as being so. In our view, they reaffirm the sovereign equality of all member states. The nature of the debate today leads to further polarisation of the international community at a time when we should be working together to end conflicts in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Despite the amendments not being carried, we were nonetheless considering voting for the unchanged resolution solely to express our support for inclusive participation including in this case, Ukraine. However, because of the manner in which states supporting an unchanged L1 resolution engaged in the debate this morning, we have had no choice but to abstain as the debate served to further polarise the international community.

I thank you