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SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE
UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS

Draft Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Niaz A. Naik (Pakistan)

1. The Fifth Committee, at its 710th meeting held on 28 September 1959, and at its 717th meeting held on 9 October 1959, considered the item "Scale of Assessments for the Apportionment of the Expenses of the United Nations: Report of the Committee on Contributions". The Committee had before it the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/4112)^{1/} and a report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/778) on the collection of contributions as at 14 September 1959.
2. The Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, in introducing the Committee's report, paid a tribute to Mr. Arthur S. Lall, who had been Chairman of the Committee for six years. He drew attention to the two main questions dealt with in the Committee's report:

- (1) The assessment of the new Member State, the Republic of Guinea; and
- (2) Consideration, under General Assembly resolution 1308 B (XIII) of 10 December 1958, of the possibility of making available to Member States the statistical and other information at the Committee's disposal.

Assessment of the Republic of Guinea

3. The Chairman explained that the Committee on Contributions had taken into account the exceptionally difficult situation of the new Member State and had recommended that its assessment should be the minimum of 0.04 per cent. The

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly: Fourteenth Session,
Supplement No. 10.

existing United Nations scale of assessments was approved by the General Assembly (resolution 1308 A (XIII)) for the three years 1959, 1960 and 1961 and rather than revising the three-year scale, the Committee had recommended that the assessment of Guinea should be additional to the existing scale of 100 per cent. Should the Committee have to consider the assessment of other new Members before the next review of the scale to be undertaken in 1961, the inclusion in the scale of the assessment for Guinea could be re-examined. In the light of the General Assembly's decisions in respect of the Member States admitted in 1955, 1956 and 1957, the Committee had recommended that Guinea should contribute for 1958 - the year of its admission to membership - one-ninth of the assessment for the full year.

4. The representative of Guinea, referring to the economic difficulties of his country as a newly independent State, asked that it be exempted from any contribution to the United Nations; a similar exemption had already been granted by the International Labour Organisation. After an explanation by the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions that the General Assembly had established a minimum assessment of 0.04 per cent for all Member States, and that the Committee had no authority to go beyond it, the representative of Guinea accepted the Committee's recommendations for its assessment.

5. The Fifth Committee approved unanimously the assessments recommended for the Republic of Guinea.

Availability of the data at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions

6. The Chairman of the Committee on Contributions explained that under General Assembly resolution 1308 B (XIII), the Committee had considered the possibility of making available to Member States, on their request, the statistical and other information at its disposal. As the statistics on estimates of national income were not strictly comparable for all Member States, the Committee had to take into account the varying quality of the available data and, before arriving at its final assessments, to make, in the case of each country, a detailed study of all relevant statistical and other economic data at its disposal. The conversion of the national income estimates into a common currency unit also presented various difficulties affecting the comparability of the data. The material was complex and drawn from many sources, and since a full report of the Committee's deliberations could not be given, publication of the basic material

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might be misleading and entail discussion of intricate and controversial issues which could not readily be resolved in a committee of more than eighty members. For that reason, the General Assembly had appointed the Committee on Contributions, a small group of experts. The Committee had, however, proposed (A/4112, para. 23) that Member States which so desired should be given access to the background documentation on the basis of which their own assessments had been established.

7. At the 717th meeting of the Fifth Committee, the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.568) was submitted jointly by Ecuador and Venezuela:

The General Assembly,

Considering the wish expressed by certain Member States that their representatives should have access to the statistical and other information at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions,

Having examined the report of the Committee on Contributions in this connexion (A/4112, section IV),

Considering that while in principle the material at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions should be available to all Member States, there are practical difficulties, as pointed out by the Committee, in the way of general disclosure of the information in question,

Notes with approval the suggestion by the Committee on Contributions that all the statistical and other factual information pertaining to the assessment of any individual Member State should, on its request, be made available to that Member; and

Recommends that the Committee on Contributions review this matter periodically, so that, as far as the Committee deems it feasible, any future requests for information from representatives of Member States wishing to acquaint themselves with other statistical information and supplementary material used by the Committee as a basis for its recommendations may be granted.

8. In introducing the draft resolution, the representative of Ecuador recalled the reasons which, in 1958, had prompted certain delegations to request that consideration be given to the possibility of making an arrangement whereby Member States might, on their request, acquaint themselves with the material on which the Committee on Contributions based the scale of assessments. The proposed arrangement for making available to Member States the information on which their own assessments had been based constituted a step forward. Under that arrangement, however, a Member State whose assessment had been increased would not be able to compare its own assessment with that of another country whose economic situation might be

similar. The Committee had advanced cogent arguments for not making available to all Member States the whole of the material at its disposal, drawing attention in particular to the practical difficulties involved and to the fact that the Committee had been granted discretionary power in the evaluation of any of the relevant factors. Account had been taken in the draft resolution of all those points.

