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Chair: Mr. Margaryan (Armenia)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Bachar Bong

Contents

Organization of work

Agenda item 142: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Agenda item 149: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/76/1; A/C.5/76/L.1)

1. **The Chair** invited members to consider the proposed programme of work of the Committee for the main part of the session, drawn up on the basis of the agenda items allocated to the Committee (A/C.5/76/1), and the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/76/L.1). A separate list on the status of documentation would be issued for the first and second parts of the resumed session.

2. He wished to highlight some of the recommendations made by the General Committee in its report (A/76/250), which had been endorsed by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting. With regard to the rationalization of work, the Assembly had requested each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods and had invited the Chairs of the Main Committees to continue briefing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the seventy-sixth session on any best practices and lessons learned with a view to improving working methods, and to coordinate their briefings through, inter alia, possible identification of commonalities in the working methods and the lessons learned.

3. The Fifth Committee should complete its work for the main part of the session by 10 December 2021. Meetings should start promptly at 10 a.m. and be adjourned by 6 p.m. In accordance with past practice, the requirement that at least one quarter of the members should be present in order to declare a meeting open and to permit debate to proceed had been waived. The General Committee had drawn attention to rules 99 (b), 106, 109, 114 and 115 of the rules of procedure regarding the conduct of meetings.

4. Efforts should be made to reduce the number of resolutions adopted, and resolutions should not contain requests for reports from the Secretary-General unless such reports were strictly necessary for the implementation of those resolutions or for the continued consideration of an item. Resolutions should be short and action-oriented. Initiators of proposals with programme budget implications should establish a timetable at an early stage with the Chairs of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in order to ensure full compliance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure. A mandatory deadline, not later than 1 December, should be established for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with such implications.

5. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he trusted that the Committee's programme of work would be adjusted during the course of the session to reflect the progress of work and the Committee's priorities, as well as any improvements in the prevailing public health situation. The Group understood why only formal meetings could be held in person at the current time but hoped that in-person informal consultations could resume shortly. The Committee should not favour the consideration of one agenda item over another; every item should be discussed under the same meeting modalities. The Group was disappointed that interpretation services were still not being provided during informal consultations and looked forward to the restoration of multilingualism. It was regrettable that several reports were still outstanding, as delays in the issuance of reports significantly compromised the Committee's work. Adequate time must be given to each item and practical steps taken to ensure that reports were issued in all official languages in a timely fashion.

6. At the current session, the Committee would address a number of crucial issues, including the proposed programme budget for 2022, the scales of assessments, construction and property management, the review of the budget cycle and consideration of the sequencing of the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee, the United Nations common system, the United Nations pension system, the Umoja enterprise resource planning system, conditions of service for full-time members of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Chair of the Advisory Committee, and the administration of justice. The Group would pay close attention to the deliberations on the capital master plan, revised estimates, all matters involving programme budget implications, improving the financial situation of the United Nations, and the reports of the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

7. Mandates must determine budget proposals and not the reverse. The level of resources to be approved by the General Assembly must be commensurate with the mandated programmes and activities to ensure their full and effective implementation. The Group reaffirmed the critical role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/243, the ten programmes of the proposed programme budget for 2022 for which the Committee for Programme and Coordination had not provided conclusions and recommendations should be reviewed in a timely manner by the plenary or the relevant Main Committee responsible for those mandates, to enable the

Fifth Committee to discuss and approve the related budget. During the adoption of the programmes of work of the other Main Committees, numerous delegations had raised the issue of programmes for which the Committee for Programme and Coordination had not provided conclusions and recommendations. The Group trusted that resolution 75/243, adopted by consensus, would be respected.

8. The consideration of the budget on an annual basis imposed additional time constraints for the thorough discussion of other agenda items. The Group was committed to overcoming that challenge, as well as the continued difficulties posed by the pandemic. The Group trusted that the Fifth Committee would devote adequate time to all items and that its deliberations would be conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

9. **Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that Member States had a responsibility to ensure that the United Nations had adequate, sustainable and predictable resources. He acknowledged that delegates were tiring of virtual meetings but urged everyone to engage in a positive and flexible manner and to make every effort to ensure that the Committee finished its programme of work early. The Committee must not make a habit of completing its work with only minutes to spare before the end of the budget year, as in 2020.

10. One particularly important agenda item under discussion was the scales of assessment, which were also used by other United Nations entities as the basis for their own calculations of assessed contributions. Nevertheless, the deliberations on the scales must not prevent progress from being made on other items.

11. To achieve its objectives, the United Nations needed a strong human rights pillar. The protection of human rights was essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting peace and security. The two delegations were committed to ensuring allocation of the resources needed to fully fund all the mandates of the human rights pillar.

12. The strategic heritage plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva was not only a conservation project but also an investment in multilateralism that would make the Office more modern, effective and efficient. The two delegations thanked the Member States for their commitment to supporting the project.

