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**FIFTH COMMITTEE**  
**11th meeting**  
**held on**  
**Wednesday, 19 October 1988**  
**at 3 p.m.**  
**New York**

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING**

**Chairman: Mr. OKEYO (Kenya)**

**later: Mr. ARASTOU (Islamic Republic of Iran)**

**Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and**  
**Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE**

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**Distr. GENERAL**  
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**27 October 1988**  
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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 and 114: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989 (continued) (A/43/16 and Corr.1 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/43/16 (Part II); A/43/286 and Corr.1, A/43/651; A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1)

1. Mr. THAPA (Nepal) noted with satisfaction that, after a year and a half, the reform process undertaken by the Secretary-General in implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 was going well. He particularly welcomed such developments as the reorganization of the political affairs sector through the clear delineation of the responsibilities of each of the offices in the sector; the integration of the former Office for Field Operations and External Support Activities into the Department of Administration and Management, as the Field Operational Division; the work of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields; the identification of concrete possibilities for strengthening inter-agency co-operation, as for example, between the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD; the three-phase review of the Department of Information, which should make it possible to consolidate information activities in that Department; the fact that the Fifth Committee had utilized 93 per cent of the resources allocated to it at the forty-second regular session of the General Assembly; the decline of \$2,748,400 in the resources requested for travel of representatives of Member States attending the current session of the General Assembly; the improved rate of staff recruitment at the P-1, P-2 and P-3 levels in 1987; and the higher percentage of women appointed in 1987 as compared with 1986 (33.3 per cent against 28.6 per cent).

2. His delegation believed, however, like the Secretary-General, that reform should not be an end in itself and must be a joint endeavour of the Secretariat and Member States. It was a matter for concern that, at a time when the Organization was called upon to play a leading role in the field of international peace, its work continued to be hampered by financial uncertainties arising from the non-payment by certain Member States of their annual assessed contributions. It was to be hoped that the prospect of dialogue and reconciliation that was emerging would encourage those States to give the Organization the political and financial support it needed.

3. Mr. COTTON (New Zealand) supported the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) that the amount for the contingency fund for the 1990-1991 biennium should be additional to the preliminary estimates, and was of the opinion that the fund should represent 0.75 per cent of total resources. He also supported the recommendation that CPC should refine all aspects of the budget exercise, and should pay particular attention to the problem of add-ons, including those resulting from currency fluctuations.

4. His delegation would confine its remarks to the reform of the Department of Information, referring to the relevant paragraphs of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/43/651). First, the possible restoration of certain posts in the

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(Mr. Cotton, New Zealand)

Department seemed acceptable, on the understanding, as the Advisory Committee emphasized (para. 45), that there would be no additional appropriations under section 27 for the biennium 1988-1989, which meant that commensurate savings must be made elsewhere. The Advisory Committee questioned the rationale for the existence of the Bureau of Programme Operations, at least in its current form, and recommended that the Secretary-General should re-examine the question (para. 49), and his delegation fully supported that opinion. It also agreed that staff training for information officers was essential, not only within the Department but also in other areas of the Organization involved in public information activities (para. 51).

5. The Group of 18 had called for consolidating information activities in the Department of Public Information to the greatest possible extent. The Advisory Committee had underscored the Department's crucial role in making the work of the Organization better known and better understood and thus contributing to the support and financial backing that were so essential to it. His delegation was surprised to see that public information work conducted outside the Department amounted to 36 work-years annually (para. 55). That figure seemed much too high and the matter should be reviewed not in 1992 at the earliest, as the Secretary-General had suggested, but well before.

6. In paragraph 88 of its report (A/43/16 (Part II)), CPC recommended that the General Assembly should closely monitor and evaluate the performance of the Department to ensure that it was functioning efficiently and effectively. His delegation fully supported that recommendation and hoped to see it incorporated in one of the draft resolutions to be prepared following the discussion on the item.

7. Mr. FORTIER (Canada) wished to convey, at the outset, his delegation's concern at the precarious overall financial situation of the United Nations. Outstanding contributions amounted to almost \$490 million and more than half the Member States had not yet paid their assessments for 1988, with the sum still to be paid totalling \$136 million. The persistence of the financial crisis was ironic at a time when the United Nations was becoming increasingly prominent in international affairs and was enacting a series of reforms which, to be successful, would need the full political and financial support of Member States.

