



DRAFT REMARKS BY:

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**AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY/
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS BUDGET**

**VENUE: UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL
UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, NEW YORK USA**

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23rd 2021

Chair, Colleagues,

Given our time constraints, please permit the brevity in protocol.

At the outset, I would like to affirm The Bahamas' support for the draft Resolution on the 2022-2024 Scales of Assessment which is before us for consideration.

It is indeed a bit of good tidings for the Season that we have been able to reach consensus on such an important matter at this juncture. It is my hope that our agreement bodes well for our collaboration in the upcoming new year.

Notwithstanding my delegation's agreement with the proposed Resolution, I wish to convey, in sum, and reiterate The Bahamas' views on a few matters of relevance to our work in the Fifth Committee, namely, our underlying budgetary principles, salient technical considerations and budgetary priorities for my country.

UN (United Nations) Budget Principles

Chair,

Invariably, for many of us, the budget of the United Nations represents a statement of our priorities, values and principles.

Accordingly, you may be aware that The Bahamas and the wider Caribbean region remain among the most economically impacted by the health and related structural adjustments occasioned by the pandemic. Not only is our region exceptionally exposed to external vulnerabilities borne out with the frequent external shocks, Chair, we have also suffered most during the pandemic and will be among those that lag most in recovery or return to normalcy. Therefore, it was utmost alarming that there was

discussion in these fora among some proposing to shift the budgetary burden to lesser developed countries like my own. Nonetheless, we are pleased that the decision was taken to maintain the *status quo*, thereby suspending our scales in place. We are hopeful that, as we move forward, Member-States will take a more reflective and balanced approach towards our respective commitments and responsibilities.

Chair, having particular regard to the peacekeeping budget, we reiterate our belief in the underlying principle of common but differentiated responsibility to finance such operations, in light of the special capabilities and privileges possessed by those that enjoy permanency in the Security Council. As such, we hold steadfast to the principle that no developing country that is not a permanent member should be classified above Level C.

Chair, by way of illustration, my country has seen a more than fivefold increase in its peace keeping assessment over the past two decades. We are committed to the peacekeeping role of the UN and our collective responsibility to protect. Our peacekeeping work must, however, continue to account for the realities and needs within my region and, in this vein, **we wish to underscore our support for the extension of the Security Council mandate for the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH).**

Chair, how we conceptualize capacity to pay and differentiated responsibility at the UN also sets the tone for how we approach the broader framework of development financing. We continue to reiterate our firm position that reliance on GNI as the central metric for assessing development should not serve as the main component in determining the level of assessment for peacekeeping operations.

As such, we encourage a review exercise which should be utilized as an opportunity for the Member-States to devise a Scale of

Contributions which will have relativity and relevance and one which can account for the Member-States' respective circumstances, going beyond the usual inequitable financial/economic metrics (GDP/GNI).

Therefore, the UN is invited to take the lead in revolutionizing and/or modernizing how progress is measured. As such, the UN should derive a contextual index/indices.

Notably, Development is the overriding lens or categorical distinction that characterizes Member-States. That is, the Member-States are defined as being either Developed or Undeveloped/LDC's.

Therefore, we believe a fairer and more comprehensive indicator of development level and need would be derived from a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and we propose that we utilize the MVI within the scales and contributions methodology.

Moreover, we pledge our commitment to establishing and implementing the MVI within the UN by next year as the Secretary-General has committed.

Technical Considerations

Notwithstanding our agreement with the draft Resolution, we do wish to also offer a few technical issues as well, as we continue to work on refining our process and outcomes around the Scales of Assessments.

We wish to remind colleague Members that the budgetary ceiling and the floor are political constructs and, therefore, impose subjectivities into our technical analysis. The current methodology comingles offsetting progressive (ability to pay) and regressive (debt discount) components. The Ability to Pay/Capacity to Pay

concept, whose overriding premise is an economic bearing, has proven to be rather difficult to quantify, wherein it is based on wealth and income not on economic well-being and affordability. We must also note that the Gradient of 3 to 6 years imposes a lag period which does not offer the required relativity and flexibility to adequately account for the corrosive impact of COVID-19 on economies of countries like mine, which are open economies that are tourism-, import- and FDI-dependent, over the immediate- to medium-term.

Chair, greater care must be exercised, given that the UN Methodology is replicated and is utilized by other Multilaterals. Therefore, any formulation or alternative must be translatable, transferable and based on qualified economic realities.

During our future negotiations, if we do wish to make substantive and meaningful adjustments to our scales of assessments, it is only appropriate that all elements are subject to review.

Conclusion

Mr. Chair,

I conclude by commending you for your stewardship of our work and my colleagues for our efforts to reach consensus. This was by no means an easy feat.

However, Colleagues, we must never lose sight of the fact that these exercises are not academic; our decisions in this committee have real impacts on our citizens and on the functioning of our organization and the perceived legitimacy and value-add of this organization in our countries.

Chair, The Bahamas rededicates itself as a committed and engaged partner in the work that lays ahead for us on administrative and budgetary matters.

I Thank You!!