13. **Ms. Tang** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that, during the seventy-fifth session, the Secretariat had been forced to take exceptional measures as a result of

the pandemic. However, the modalities for the work of the Committee should evolve in line with the prevailing health situation. She trusted that the Bureau would bear that in mind when considering best working practices for the current session.

14. With the challenges facing the world being more complex and interconnected than ever, multilateralism and the rules-based multilateral system were essential. Member States must support the United Nations and set it up for success by ensuring that it had adequate financial resources. The pandemic had disrupted the economies of many Member States and it was understandable that those States whose economies had been disproportionately affected might be facing difficulties in paying their contributions. It was therefore important for Member States that had the capacity to pay to do so in full, on time and without conditions. Otherwise, the United Nations risked not having the resources it needed to carry out its mandates.

15. ASEAN would follow with interest the Committee's deliberations on the scales of assessment, the proposed programme budget for 2022, construction and property management, special political missions and the request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. She urged Member States to work together to reach outcomes that would command the widest possible consensus. The States members of ASEAN would work constructively and in an open and transparent manner with all delegations with a view to ensuring the timely conclusion of the Committee's work.

16. **Mr. Camelli** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine, said that the European Union supported the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure the effective implementation of his organizational reforms. The need for effective multilateral governance and a fit-for-purpose Organization was more acute than ever. The European Union was committed to working collectively to build a stronger, more efficient and agile Organization.

17. All Member States should pay their contributions in full and on time. The liquidity situation of the United Nations continued to undermine mandate delivery. The temporary solutions introduced to date had merely alleviated the consequences of the liquidity crisis, resulting in the systemic underperformance of the United Nations. The Committee must rise to the challenge and find sustainable solutions to the crisis.

18. With regard to the scales of assessments, the principles of solidarity and capacity to pay must be upheld. While the item was important, delegations should engage constructively on all items. The main purpose of the Committee was to ensure the adequate funding and functioning of the Organization. At the same time, resources should be used in an efficient, effective and accountable manner, with a focus on results.

19. Certain delegations wished to duplicate the discussions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the Main Committees of the General Assembly. While it was up to the Main Committees to decide, any decision taken should not undermine the Committee for Programme and Coordination, affect consensus-based decision-making or hamper the Fifth Committee's ability to negotiate and adopt the programme budget in a timely fashion.

20. Some general principles should apply to the Committee's work. It was the responsibility of all Member States to ensure that the Committee concluded its programme of work in a timely fashion. Conducting negotiations after normal working hours and extending the programme of work beyond the time allotted should not be the norm. Member States should show pragmatism and political will, while the Bureau should enforce deadlines. To ensure the effective use of the Committee's time and alleviate the ever-increasing burden on the Secretariat to respond to questions, the European Union would streamline the number of questions it asked, and encouraged other delegations to follow suit.

21. All documents should be submitted on time in all official languages. While the European Union recognized the constraints imposed by the pandemic and the strain placed on interpretation and translation services, multilingualism was key to ensuring inclusivity and transparency and helping the Committee to reach successful outcomes.

22. The European Union was committed to decision-making by consensus, which must remain the fundamental tenet of the Committee. That required Member States to engage in a spirit of good faith, collegiality and constructive cooperation to find middle-ground positions that all could join and support, even when they did not correspond to Member States' preferred choices, and to refrain from politicizing the issues at hand. The members of the Committee had proved time and time again their capacity to find agreement on technical issues that had important political ramifications.

23. **Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group noted with satisfaction the steps taken towards a return to normality after over a year of virtual meetings. The Group trusted that the Committee would take advantage of the improved public health situation to revert, as much as possible, to in-person meetings, which greatly enhanced negotiations. Interpretation services should be provided for all in-person meetings to allow States to contribute to deliberations in the official language in which they were most effective. The late issuance of documentation continued to affect the work of the Committee, although there had been some improvement. All pending reports should be finalized and issued as a matter of priority.

24. The Group valued the work of the Committee on Contributions, whose report provided the basis for the new scales of assessments. Any modifications to the current methodology must not be detrimental to developing countries. Their peculiarities should be taken into account, in particular those of African countries, which were facing unprecedented health, economic and social challenges. The Group would also pay close attention to matters relating to the programme budget for 2022, the Board of Auditors, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, and construction and property management.

25. Special political missions were one of the most effective tools for sustaining international peace and acted as early warning mechanisms in conflict situations, yet the Committee had failed to provide them with adequate financial and human resources. Ensuring that such missions had adequate resources would reduce the amount of funding needed for peacekeeping operations and ultimately save lives and prevent conflict.

26. The Group reiterated its position that mandates should dictate budgetary allocations and not the reverse. In that connection, the Group was committed to ensuring that adequate resources were approved for the Economic Commission for Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

27. Requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations should be considered promptly to enable the Member States concerned to participate fully in the work of the General Assembly. He emphasized the Group's long-standing position that consultations should be conducted in an inclusive and transparent manner and concluded within the allocated time frame of the programme of work.