8. In his delegation's view, the reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General were consistent with both the spirit and the letter of resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 and the rate of progress was generally satisfactory.

9. As the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had recommended, the Secretary-General should strive towards the full implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 for a 15 per cent reduction in the number of posts. That target, which was an important aspect of the drive for improved efficiency, must not, however, be attained at the expense of programme implementation. His delegation would support the Secretary-General's general proposals for post reductions as adjusted by a 10 per cent reduction in the staffing of Conference Services in New York and Geneva, making a total of

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

1,365 posts (12.1 per cent of the total establishment). The Advisory Committee proposed a further reduction of 50 posts in areas of the Secretariat other than Conference Services and his delegation was prepared to support that proposal, provided the Secretary-General indicated in his report that there would be no adverse programmatic impact.

10. However, it was not convinced that unit-by-unit post cuts did not impair the delivery of programmes, especially when the cuts were severe. Post reductions must therefore be functional and take into account the order of priorities established by Member States. The case of administrative units which already had only a small staff was particularly worrying. For example, the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva must not be reduced to paralysis. If the Organization fragmented the mechanisms for protection of human rights, it might lose part of the stock of public sympathy which it had acquired, particularly in Canada. It was also necessary to ensure that the Vienna-based units which administered the high-priority programme to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking continued to have sufficient resources to fulfil their mandate. The Department for Disarmament Affairs, which had increasing responsibilities in an area of universal interest, must also have sufficient staff. Furthermore, as Africa was one of two priority areas for the United Nations, it was essential that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which was already under-staffed, should not suffer any cutback in its ability to deliver programmes. His delegation commended in that connection the special measures taken to reduce the vacancy rates in the regional commissions.

11. It also noted with pleasure that since the beginning of 1987 three women had been appointed to posts at the level of Under-Secretary-General and four others promoted to the Director level; women had been appointed to some 30 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution. In contrast, it was disappointing to learn that the preparation of a complete personnel administrative handbook would take 18 months, that the training programmes envisaged under recommendation 58 appeared insufficient to meet the demand, and that no clear action had yet been taken to eliminate delays in the appeals process.

12. His delegation favoured an approach which, rather than focusing on further reductions, would emphasize the improvement of recruitment and placement, in order to ensure that units servicing high-priority programmes and field activities received priority treatment. In the future there must be greater flexibility in the movement of staff. With regard to the problem of renewable temporary posts, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that a "blanket" conversion of such posts into permanent posts was not desirable in 1988. Proposals for conversion should be considered case by case within the context of the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991, in accordance with established procedure.

13. In paragraph 9 of document A/43/16 (Part I)/Add.1, the Secretary-General stated that the overall post reduction of 12.1 per cent, instead of the 13.02 per cent originally envisaged, would not entail a change in the overall level of appropriations for 1988-1989. The Advisory Committee had recommended in its report (A/43/651) a series of compensating measures which should eliminate the

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

requirement for an additional appropriation in the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989. The overall budget would thus remain unchanged, and the revised budget estimates would confirm the decline of budgetary growth rates - something which his delegation could only welcome.

14. It also noted with satisfaction that the structural changes in the political sector were near completion, at an opportune time to furnish the Organization with the means to take even more effective action in that area. However, the reforms undertaken in the economic and social sectors were marking time, and the Special Commission had been unable to reach agreement on a final document. His delegation thought nevertheless that it ought to be possible to reach an early agreement on the basis of the work done by the Special Commission and Economic and Social Council resolution E/1988/77.

15. The Canadian delegation looked forward to the completion of the restructuring of the Department of Public Information on the basis of the CPC recommendations. It also supported the Secretary-General's initiatives in the area of improved management information systems, for such measures could only increase the Organization's efficiency and productivity.

16. In conclusion, he thanked all staff members for the efforts which they had made during that long and particularly difficult period, efforts which had enabled the Organization not only to continue to function but also to be recognized at its true worth by the whole of the international community.

