

Sri Lanka Statement
By H.E. Kshenuka Senewiratne, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN
Fifth Committee
On Agenda Item 139
"Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations"
UNHQ, Conference Room 3
7 October 2019

Chairperson,

At the outset allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you on your election and the members of the bureau on theirs. Sri Lanka stands ready to support this important committee through its arduous work, as we, together as members of this Committee, seek to discharge our onerous responsibilities to all member states and their peoples.

We wish to thank Mr. Lionelito Berridge, Acting Secretary of the Fifth Committee, in facilitating the work of the Committee. The two reports presented by the Chair of the Committee on Contributions and the Assistant Secretary General will facilitate our work under this agenda item.

Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of G77 and China and wishes to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

Chairperson,

Firstly it is crucial that sufficient financial resources are apportioned in order that the various mandates which have been provided by us Member States after considerable deliberation, could be effectively implemented. In doing so, it is vital that we do not fall prey to implementing mandates in a selective manner. To this end, it is important that all Member States fulfill their legal obligations to contribute their assessed financial dues to meet the expenses of the United Nations on time and in full, in accordance with the Charter, and most importantly free of conditions and qualifications. It is only then, that the UN as the foremost multilateral body can best fulfill its mandate and obligations to humanity.

We recognize that there are some developing states that face genuine difficulties and challenges beyond their control which prevent them from temporarily meeting their financial obligations. These cases must be examined individually in line with Article 19 of the Charter.

As underscored in the Ministerial Declaration of G77 and China, our delegation is of the view that the current methodology for determining the scale of assessments is a reflection of the relative economic circumstances of member states. We therefore reaffirm the principle of "capacity to pay" as the cornerstone in the apportionment of dues. Any change to the elements of the current methodology for the scale of assessments aimed at increasing the contributions of developing countries, is unacceptable.

It is equally important that the Secretariat utilizes the resources received from the member states effectively that ensures impartiality and transparency staying clear of politicization and double standards.

It is fundamental to the values of this august body, that the Secretariat adheres to accepted procedures and the work of the United Nations in general does not serve the narrow political interests of a few in the guise of their budgetary contributions, while shunting to the margins the legitimate aspirations of the many.

Sri Lanka is regrettably compelled to briefly refer to a matter of questionable procedure, having experienced unjust treatment at the hand of the Secretariat, with the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). This situation arose in the manner in which a unilateral decision was conveyed on the adjustment of Sri Lanka's contribution to a peacekeeping operation, while violating the provision of the related MoU, thereby bringing into question the adopted procedure. The DPO sought to link its decision of not replacing a contingent on rotation to an internal appointment made by Sri Lanka as a sovereign right, thereby challenging the Head of State of a member country.

This could lead to precedent setting which member states should seek to arrest, lest the practice becomes systemized and entrenches politicization within the UN system. It is often said that trust arrives on foot but leaves on horseback. As such Sri Lanka will also seek to explore the elements of the various proposals under Section five of the proposed Program Budget during informal consultations, to seek ways and means to improve the related work ethics. We therefore urge Member States to ensure that the United Nations remains an organization that is member state driven and that its Secretariat serves the interests of all its members in an equal manner.

Thank you