28. **Ms. Zilbergeld** (Israel) said that, while the seventy-fifth session had been challenging due to the pandemic, new working methods and technological solutions had been introduced that had ensured business continuity and enabled the United Nations to continue functioning, all while protecting the health and safety of staff and delegates, which must remain the primary consideration. The pandemic had demonstrated the usefulness of an annual budget in enabling the United Nations to be more agile and responsive. It was more important than ever for the Committee to promote the use of innovative technologies and best practices in order to ensure mandate delivery.

29. Strengthening the technological capacity of the United Nations contributed to the effective use of information, data-driven decision-making processes, and coherent and effective mandate implementation. The development of information systems and updated technologies for analysing data enabled the United Nations to achieve effective oversight. Digital best practices should be introduced throughout the Organization to reduce organizational bureaucracy.

30. An independent, transparent, professionalized and decentralized system of administration of justice for the resolution of work-related disputes remained a priority for Israel. It was particularly important to protect United Nations staff from retaliation, address the causes of disputes, improve mental health services, and investigate the trend of upward harassment of female managers. Her delegation looked forward to considering the report of the Secretary-General on the administration of justice at the United Nations.

31. Greater efforts should be made to recruit female staff and achieve full gender parity at all levels of the Secretariat. Specific and targeted efforts were needed to address the recruitment and promotion of women at all levels, both in field and non-field positions.

32. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) said that the pandemic continued to present significant challenges and cause uncertainty. While it was not ideal for the Committee to be obliged to conduct the bulk of its work online, it had succeeded in doing so before and could do so again if necessary.

33. During the current session, the Committee would consider the Organization's third annual budget, ahead of the review in 2022. There were discussions taking place in the other Main Committees about how to deal with the absence of recommendations from the Committee for Programme and Coordination on certain programmes of the proposed programme budget. Decisions about programmes of work remained with the Main Committees and their members to take forward as

they saw appropriate within their respective mandates. The Fifth Committee, however, must not lose sight of its responsibility to adopt the programme budget in good time, so that the Organization could carry out the mandates given to it by Member States. The Committee must therefore move ahead expeditiously with its work. During the previous session, significant delays in completing the programme of work and adopting the programme budget had threatened mandate delivery, an approach that bordered on irresponsible.

34. His delegation would work with all Member States to reach an appropriate and timely agreement on the scales of assessments. It was important to refine the methodology for the scales so that it was based firmly on the principle of capacity to pay. His delegation also looked forward to discussing the ICSC recommendations for the United Nations common system, issues relating to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and after-service health insurance, and efforts to strengthen accountability and transparency within the Organization and in special political missions.

35. **Mr. Kimura** (Japan) said that there were many pressing and complex items before the Committee, including the programme budget for 2022, special political missions and the scales of assessments. The Committee should strive to be even more effective and efficient in order to conclude its programme of work in a timely fashion, taking into account the lessons learned from previous sessions.

36. Since the approval of the programme budget for 2021, the pandemic and geopolitical shifts had altered the global environment. The Committee should maximize the benefits of the annual budget cycle to make the United Nations budget more nimble, responsive and accountable in order to address global needs properly and promptly.

37. It was of the utmost importance that the United Nations deliver its mandates effectively. Japan would continue to call for budgetary discipline, which was essential for the United Nations to implement its mandates in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner. His delegation was committed to having constructive discussions based on that principle.

38. **Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) said that during the general debate, leaders had called for a strengthened role for the United Nations and greater cooperation in addressing global challenges, such as the pandemic and climate change. China, as a practitioner of multilateralism, was actively engaged in reforming and improving the global governance system and firmly upheld the United Nations-centred international system, the international order underpinned by international law and the central role of the Organization in international affairs.

39. In order to maintain the role of the United Nations, all Member States must assume their responsibilities and fulfil their financial obligations, as financial resources underpinned United Nations governance. The financial situation of the United Nations remained worrying. Despite the fact that the Secretary-General had sent letters to Member States expressing his concerns and despite repeated calls by many Member States, one major contributor still had long-term unpaid assessments, which were the main cause of the Organization's liquidity crisis. China, as the second largest contributor to the regular and peacekeeping budgets, was highly responsible and always paid its assessments in a timely manner. China called upon Member States, in particular large contributors, to fulfil their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. Member States should translate their promises into action to ensure mandate implementation.

40. The Committee would consider several important items during the current session, including the scales of assessments, the programme budget for 2022 and the reports of the Board of Auditors. China called upon all parties to conduct broad consultations and to strive for mutual benefits through cooperation.

41. In recent years, there had been an increase in the share of the scale of assessments borne by developing countries and a decrease in that borne by developed countries, which was unreasonable and not in line with the principle of capacity to pay. Developed countries should shoulder more financial responsibilities for the United Nations and take into account the difficulties and concerns of developing countries. The relief measures for developing countries contained in the current scale of assessments methodology should be strengthened, not diminished. Programme planning should respect the Member-State driven principle and take into account legitimate interests and aspirations of Member States.