17. Mr. Arastou (Islamic Republic of Iran) took the Chair.

18. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) recalled that almost two years had elapsed since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/213 and said that his delegation endorsed reforms which would have no negative impact on programmes and activities mandated by the General Assembly and other legislative bodies. The reform process had produced positive results in some areas but its impact in areas of crucial importance to the majority of Member States had given rise to concern. Cuts in resources did not necessarily mean improved efficiency.

19. Resolution 41/213 could not bear fruit unless all Member States showed flexibility and expedited decisions on the studies relating to economic and social activities. Those decisions should be reflected in the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1988-1989. It was impossible at one and the same time to approve programmes, especially priority programmes, and to refuse to provide the Secretary-General with the necessary support, including financial support, for their implementation.

20. In paragraphs 15 to 21 of his report (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1), the Secretary-General had proposed targets for post reductions to be attained by 31 December 1989, but without indicating the basis on which those targets had been established or which posts were to be abolished. It was clear that the way in which recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 was implemented at present had a direct impact on the

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(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat. The majority of Member States attached particular importance to the adequate representation of developing countries, particularly at the higher levels, and was concerned that some posts seemed to be the exclusive preserve of certain Member States. It was therefore important for the Secretary-General to strive to correct that situation.

21. Drastic cuts could not be made in the conference service budget without impairing the Organisation's performance. His delegation found it difficult to support proposals along those lines but it had nevertheless accepted, as a compromise, the reduction of 10 per cent in the staffing of conference services in New York and Geneva recommended by CPC (A/43/16, para. 36). It regarded the issue as a fundamental one which had a direct bearing on the Organization's future work. It was closely monitoring the deliberations of the Fifth Committee on the report of the Committee on Conferences and reserved the right to return to the item at an appropriate time.

22. The situation in the regional commissions remained a matter of concern, especially the situation in ECA where the high vacancy rate had become a chronic problem, for which the Secretariat had not really given a satisfactory explanation. His delegation welcomed the action taken by the Secretary-General in that connection but called for urgent measures to correct the problem. It would be particularly useful for the Secretary-General to make known the timetable for filling the vacancies. It was also important to ensure the full and timely implementation of paragraph 1 (a) of resolution 41/213 concerning the implementation of all the projects and programmes already approved by the General Assembly, in particular the development of conference facilities in ECA and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

23. His delegation fully subscribed to the recommendation made by CPC in paragraph 45 of its report (A/43/16) that the final decision on the consolidation and strengthening of support activities relating to Namibia should be made by the General Assembly at the present session, taking full account of the opinion of the United Nations Council for Namibia. The fact that South Africa was giving the appearance of accepting Namibia's early access to independence should not be used as an excuse for downgrading the functions of the Council for Namibia.

24. His delegation was keenly interested in the reorganization of the Department of Public Information, and believed that full account should be taken of the views of Member States, summarized in paragraphs 47, 50, 52 and 53 of the report of CPC (A/43/16), paragraphs 10 (f) and 11 of resolution 41/211 and elsewhere, as recommendation 29 of the Group of 18 was put into effect. While appreciative of the efforts by the Secretariat to meet some of the concerns it had expressed at the twenty-eighth session of CPC, his delegation considered that the new structure should take effect only after the approval of the General Assembly, as stipulated in resolution 42/211. It was regrettable that the proposed plan was already being put into effect, contrary to the assurances given to the Fifth Committee at the previous session. There were still fundamental problems with the structure of the Department, its programmes, and the level and distribution of resources for

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(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

priority topics such as Palestine, Namibia and apartheid. Some programme activities covered by the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1992 had been abolished, despite the increasing problems posed by the apartheid régime and the Israeli occupation. He hoped that the Fifth Committee would take full account of those concerns during its consideration and final adoption of the revised estimates under section 27 of the programme budget.

25. The Committee must remember that reforms introduced pursuant to resolution 41/213 should be designed to strengthen the Organization, not weaken it.

