



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. AICHA AFIFI, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY PERMANENT MISSION OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 124: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 14 October 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 124: Scale of Assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to agenda item 124, and therefore welcomes the opportunity to review it at this fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions for introducing the report of the Committee (A/58/11) and to the Secretary of the Committee for the introduction of the relevant reports.

Since this year is a scale year the General Assembly has to approve a new scale of assessments for the triennium 2004-2006. 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 of the report.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China wishes to reiterate what it has stated in its Ministerial Declaration of 25th September 2003, and I quote:

"We reaffirm the legal obligation of all member states to bear the financial expenses of the UN, in accordance with the Charter, and urge all member states to pay assessed contributions on time, in full and without conditions. We further recognize the need to extend sympathetic understanding to those member states that temporarily may not be able to meet their financial obligations as a consequence of genuine economic difficulties (...).

We also reiterate the importance of the forthcoming negotiations on the scale of assessment for the triennium 2004-2006, and their swift conclusion, while reaffirming the principle of "capacity to pay" as the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations." End of quote.

The Group of 77 and China agrees with the report of the Committee on Contributions, which was adopted by consensus. The Group reaffirms the role of the Committee on Contributions as the sole expert body mandated to advise the General Assembly on this issue and commends the Committee on its work.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group would like to underline its concern that many developing countries, who are members of the Group, have seen a huge increase in their assessments for the next triennium while their economies are currently going through many difficulties which undermines the capacity to pay. These countries are making an extraordinary effort to fulfill their obligations to the United Nations.

We would like to emphasize the importance of the continuing work of the Committee, and reiterate that the multi-year payment plans should remain voluntary and should not be linked to other measures.

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 to achieve a swift conclusion of the negotiations and concentrate our efforts in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the informal consultation on this agenda item and is ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with all our partners.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.