Explanation of vote by Canada on Israeli amendment proposing to remove funding for the Commission of Inquiry from a General Assembly draft budget resolution, U.N. budget (Fifth) Committee of the General Assembly

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My delegation is speaking today after the important decision of this Committee to fulfill its duty within the UN system and ensure the appropriate financing of all mandates passed to it by relevant UN governing bodies. Canada strongly supports providing adequate financing to fund expenses arising from resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council. The Council is the central UN organ with responsibility to oversee and uphold the main pillar of the UN’s work. That a Chair’s text was required to adopt this by consensus speaks to the politicization of discussions in our Committee on human rights budgets, including those emanating from HRC mandates, where a couple large member states routinely propose to entirely defund mandates and to prevent OHCHR from having the stable and reliable resources necessary to implement its work. When mandates established by the Human Rights Council are considered by the 5th Committee, it is not to further evaluate them, but rather to set the level of human resources required to undertake the tasks already approved. For this reason, we supported SG-level funding for revised estimates from the Human Rights Council and we welcome that the resolution on this item was adopted by consensus here today.

But we have significant concerns with the Commission of Inquiry just referenced by our colleague from Israel and other speakers, the way it was established, and how it is being resourced. It is Canada’s firm view that the Commission of Inquiry established by A/HRC/RES/S-30/1 on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an unacceptable outlier. Its scope, unprecedented ongoing nature, budget, and proposed numbers of posts are significantly larger than all the other investigations we approved resources for today. It represents a continuation of a long-line of such investigations into the same conflict, for which there is a vast volume of UN and independent reporting and analysis, negating the need for investigators to restart at the conflict’s origins, first principles, or root causes. Canada shares the concerns expressed by others that the expansive mandate of this CoI risks hardening positions and moving us further away from a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For these reason, and in keeping with Canada’s long-standing opposition to the disproportionate focus on Israel, we abstained on the amendment proposed by Israel.