AGENDA ITEM 120: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/43/11)

26. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago) said that his delegation was totally unhappy with the scale of assessments presented in the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/43/11). It had long maintained that the method used and the factors considered for determining the scale were inadequate. The scale proposed meant that the assessed contribution of one Member State was fixed at the ceiling level, and those of 79 others, at the floor level. An initial series of adjustments had had to be made in order to arrive at the assessed contributions of the majority of those States. The Committee had then applied "mitigation" to 56 States. Thus, the current method really applied only to a minority of countries.

27. A concise, transparent method, which took economic and social conditions into account and eliminated the need for mitigation in the light of a subjective evaluation of the situation, must be developed.

28. A new method could be developed in two stages. First, the parameters (floor and ceiling levels, etc.) must be decided upon; then all the relevant factors should be incorporated into a formula to convert national income into assessable income, due allowance being made for the problems of data comparability and the statistical base period. A development index needed to be devised to take account, as his delegation had emphasized in the general debate at the current session, of such factors as the share of its resources which a country devoted to infrastructure, the proportion of its main export commodities to total exports, food imports as a percentage of domestic consumption, and external debt as a proportion of export earnings.

29. The Fifth Committee should recommend that the Committee on Contributions should submit the broad outlines of a new methodology, taking those points into consideration, to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. An acceptable solution must quickly be found which could apply both to the scale for the period beginning on 1 January 1989 and to future scales, reconciling all the factors, political and technical, that needed to be taken into consideration in assessing contributions.

30. In conclusion, he noted that the proposals submitted by the delegations of Norway, Canada and India also sought to provide short- and long-term solutions to the problem of assessed contributions.

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31. Mr. GABRIEL (Philippines) said that the guidelines set by the General Assembly in resolution 42/208 had been in response to desire among developing countries for allowance to be made for the problems they faced, including external debt, natural disasters and the effects of exchange rate fluctuations. The new scale of assessments, however, provided no relief for many of them. A large number of developing countries in the Group of 77 had had their assessed contributions increased despite their serious economic circumstances. His own country was one of the few whose contribution had been reduced, but the reduction should have been larger, considering the country's current economic crisis.

32. Changes must be made, to make the scale better reflect the effects of the economic situation on Member States' capacity to pay. First, as the International Monetary Fund had suggested, the method for calculating the amount of debt service to be deducted from national income needed to be further refined. Next, the scheme of limits, since its application had produced distortions, should be looked into more closely. Finally, his delegation shared the concern at the lack of objectivity in the criteria for mitigation.

33. Although he recognised the virtual impossibility of drawing up a scale of assessments that was acceptable to all Member States, he believed that the manifest need for improvements in the method in use should not hinder the adoption of the proposed scale. Rejecting that scale would have a profound effect on the ability of the United Nations to finance its activities.

34. Ms. BERENQUER (Brasil) said her delegation was well aware that it was difficult to translate the concept of capacity to pay into an equitable scale of assessments accepted without reservation by all Member States, but the problems should not be used as an excuse, still less as a justification for a scale which, as proposed, could hardly be described as equitable or fair, especially towards the developing countries. Paragraph 50 of the Committee's report showed that the assessed contributions of countries belonging to the Group of 77 would increase by 34 points, while those of OECD countries would increase by only 10. Furthermore, the proposed scale entailed significant increases in the contributions of some developing countries, and substantial reductions in those of some developed ones. Had the Committee thus failed to take account of the growing gap between the developed and developing countries, the difficulties which the developing countries faced, or all the data and factors which determined capacity to pay, as its mandate required?

35. Her delegation believed that the method and criteria that had been adopted, which produced results that did not reflect the capacity to pay of all Member States, lay at the heart of the problem. The new scale had been drawn up on the basis of the methodology and criteria used to prepare the current one, as requested by General Assembly resolution 42/208, but a significant change had been made where debt relief was concerned and only eight countries benefited under the new scale, most of them not developing countries. Her country, for example, which, everyone would agree, should be entitled to substantial relief in view of its high external debt, had had its contribution increased. The Committee explained in paragraph 5 of its report that some elements of the methodology had required some elaboration



(Ms. Berenguer, Brazil)

as a result of their ad hoc treatment in the preparation of the scale. Her delegation did not believe that was sufficient justification for the licence taken in applying resolution 42/208, especially as no improvement had resulted. The figure of 12 per cent for accumulated debt used to calculate debt service due was just as arbitrary as the previous method, and hardly led to the relief sought for all heavily indebted countries.

