

Statement by Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on agenda item 117: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations, in the Fifth Committee of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly

New York, 14 October 2002

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 117: Scale of Assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attach great importance to agenda item 117, scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. We therefore welcome the opportunity to review it at this 57th United Nations General Assembly.

We would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions for introducing the report of the Committee (A/57/11) and to the Executive Secretary of the Committee for the introduction of the relevant reports.

This year, the report contains a large number of recommendations on a variety of issues, which we have studied carefully. The discussions during the last session of the Committee, as reflected in the report, provide an extensive insight on the points of view of its members and on the technical aspects of the issues under consideration. All of them are very clear and very valuable for the Fifth Committee consideration of the report. However, the Group regrets that the Committee did not provide enough guidance to the Fifth Committee on the arrears of the former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China wish to reiterate what was stated in its Ministerial Declaration of 17 September, where it said that, and I quote:

“We reaffirm the legal obligation of Member States to bear the expenses of the Organization in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the requirements to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time and without conditions. While recognizing the need to extend sympathetic understanding to those that are temporarily unable to meet their financial obligations because of genuine economic difficulties, we urge all others, in particular the major contributor, to pay their assessed contributions unconditionally, in full and on time”.

“We reaffirm that the principle of the “capacity to pay” is the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. We stress that the especial difficulties faced by some developing countries should be fully taken into account and that the decisions of the General Assembly on the agenda item “Scale of Assessment” must be responsive to such difficulties. We stand fully committed to support the requests of these developing countries”.

“We encourage the promotion of an intergovernmental dialogue in order to explore measures to improve the financial situation of the Organization that can have a positive impact. In this regard, we stress that any attempt to change the current methodology of calculating the arrears under Article 19 of the Charter that could adversely affect a large number of developing countries, is not desirable and should be discouraged”.

End of quote.

Also, in this regard, the Group of 77 and China, in its statement of September 25 on the organization of work of the Committee, expressed that:

“The Group of 77 and China has closely followed the work of the Committee on Contributions during their last session, from 3 to 21 June 2002. In this regard, it fully supports to the recommendation adopted by the Committee on Contributions on the request of Argentina and Afghanistan for the ad-hoc reduction of their assessments for the year 2003”.

The Group of 77 and China supports the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions on Afghanistan and Argentina, not only on the basis of solidarity with two members of the Group, but because the recommendations were adopted in the Committee on Contributions by consensus and based on their technical merits taking into account that the COC is the only expert body entitled to give guidance to the General Assembly on this issue. Furthermore, not agreeing on them would pose a serious threat to the credibility of the Committee’s future recommendations, which, based on such a precedent, would be then freely contested according to the interest of the affected parties.

Mr. Chairman,

On the application of Article 19, the Group accepts the need to consider the request for exemption from the application of Article 19, in particular developing countries that are temporarily experiencing genuine economic difficulties. Accordingly, we believe the General Assembly should continue to examine ways in which requests of those Member States for exemption under Article 19 due to conditions beyond their control could be considered in a timely manner. On this matter, the Group of 77 and China reaffirm the role of the General Assembly with regard to Article 19 of the Charter, and we reaffirm the advisory role of the Committee on Contributions in accordance with Rule 160 of the Rules of the Procedure of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

With reference to the subject of multi-year payment plans, the Group of 77 and China endorse the recommendation of the Committee that multi-year payment plans should remain voluntary and should not be automatically linked to other measures.

In the case of the arrears of the former Yugoslavia, the Group looks forward to the additional information as well as the views of other delegations on the proper way to approach this issue, taking into account its political, legal and technical dimensions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group would also like to emphasize that discussions on this item should be conducted in a comprehensive and transparent manner in order for all Member States to contribute meaningfully to the deliberations on this agenda item.

The Group of 77 and China look forward to the informal consultations on this agenda item and is ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with all our partners on the various issues that have been raised.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.