42. The function of the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be strengthened and each Main Committee should play its role. The programme budget should be maintained at a reasonable level. The Secretariat should improve comprehensive budget performance, enhance cost-saving and efficiency gains, and ensure that spending was linked to performance and performance to accountability. United Nations entities and departments should focus on their core functions and avoid unnecessary expansion and duplication of mandates. China had confidence in the ability of the Board of Auditors to audit the United Nations fully and independently. The United Nations should take additional measures to increase the geographical representation of developing countries in the Secretariat.

43. **Mr. Penaranda** (Philippines) said that the pandemic presented an opportunity for the United Nations to play an important role in the recovery of those countries most affected. As the first of the Main Committees to pivot to alternative working methods at the start of the pandemic, the Fifth Committee had proved its ability to continue to exercise its crucial mandate. During the current session, his delegation looked forward to the timely issuance of documents in all official languages and hoped that simultaneous interpretation would be provided during informal consultations, to ensure the Committee's timely consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals.

44. The United Nations must be equipped with the resources it needed to work at its fullest capacity. The timely payment by Member States of their financial contributions, without preconditions, was essential. With regard to the proposed programme budget for 2022, proposals must be in line with existing intergovernmental mandates, with an emphasis on equitable geographic representation and enhanced accessibility for persons with disabilities.

45. Over six years had passed since the issuance of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which set out technically sound recommendations on the funding and backstopping of special political missions. The crucial role of such missions could be further enhanced if improvements were made to existing financing arrangements. His delegation called upon all Member States to reinvigorate special political missions, which were a crucial tool for addressing peace and security challenges. The Philippines looked forward to the discussion on progress made with regard to the implementation of the management reform, despite the challenges experienced in 2020 and 2021.

46. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that, given the importance of the matters before the Committee and the impact of its decisions on the operations of the Organization, the Committee must have a clear overview of programmes and consider the programme budget in a constructive manner. The regular budget and peacekeeping scales of assessments for the period 2022–2024 must be fair, reflect the reality of the international system and be calculated in accordance with the principle of capacity to pay. With regard to the programme budget for 2022, for the third consecutive year, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had not made recommendations on a significant number of programmes, which would complicate the work of the Fifth Committee. The approved budget must be realistic and balanced so as to provide the Secretariat with the resources it needed to implement its mandates in a timely manner.

47. Special political missions had a central role to play in building sustainable peace. However, a separate account for funding such missions should be established. Mexico would pay close attention to the deliberations on the 38 special political missions, which together accounted for over 22 per cent of the regular budget. To implement their substantive mandates, such missions must be provided with adequate and timely funding, which they must utilize in a responsible, transparent and accountable manner.

48. It was essential to resolve the divergences in the jurisprudence of the tribunals of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations on matters relating to ICSC decisions and to reaffirm the authority of ICSC in order to safeguard the unity of the United Nations common system. His delegation reiterated its commitment to the management reform and emphasized the importance of finally reaching an agreement on the global service delivery model. His delegation would participate constructively in the Committee's deliberations, striving for budgetary discipline, transparency and accountability.

49. **Mr. Knyazyan** (Armenia) said that, with the world beginning to recover and build back from the pandemic, Member States needed to strengthen their commitment to equipping the Organization with the resources it needed to respond in a timely and efficient manner to challenges on the ground. The Committee had a critical role to play, as its decisions would define the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil its mandates across all three pillars.

50. His delegation attached the utmost importance to the sustainable and adequate resourcing of the mandates of the United Nations, with a view to making the Organization fit for purpose, results-oriented and able to prevent and respond to challenges. The timely fulfilment of financial obligations by Member States was the key to addressing the Organization's financial crisis. For many consecutive years, Armenia had appeared on the honour roll, the list of Member States having paid their regular budget assessments in full within the first 30 days of the year.

51. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia) said that at a time when multilateralism was being challenged in every possible way, it was important to make the Organization stronger and more dynamic. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's reforms and his proposal to make the United Nations more effective by developing new capabilities that promoted agility, integration and cohesion across the United Nations system, as part of a wider transformation towards a United Nations "2.0", as set out in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*.

52. Mongolia would pay close attention to the deliberations on the proposed programme budget for 2022, the scales of assessments, construction and property management, and improving the financial situation of the Organization. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the Committee concluded its work within the time allotted. To that end, reports must be issued on time to allow for transparent and inclusive negotiations. With regard to the methodology used to calculate the scales of assessments, his delegation shared the long-standing position of the Group of 77 and China that the principle of capacity to pay should remain the main criterion for apportioning the expenses of the United Nations.

53. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that while the United Nations had been on the frontline of the global response to the pandemic, at times, resource constraints had prevented the Organization from delivering, which was a reminder of the need to scale up, and make provision for, emergency responses. Sound financial health was the key to the smooth functioning of the United Nations and the efficient and timely delivery of its mandates. It was more important than ever to ensure that the Organization had adequate resources. The effective implementation of a well-planned budget was critical. Bangladesh reiterated the principled position on assessed contributions of the Group of 77 and China and remained committed to paying its assessed contributions regularly and on time.

54. The pandemic continued to pose formidable challenges to the Organization in terms of the effective and efficient delivery of mandates. During the consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2022, Member States should take into account the impact of the pandemic on the Organization's operations and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources, to enable the United Nations to continue implementing its regular programmes while also carrying out pandemic response efforts.

55. Genuine budgetary discipline was essential for the United Nations to be efficient and effective. Her delegation expected the Secretariat to utilize the resources entrusted to it in a cost-effective, efficient and rational manner, to keep Member States informed on a regular basis, and to maintain the utmost transparency in its reporting. Bangladesh was confident that the Committee would be able to maintain its tradition of consensus-based decision-making and expected all delegations to show flexibility and engage constructively in the Committee's deliberations to ensure the timely conclusion of its work.

56. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) said that the United Nations had an indispensable role to play in

addressing the challenges facing the world, including climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the erosion of human rights, the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse, and growing threats to international peace and security. In order to deliver on its mandates, the Organization must become more efficient in its use of resources, better measure its performance, and be more transparent and accountable to its Member States and the people it served.

57. The United States of America would examine closely the matter of growing demands for assessed contributions. His delegation called for budget discipline across the United Nations system, which included ensuring that only necessary construction was undertaken and that major projects avoided cost overruns. The United Nations should also seek to contain increased spending in response to new and expanded mandates by eliminating outdated ones, consolidating duplicative areas of work and redeploying existing resources. In that connection, he recalled that increased flexibility to respond to shifting priorities was a goal of the Secretary-General's reform agenda.

58. At the same time, resources must be safeguarded for special political missions, which were a valuable means of upholding international peace and security. In addition, full funding should be maintained for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

59. Programme planning was an essential tool for ensuring that the Organization's mission was focused, well understood, and oriented towards the problems that the United Nations existed to address. His delegation looked forward to reviewing the programme plans and recalled that the Fifth Committee was the Main Committee responsible for administrative and budgetary matters.

60. Staff entitlements and costs relating to conditions of service comprised nearly two-thirds of the Organization's costs. It was important to re-establish a unified salary scale, including by addressing the divergent decisions handed down by the different administrative tribunals of the United Nations common system; enhancing transparency on compensation costs, including through the use of commercially available data; and reaffirming the authority of ICSC and improving its methodology.

61. As the largest contributor of assessed funding to the regular and peacekeeping budgets, the United States

had a significant responsibility for the finances of the Organization and a shared interest in ensuring that the methodology for calculating assessments was equitable, data-driven and grounded in the principle of capacity to pay. During the deliberations on the scales of assessments, his delegation looked forward to discussing the various discounts afforded to certain States, including the special discount intended for developing countries that was currently applied to certain wealthy Member States. The Committee had proven its ability to find consensus on critical issues despite the challenges presented by virtual working modalities and he was confident that it would do so again.

62. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) said that the pandemic had jeopardized many of the gains achieved and put additional pressures on the United Nations system. Nevertheless, the Organization had been able to deliver on its mandates in such areas as peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Norway was a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's reform agenda, which not only ensured better processes at the United Nations but also acted as a catalyst for better mandate delivery in the field. That was particularly important for building back better after the pandemic. Her delegation welcomed the report entitled *Our Common Agenda* and the Secretary-General's call for a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations. Member States must continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the United Nations was fit for purpose.

63. The regular budget was a key enabler of mandate delivery. While her delegation would continue to promote the importance of results-based management, the Organization must also be provided with adequate resources and given more flexibility to fulfil its mandates, in order to ensure that it remained relevant. That extended to the United Nations human rights system, which was hampered by persistent underfunding, as well as the United Nations development system, oversight mechanisms and peacekeeping operations.

64. **Ms. Oh Hyunjoo** (Republic of Korea) said that her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's reform efforts and intended to engage constructively in the Committee's deliberations, including on the issue of management reform. The seventy-sixth session was particularly significant as it coincided with the final year of the trial period of the annual budget cycle. The essence of the Organization's reform efforts – namely, making the United Nations more effective, efficient and accountable – should be fully incorporated throughout the budget negotiation process. In addition, the lessons learned from the experience of responding to the

pandemic should be used to increase the efficiency of the Organization.

65. The work of the Committee on Contributions provided a valuable foundation for the Committee's discussions on how to update and modernize the scales of assessments. Assessments were the most fundamental contribution a Member State could make to achieving the shared goal of maintaining and promoting international peace and security. The shared and equitable responsibility for paying assessments must be based on capacity to pay and on the most current, comprehensive and comparable data available.