36. The General Assembly, in resolution 42/208, paragraph 1 (b), had requested the Committee to review the limits set to avoid excessive variations of individual rates of assessment between successive scales. The Committee stated (para. 40) that it had reviewed the limits and "agreed to apply the existing limits for the 1989-1991 scale", without giving any description of how the review had been carried out. Paragraph 20 of the report said that "successive applications of the scheme of limits introduced progressive distortions in the assessments of certain Member States" and that "a further review" of the scheme "would be appropriate". Her delegation failed to understand why a review which the General Assembly had requested and the Committee deemed appropriate had failed to produce any new result whatsoever. It fully supported the members of the Committee who had argued that the limits in the scheme should be strengthened in such a way as to take care of the problems of developing countries, in particular the problem whereby the application of the scheme of limits effectively annulled the points theoretically deducted from developing countries for debt relief (para. 21).

37. In the view of her delegation, it was high time for a thorough review of the criteria and methodology employed by the Committee on Contributions, so that the scale of assessments might indeed reflect the capacity to pay of all Member States. In that connection her delegation wished to propose: (a) the adoption of an effective relief formula for highly-indebted countries; (b) the revision of the upper limit of the per capita income allowance, taking into account fluctuations in inflation in the United States; and (c) a narrowing of the rate brackets established for the low-income allowance, so as to avoid excessive variations between successive scales. There should be no change in the ceiling and floor rates of 25 per cent and 0.01 per cent, respectively, or in the provision whereby there was to be no increase in assessment rates for the least developed countries.

38. Consideration might, on the other hand, be given to increasing the assessed contributions of the permanent members of the Security Council to a level commensurate with the status they enjoyed under the Charter. The Committee on Contributions should employ technical creativity and not overlook any factor affecting capacity to pay. The consideration of new elements, such as the net transfer of resources, for example, when calculating assessable incomes, might make for a more equitable scale. Progress should also be made towards achieving greater data comparability, including with regard to exchange rate anomalies, without losing sight of the fact that the fundamental object of the exercise was to measure capacity to pay while taking into account external and internal aspects of the economies of Member States.

(Ms. Baranquer, Brazil)

39. Her delegation sincerely hoped that the Committee on Contributions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/208, would be able to submit to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session an improved methodology for drawing up scales of assessment. That did not imply complicating the current methodology still further. On the contrary, the essential components of the proposed overall review exercise would be streamlining and transparency. The Committee was clearly in need of guidelines, which should be incorporated in the draft resolution contained in paragraph 68 of its report. As for the scale recommended to the Assembly in that draft resolution, which the Chairman of the Committee himself had considered far from perfect, her delegation wished to recall the reservations expressed by the Brazilian member of the Committee on Contributions and the statement made by another member of the Committee, which appeared in chapters IX and X, respectively, of the report. Her delegation was encouraged to note that others shared its point of view and trusted that the Fifth Committee would make every effort to reach agreement on the scale of assessments to be recommended to the General Assembly for the period 1989-1991, and that the Committee would be in a position to reach a consensus incorporating the points raised by Brazil.

40. Mr. AL-RAISI (United Arab Emirates) said that in the scale of assessments for the triennium 1989-1991 the Committee on Contributions had not taken account of the situation of various developing countries that were members of the Group of 77 including the member States of OPEC, so much so that it had increased their contributions by 56 points, for an aggregate assessment of 10.01 per cent, while it had reduced the aggregate assessment of the developed countries by 22 points. More specifically, the Committee on Contributions had determined eligibility for debt relief for all developing and centrally planned economy countries (para. 16) but had not taken account of the situation of the oil-exporting countries, which were suffering from the repercussions of the fall in oil prices. In a more general sense the members of the Committee themselves did not seem to be in complete agreement with the methodology and criteria for high indebtedness relief (paras. 18-21). Further, paragraph 33 of the report stated that some of the countries' national income data had been adjusted twice, once for debt and once for price-adjusted rates of exchange, the burden of the reductions having been borne by those countries which did not benefit from relief adjustments; some members of the Committee had found that unacceptable.

