

on the path followed by the Committee in discharging its mandate. The report once again demonstrates the importance of the work of the Committee as well as the competence and expertise shown by its members enlightened by the guidance of its distinguished Chairman, Ambassador Ali.

The U.N. scale derives importance, among several reasons, from the fact that it serves not only the United Nations but many other organizations as a basis for apportioning expenses. Members of the Fifth Committee know that the majority of specialized agencies use the U.N. scale. What is perhaps less common knowledge is that the same scale has found its way into many other inter-governmental organizations. Even if their membership differs from that of the United Nations, these organizations find that the scale provides proportionate assessments which can be used to apportion expenses. It would be interesting to know the organizations which utilize the U.N. scale and what the aggregate resources thus apportioned add up to.

The conceptual, methodological and statistical issues dealt with in composing the scale are analyzed in the current report and in previous reports of the Committee on Contributions. Efforts to introduce new statistical indicators which qualitatively or quantitatively improve the measurement of capacity to pay of each country have to this date not yielded positive results. Partial introduction of new indicators for countries which have them available does not appear desirable. My delegation therefore endorses the conclusion of the Committee on Contributions that regrettably it is not yet possible to improve on national income as the measure of national wealth. We have taken note of the efforts being conducted to find such a way, as outlined in the report and we would welcome initiation of a process which would eventually lead us to systematic and universal national wealth statistics.

The Committee on Contributions points out that changes in export - import prices are intrinsic determinants of national income. They are therefore taken into account automatically whenever national income statistics are compiled. Selective adjustment of some assessments to changes in prices would amount to a duplicate application of the same factor which can be expected to introduce an element of inequity. For this reason, price variations should not enter as an independent factor in setting individual assessments. In the final analysis there may be special circumstances that in the judgement of the Committee on Contributions justify an exception. My delegation would however expect an explanation from the Committee if it used prices to adjust assessments. My delegation further is not persuaded that exports of non-renewable natural resources should necessarily become a mitigating factor. We must not forget that national income over the long term is also determined by consumption at home of non-renewable resources.

It is not surprising that the Committee on Contributions was unable to find methods for adjusting national incomes to inflation and exchange rate fluctuations. The Committee may wish to provide the General Assembly at one of its future sessions with a detailed review of the obstacles encountered in developing constant price statistics, and the prospects for overcoming such obstacles in the years to come. A better understanding of the constant price issue will no doubt contribute to the general acceptability of the recommended scale.