9. A number of delegations expressed support for the draft resolution as representing a reasonable compromise that met the requirements of certain delegations and paid due regard to the observations of the Committee on Contributions. Other delegations stressed that the establishment of the scale was a complex matter involving not only statistical material but also factors of judgement. Without reference to those factors, the material at the disposal of the Committee might be misleading, and, as the Committee on Contributions had pointed out, there would be no practicable method of acquainting Member States with all the considerations that guided it in the preparation of the scale. Furthermore, as the material was voluminous, it might prove difficult for Member States to undertake a sufficiently detailed study of the data, and they might reach conclusions based on inadequate information. The complexity of the task was one of the main reasons why it had been entrusted to the Committee on Contributions, a small group of experts whose competence and impartiality had always been recognized. There was the further consideration that, were access to all the material to be authorized, Member States might be reluctant to continue supplying confidential information to the Committee on Contributions. That would have an adverse effect on the work of the Committee and in the last analysis on the scale of assessments. For those reasons, many delegations favoured the existing system, which had worked satisfactorily for many years.

10. Some delegations, while not opposed to the draft resolution, had certain reservations with regard to the wording of the third preambular paragraph and the second operative paragraph. They were not convinced that it would be desirable to adopt the principle that the material at the Committee's disposal should be made available to all Member States. The phrase in the second operative paragraph "as far as the Committee deems it feasible" might also be open to differing

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interpretations. In reply to questions raised, the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions pointed out that if the principle laid down in the third preambular paragraph was adopted, Member States might insist on the principle and assume that it was for the Committee on Contributions to solve the practical difficulties.

11. In the course of the discussion, several oral amendments were proposed and drafting suggestions made in connexion with the third preambular and second operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. The representative of Ecuador agreed, on behalf of the sponsors, to the following revised text of the two paragraphs:

Third preambular paragraph

"Considering that while it would be desirable if the material at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions could be made available to Member States, there are practical difficulties, as pointed out by the Committee, in the way of general disclosure of the information in question."

Second operative paragraph

"Recommends that the Committee on Contributions review this matter periodically so that, at the discretion of that Committee, any future requests for pertinent information from representatives of Member States wishing to acquaint themselves with other statistical information and supplementary factual material used by the Committee as a basis for its recommendations may be granted."

12. The representative of the United Arab Republic suggested the addition of the phrase "subject to the consent of the countries concerned" after the words "at the discretion of that Committee" in the second operative paragraph. The amendment was considered unnecessary by the representative of Ecuador, since it must be assumed that the Committee on Contributions would consult with Member States before releasing confidential information supplied by them in connexion with their assessments.

Decisions of the Committee:

13. At the request of the representative of India, the third preambular paragraph and the second operative paragraph of the draft resolution were voted on separately.

The third preambular paragraph, as amended, was adopted by 42 votes to 16, with 8 abstentions.

The second operative paragraph, as amended, was adopted by 41 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions.

The draft resolution as a whole, as amended, was adopted by 44 votes to one, with 20 abstentions.

Recommendations of the Fifth Committee

14. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft Resolution

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

A

The General Assembly,

Resolves:

1. That for the years 1959, 1960 and 1961, the assessment for the Republic of Guinea shall be 0.04 per cent, which shall be in addition to the scale of assessments of 100 per cent contained in paragraph 1 of resolution 1308 A (XIII) of 10 December 1958, and shall be applied to the same bases of assessment as for all other Member States.

2. That the Republic of Guinea, which became a Member of the United Nations on 12 December 1958, shall contribute for the year of admission to membership an amount equal to one-ninth of 0.04 per cent applied to the net budget for 1958.

3. That the advance to the Working Capital Fund by the Republic of Guinea, under Financial Regulation 5.8, shall be 0.04 per cent of the total amount of the Fund and shall be carried as an advance additional to the authorized level of that Fund pending the inclusion of the rate of assessment for Guinea in the scale of 100 per cent.

B

The General Assembly,

Considering the wish expressed by certain Member States that their representatives should have access to the statistical and other information at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions,

Having examined the report of the Committee on Contributions in this connexion (A/4112, section IV),

Considering that while it would be desirable if the material at the disposal of the Committee on Contributions could be made available to Member States, there are practical difficulties, as pointed out by the Committee, in the way of general disclosure of the information in question,

Notes with approval the suggestion by the Committee on Contributions that all the statistical and other factual information pertaining to the assessment of any individual Member State should, on its request, be made available to that Member; and

Recommends that the Committee on Contributions review this matter periodically, so that, at the discretion of that Committee, any future requests for pertinent information from representatives of Member States wishing to acquaint themselves with other statistical information and supplementary factual material used by the Committee as a basis for its recommendations may be granted.