41. In a number of countries economic development was largely based on revenue derived from a single export product, namely, in the case of the United Arab Emirates, oil. Moreover, the United Arab Emirates granted assistance and loans on concessional terms to other countries to help them to overcome their economic difficulties, while facing similar difficulties itself. It must be noted that the Committee on Contributions had not taken account of that reality, any more than it had complied with General Assembly resolution 36/231 A, which recalled that the real capacity of Member States to pay was the fundamental criterion on which the scales of assessment were based.

(Mr. Al-Raisi, United Arab Emirates)

42. The United Arab Emirates wished to emphasize that its assessment had increased from 0.07 per cent to 0.10 per cent in the scale for the triennium 1980-1982, then to 0.16 per cent in the scale for 1983-1985, 0.18 per cent in the scale for 1986-1988, and 0.19 per cent in the scale proposed for 1989-1991. In that connection his delegation recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 36/231 A, paragraph 4 (c), had decided that efforts should be made to limit the increase of individual rates of assessment to a reasonable level, and that special measures should be taken in favour of countries whose rates of assessments had already been increased at the previous review of the scale. That resolution had evidently not been applied in the case of the United Arab Emirates, since it had been granted only one point in mitigation whereas other countries had been granted several points.

43. Accordingly, his delegation disagreed with the proposals of the Committee on Contributions. Nevertheless his delegation was willing to participate in a constructive manner in the search for an equitable and just solution that preserved the interests of all.

44. Mr. JEMAIL (Tunisia) said that the factoring-in of indebtedness in formulating the scale of assessments, even if it complicated the methodology, would nevertheless better reflect the economic reality of the majority of developing countries, which, in addition to indebtedness, was characterized by a deterioration in the terms of trade and technological backwardness. The situation was such that the member countries of the Group of 77 had been impelled to propose the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the reactivation of development. Yet the report of the Committee on Contributions indicated that the assessments of the member countries of the Group of 77 had increased from 9.67 per cent to 10.01 per cent.

45. That unjustifiable increase in the assessments of developing countries was due to the many imperfections in the methodology, which, in the view of his delegation, none the less reflected as faithfully as possible the economic realities of Member States. The Committee should thus focus on the elimination of such imperfections, which, first and foremost, implied that the most accurate data possible should be collected. The problem of exchange rate anomalies, which had a direct negative impact on per capita income, must also be resolved. In that connection further refinement of the price-adjusted rates of exchange methodology was required and the Committee would be well advised not to adopt new parameters too hastily.

46. His delegation emphasized questions relating to methodology so as to ensure that the methodology employed did not produce results that were contrary to the desired end, as had been the case with respect to the factoring-in of indebtedness. What other explanation could there be for the increase in the assessments of the member countries of the Group of 77? In the view of his delegation the primary function of the Committee was to translate into practice the decisions of the General Assembly, namely, to adapt its methodology to new situations.

(Mr. Jemai, Tunisia)

47. Real capacity to pay must remain the fundamental criterion for the allocation of costs among Member States and it would not be realistic to seek to impose on developing countries a financial burden that they could not bear. Tunisia welcomed the measures taken in favour of the least developed countries as well as the efforts made by the Committee not to add excessively to the burden of the oil-producing countries, which, in addition to the fall in oil prices, faced heavy financial commitments.

48. His delegation considered that the idea put forward by certain industrialized countries that the major contributors to the budget should enjoy greater influence in the Organization than other Member States ran counter to the principles of the sovereign equality of States and democracy set forth in the Charter. The Organization could not be reliant, for its very existence, on a small group of affluent countries. The considerable progress made by those countries in comparison with countries which had formerly been colonized was due to the existence of the United Nations and the essential role that the Organization played in maintaining international stability. It was thus perfectly legitimate for the contributions of those major Powers to the costs of the Organization to be in proportion to their influence, particularly since they already enjoyed substantial prerogatives in the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.