

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Saodah B.A. Syahrudin, Member of Indonesian Delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on Agenda Item 118, Scale of Assessments for the Apportionment of the Expenses of the United Nations before the Fifth Committee of the 53rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 28 October 1998

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 118, Scale of Assessments for the Apportionment of the Expenses of the United Nations.
2. First of all, we would like to thank Mr. David Etuket, Chairman of the Committee on Contributions (COC), for presenting the report of the fifty-eight session of the Committee on Contributions contained in document A/53/11.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China attaches high importance to this agenda item. We are of the view that the resources provided for the Organization should be commensurate with the mandates for their full implementation. We emphasize the need for member states to provide adequate resources for full implementation of mandated programmes and activities. In this regard, we reaffirm the legal obligation of Member States to bear the expenses of the Organization as apportioned by the General Assembly. We further reaffirm that the principle of capacity to pay is the fundamental criterion on the apportionment of such expenses. Furthermore, as stressed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China during their twenty-second annual meeting in September 1998, the developing countries should not be assessed at a rate higher than their capacity to pay as a result of any adjustments in the scale.
4. The Group of 77 and China continues to maintain the view that the difficult and chronic financial situation of the Organization is not linked to the methodology of the scale of assessments. Revisions to the scale methodology will not solve the critical financial situation facing the Organization since it will neither change the level of resources to be made available to the Organization nor guarantee payment of future assessments promptly and in full. In this regard, the financial difficulties of the United Nations can only be resolved if Member States, in particular the major contributor, take concrete actions in settling their arrears and honour faithfully their Charter obligations in paying their assessments in full, on time and without conditions.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China notes the information from and the observation of the COC in paragraphs 6 to 10 of its report A/53/11, on the review of the procedural aspects of the consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations. We also note that on the review of the current procedures for the application of Article 19, including the possibility of calculating and applying it at the beginning of each calendar year and at the beginning of the peacekeeping financial period on 1 July of each year as well as its possible practical implications, the COC has decided to continue its consideration at its fifty-ninth session.
6. The Group emphasizes the need to consider sympathetically requests of those member states, in particular developing countries, that are temporarily experiencing genuine economic difficulties. Therefore, we believe that the COC should continue examining ways in which requests of those member states for exemption from the application of Article 19 due to conditions beyond their control can be considered in a timely manner. We

also believe that the General Assembly should be able to benefit whenever possible from the technical advice of the COC when considering requests from Member States for exemptions from the application of Article 19. In this context, it is important for the General Assembly to agree on a clear set of rules on granting waiver of Article 19. This set of rules should not be discriminatory against any Member State.

Mr. Chairman,

7. On the review of the various elements of the scale methodology, the Group of 77 and China notes that the Committee on Contributions decided to consider a number of issues further at its fifty-ninth session, with a view to make a consolidated set of recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China recalls the painstaking negotiations that led to the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 52/215 on the scale of assessments for the period 1998-2000. Therefore, we would like to reaffirm that the scale of assessments, when once fixed by the General Assembly, shall not be subject to a general revision for at least three years unless it is clear that there have been substantial changes in relative capacity to pay.

8. Finally, we would like to state that the agenda item before us for consideration is not related to the peacekeeping budgets but rather the regular budget. We would therefore like to underscore that our deliberations remain focused on the issue of the scale of assessments for the regular budget.

Thank you.