66. Discussions about the establishment of the global service delivery model should be guided by its original purpose, which was to provide the Organization with high-quality services at minimum cost. Transparency was essential to decisions regarding the location of the global shared service centres.

67. **Mr. Mnguni** (South Africa) said that as a result of the pandemic, the Committee had been obliged to adjust its working methods and adopt a hybrid working model. While the Committee had succeeded in concluding its programme of work during the seventy-fifth session, his delegation hoped that in-person meetings would resume once the public health situation had improved. All Member States must be able to participate in all types of Committee meetings on an equal footing; that meant providing interpretation services in all of the official languages of the Organization. In addition, all outstanding reports should be issued as a matter of priority.

68. South Africa attached great importance to the item on the scales of assessments and hoped that the Committee would conclude the item promptly, including requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter. The existing methodology must be kept intact. Other matters of interest to his delegation included the proposed programme budget for 2022, the review of the implementation of the management paradigm, construction and property management, issues relating to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, global communications, human rights and humanitarian affairs, economic and social development in Africa, United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and special political missions.

69. **Mr. Wallace** (Jamaica) said that the pandemic had highlighted the need for the international community to work in concert to address the diverse challenges impeding development. The development imperatives of Jamaica, a small island developing State, were aligned with the Organization's vision of sustainable development, which could best be achieved through

international cooperation. Member States must commit to ensuring that the United Nations had the necessary resources to operate at full capacity. The United Nations continued to face a liquidity crisis owing to the late and non-payment of assessed contributions by Member States, despite their best efforts to pay in full and on time. The crisis had been further exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. He urged all Member States to make every effort to reduce their arrears to the regular and peacekeeping budgets.

70. His delegation emphasized the importance of the deliberations on the scales of assessments, given their direct implication for the work of the Organization. Jamaica supported the long-standing position of the Group of 77 and China regarding the methodology for calculating the scales of assessments. He urged Member States to be constructive and transparent and to bear in mind that all budget proposals approved by the Committee must be in line with the mandates conferred upon it by the General Assembly.

71. **Mr. Pedroza** (Peru) said that the Committee was responsible for approving a programme budget that would enable the Organization to fulfil its mandates effectively, particularly in the light of the complex global situation facing the international community. His delegation would focus on the deliberations on post and non-post resources for the United Nations entities involved in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting and protecting human rights and addressing climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution.

72. The methodology and elements used to calculate the scales of assessments for the period 2022–2024 should not change, particularly given the difficult socioeconomic situation of many developing countries, which was unlikely to improve in the next three years. His delegation trusted that all matters before the Committee would be discussed in a constructive and collaborative manner, with a view to achieving optimal results for all Member States.

73. **Mr. Kalugin** (Russian Federation) said that during the previous session, the Fifth Committee had agreed that in the event the Committee for Programme and Coordination could not provide recommendations on a programme of the proposed programme budget, the relevant Main Committee should provide substantive comments. Paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution [75/243](#) reflected the clear and categorical will of Member States. The provision of substantive conclusions and recommendations on such programmes by the other Main Committees would help the Fifth Committee to conclude its work within the time allotted.

The Chair should do his utmost to ensure that the Committee received such conclusions and recommendations in a timely manner. His delegation expected greater involvement from the secretariat of the Committee, which should have done the necessary work in advance with the secretariats of the other Main Committees. If that was not the case, Member States and the secretariat should work together to understand the reasons behind the failure to carry out the mandate of the General Assembly.

74. The number of formal and informal in-person meetings must be increased. Virtual meetings could only be informal in nature. It was important to ensure the timely and simultaneous issuance of documents in all official languages, as delays had a negative impact on the ability of delegates to prepare. The Russian Federation trusted that deliberations would be as inclusive and transparent as possible.

75. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that the Bureau would take into account the views expressed and make any necessary adjustments.

76. *It was so decided.*

77. **The Chair** suggested that a deadline of 15 October 2022 should be set for the submission of candidacies for appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments and that the elections should be held on 9 November 2022. If he heard no objection, he took it that the Committee wished to proceed in that manner.

78. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 142: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/76/11, A/76/11/Add.1 and A/76/70)

Agenda item 149: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/76/296/Rev.1)

79. **Mr. Greiver** (Chair of the Committee on Contributions), introducing the report of the Committee on Contributions on its eighty-first session (A/76/11 and A/76/11/Add.1), said that the report contained the results of the review, conducted by the Committee on Contributions pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/271, of the elements of the methodology for the scale of assessments.

80. Based on its review of the income measure, which constituted a first approximation of capacity to pay, the Committee on Contributions had reaffirmed its recommendation that the scale of assessments should be

based on the most current, comprehensive and comparable data available for gross national income (GNI). It had expressed support for efforts by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to enable Member States to submit national accounts data on a timely basis with the required scope, detail and quality. It had also recommended that the General Assembly encourage Member States to submit the required national accounts questionnaires under the 2008 System of National Accounts on a timely basis.

