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United States Statement
Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the
Role of the Organization
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United States Mission to the United Nations
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Thank you, Chair.

We welcome this opportunity to provide a few observations about the work of the Special Committee on the UN Charter this year.

We begin by observing that, as we convene this meeting of the Special Committee on the UN Charter, we also enter the second year since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in violation of the UN Charter. We have demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. We have called upon the Russian Federation to abide by the principles of the UN Charter and to act consistently with the order of the International Court of Justice. As this Committee sets out to examine and strengthen the UN Charter, the United States reaffirms these demands.

We also look forward to the annual briefing on sanctions, and we continue to emphasize that targeted sanctions adopted by the Security Council in accordance with the UN Charter remain an important instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. We welcome further discussion on options to strengthen their implementation. With respect to sanctions implemented outside of UN auspices, and appreciating that these are not the focus of this Committee's work, we make clear that we consider such sanctions to be a legal and legitimate means to achieve foreign policy, security, and other important objectives.

In the area of the maintenance of peace and security, we continue to view several older proposals under this agenda item as duplicative or inconsistent with the roles of the principal organs of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter. These include consideration of a working paper that calls, among other things, for a Charter Committee legal study of General Assembly powers, as well as a longstanding proposal regarding UN reform. We have also consistently stated that the United States does not support the proposal made in 1999 for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

With respect to proposals of new subjects for the Special Committee's consideration, we continue to consider that all new proposals should be practical, non-political, and not duplicative of efforts elsewhere in the United Nations. We hope to continue meaningful discussion of matters within the Special Committee's mandate and to not see it used as a forum for raising bilateral concerns, or topics more appropriately raised in other fora. For these reasons, we continue to believe that three proposals initially raised in our 2020 session should not be added to the Committee's agenda. We do not support the proposal concerning unilateral coercive measures. Concerns about the obligations of the host country should be raised in the dedicated Host Country Committee, and we also believe that the proposal concerning Article 51 is better addressed in other fora. We believe that consideration of these politically charged topics has little prospect for generating consensus in this committee.

Likewise, we urge delegations to withdraw those proposals that have remained on the Special Committee's agenda for years without generating consensus. We would urge delegations to give serious consideration to biennial meetings or shortened sessions, in particular given the heavy demands on meeting resources at the UN and the repetitive nature of the Special Committee's agenda. We hope the Special Committee will take further steps to improve its efficiency and productivity and to make the best use of scarce Secretariat resources.

We regret to hear the statements of some delegations which failed to condemn the terrorist attack that Hamas carried out against Israel on October 7th and that continues to have terrible consequences for Palestinians and Israelis. The terrorist actions of Hamas have no justification, no legitimacy, and must be universally condemned. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other armed groups. We've made clear that it is critical that Israel do everything possible to prevent civilian casualties, minimize collateral damage, and increase humanitarian access and assistance in Gaza to ensure life-saving aid for those in need. At the same time, we recognize the very real security challenges that Israel faces and its legitimate right to defend its people and territory from terrorism.

In closing, the United States thanks the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs for its diligent and faithful work on the Repertory of Practice of the United Nations Organs and the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. They are both valuable resources on the practice of the United Nations organs and the application of the Charter to the UN's important work for international peace and security. We also want to express our appreciation for the Secretariat of the Special Committee, the Bureau, support staff, and all those who contribute to the Committee's success.

Thank you.