81. Conversion rates were required in order to be able to express in a common monetary unit GNI data reported in national currencies. The Committee on Contributions had reaffirmed its recommendation that conversion rates based on market exchange rates should be used, except where doing so would cause excessive fluctuations and distortions in some Member States' GNI expressed in United States dollars. In the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Committee on Contributions had decided to use a modified conversion rate for the years 2014–2016 and the United Nations operational rate of exchange for the years 2017–2019. GNI data must be averaged over a designated base period; once a base period had been chosen, there were advantages in using the same base period for as long as possible.

82. Members of the Committee on Contributions continued to have divergent views on the debt-burden adjustment, which had been an element of the methodology since 1986. The unavailability of data was no longer a factor in determining whether to base the debt-burden adjustment on total external debt or public external debt, and whether the debt-stock approach or the debt-flow approach should be used. Data were now available on public external debt and on actual repayments. The Committee on Contributions had decided to consider further the question of the debt-burden adjustment in the light of guidance from the General Assembly.

83. While the Committee on Contributions had agreed that the low per capita income adjustment, part of the methodology since the first scale, continued to be an essential element in the scale methodology, it had considered various alternatives. One such alternative involved establishing the threshold on the basis of the world average per capita debt-adjusted GNI. Another possible alternative was an inflation-adjusted threshold. The Committee had decided to consider the low per capita income adjustment further in the light of guidance from the General Assembly.

84. The current methodology included a maximum assessment rate, or ceiling, of 22 per cent, a maximum assessment rate, or ceiling, for the least developed

countries of 0.010 per cent, and a minimum assessment rate, or floor, of 0.001 per cent. The Committee on Contributions had decided to consider those elements further in the light of guidance from the General Assembly. Its review of large scale-to-scale changes in rates of assessment and discontinuity, annual recalculation, and the inclusion of the indicators of 2020 and 2021 in the scale methodology was detailed in chapter III B of the report. The Committee on Contributions would also study those questions further in the light of guidance from the Assembly.

85. In order to be able to identify the impact of the inclusion of new data on the 2022–2024 scale of assessments, including decisions on data and conversion rates but excluding proposals for changes to the scale methodology, the Committee on Contributions had considered the application of the new data to the methodology used in preparing the current scale; the results of the analysis were set out in chapter III D of the report. For the period 2022–2024, the Committee on Contributions had recommended that non-member States be called upon to contribute based on a flat annual fee fixed at 50 per cent, which would be applied to notional rates of assessment fixed at 0.001 per cent for the Holy See and 0.011 per cent for the State of Palestine.

86. In its resolution 57/4 B, the General Assembly had endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on Contributions concerning multi-year payment plans. The Committee on Contributions reiterated its recommendation that the Assembly encourage Member States with contributions arrears within the meaning of Article 19 of the Charter to consider submitting multi-year payment plans. The Committee on Contributions had considered four requests for exemption under Article 19. It had concluded that the failure of the four Member States – the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia – to pay the minimum amount necessary to avoid the application of Article 19 was due to conditions beyond their control and had recommended that they be permitted to vote until the end of the seventy-sixth session. The Central African Republic had subsequently made the minimum payment necessary to no longer fall under Article 19.

87. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on multi-year payment plans (A/76/70), said that six Member States had implemented multi-year payment plans since the adoption of that system, enabling them to pay their assessed contributions in full. The status of implementation of the sole remaining payment plan, submitted in 2002 by Sao Tome and Principe, was set out in the report.

88. No new payment plans had been submitted in recent years, but several Member States had indicated that they were considering the matter. Due consideration should be given to the economic situation of Member States, as some might not be in a position to submit payment plans. The submission of such plans should remain voluntary. The Secretariat stood ready to assist Member States wishing to implement such plans.

89. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236 (A/76/296/Rev.1), he recalled that in its resolution 55/235, the Assembly had established a new system for adjusting Member States' regular budget rates of assessment to determine the rates of assessment for peacekeeping operations. The system was based on various criteria, including average per capita GNI, which were used to place each Member State in a contribution level. The Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to update the composition of the contribution levels every three years, in conjunction with the review of the regular budget scale of assessments. In establishing the system, the Assembly had decided that Member States would be assigned to the lowest level of contribution with the highest discount for which they were eligible, unless they indicated a decision to move to a higher level. In its resolution 55/236, the Assembly had welcomed the voluntary commitment made by a number of Member States to contribute to peacekeeping operations at a rate higher than required by their per capita income.

90. At its seventy-third session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 73/272, had reaffirmed the principles set out in resolution 55/235. The Assembly had also recognized the need to reform the current methodology for apportioning the expenses of peacekeeping operations and had decided to review the structure of the levels during its seventy-sixth session. The report of the Secretary-General provided information on the updating of the composition of the contribution levels in accordance with the established criteria and in conjunction with the review of the regular budget scale of assessments. The updated composition of levels, subject to adjustments arising from the Assembly's review, would be used to establish each Member State's peacekeeping rate of assessment for the period 2022–2024. The effective rates would only be determined once a new regular budget scale had been adopted; however, for illustrative purposes, annex III to the report showed the peacekeeping rates of assessment using the existing structure of contribution levels.

91. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and

without conditions, in fulfilment of their legal obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure that the Organization had adequate financial resources to discharge its mandates. It was not realistic of Member States to continuously demand more of the Organization while unilaterally withholding their contributions.

92. Consideration should nevertheless be given to the special circumstances that temporarily prevented some developing countries from meeting their financial obligations. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the economies of many developing countries was of particular concern. The Group endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Contributions concerning the three Member States with pending requests for exemption under Article 19 and urged the Fifth Committee to consider those requests at the earliest opportunity. He welcomed the efforts of Member States that had met their commitments under multi-year payment plans and encouraged others with significant arrears to consider submitting such plans, although he reiterated that they should remain voluntary.

93. The current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments reflected changes in the relative economic situations of Member States. The Group reaffirmed capacity to pay as the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations and rejected any changes in the elements of the current methodology aimed at increasing the contributions of developing countries. Core elements such as the base period, GNI, conversion rates, low per capita income adjustment, the gradient, the floor, the least developed countries ceiling and the debt-burden adjustment were not negotiable.

94. The General Assembly should, however, review the overall ceiling, in accordance with its resolution 55/5 C. The ceiling had been fixed as a political compromise and consequently was at odds with the principle of capacity to pay and caused a fundamental distortion of the scale of assessments. In its report, the Committee on Contributions noted that the total redistribution of points as a result of the ceiling had been 6.565. In dollar terms, the ceiling represented a discount of approximately \$200 million for a single Member State.

95. Organizations with an enhanced observer status at the United Nations that enjoyed rights and privileges usually granted only to observer States should have the same financial obligations as such States. The General Assembly should consider establishing an assessment for such organizations.

96. The application of the current methodology to the 2022–2024 scale of assessments would lead to substantial increases in the contributions of many

developing countries. The share of the regular budget scale of assessments borne by States members of the Group of 77 and China would increase to 27.27 per cent, while the scale of assessments for developed countries would continue to decrease. While the Group was committed to fulfilling its financial responsibilities, developed countries should also take on more financial responsibilities.

97. The Group would request detailed information on the payment of arrears with a view to determining whether the rationale for reducing the overall ceiling to 22 per cent – namely, to improve the Organization's financial situation by facilitating the payment of arrears – had been upheld. In recent years, the Organization had experienced severe financial crises, with arrears largely owed by a single Member State. The Group rejected the unilateral withholding of contributions in order to put pressure on the United Nations, which ran contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter. Any attempt to shift further the burden of financing the Organization to developing countries was unfair, particularly given the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on such countries, and would be unsuccessful.

98. Peacekeeping operations, which were an indispensable function of the United Nations, must be provided with the resources necessary for the implementation of their mandates. The current principles and guidelines for the apportionment of the expenses of peacekeeping operations should serve as the basis for any discussion of the peacekeeping scale of assessments. That scale should clearly reflect the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security. As economically less developed countries had a limited capacity to contribute to the budgets of peacekeeping operations, any discussion of the system of discounts applied in calculating the peacekeeping scale should take account of the situation of such countries. No member of the Group that was not a permanent member of the Council should be classified above contribution level C.

99. The permanent members of the Security Council should continue to pay their respective premiums in addition to their regular rates of assessment. In previous years, the arbitrary and unilateral withholding of assessments had led to liquidity shortfalls, forcing the Organization to borrow from the accounts of closed peacekeeping missions. Such shortfalls had a disproportionate impact on troop- and police-contributing countries.

100. The Group rejected attempts by developed countries to shift obligations to developing countries.

Developing countries should not be arbitrarily targeted to move to higher levels or be forced to accept reductions in their discounts. All countries were welcome to contribute above their calculated rates on a voluntary basis. In keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, developing countries should not be assigned to the same level of contributions as developed countries on the sole basis of their per capita income. The exclusive use of that measure failed to take into account the difficult and unique circumstances of developing countries. Least developed countries should continue to be assessed at the lowest level of the scale.

101. The Group was concerned that the application of the current system of discounts and the ceiling for the peacekeeping scale had resulted in a situation in which developing countries, including small island developing States, had been repeatedly assigned to level B, in violation of the principles underlying the creation of that system. Given that developing countries had been compelled to relinquish significant discounts to accommodate the new contribution levels and that level C had been created with the understanding that those countries would be afforded a minimum discount of 7.5 per cent, they were not in a position to agree to any further reductions in their discounts.

102. Deliberations regarding the items on the agenda of the Fifth Committee should be open, inclusive and transparent, as befitted the Committee's competence as the sole Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with administrative, financial and budgetary matters. The Group reaffirmed its unified position on the current agenda items and its opposition to decision-making in small groups.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.