Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time in this session that my delegation is taking the floor, let me congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. We also extend our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your stewardship, the Fifth Committee would undertake constructive and meaningful deliberations during this session. I assure you of my delegation’s fullest cooperation in the Committee’s work.

I would also like to convey our appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions for introducing his Committee’s report and to the Chief of the Contributions Section for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on multi-year payment plans.

I would also like to strongly support the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77 before this committee.

My delegation is of the view that the current methodology for preparing the scales of assessment for the apportionment of the expenses of the Organization truly reflects the fundamental and inviolable principle of “capacity to pay”. It is also our clear understanding that this is the view of an overwhelming majority of the Member-States.

The current methodology, which includes the base period, the per capita Gross National Income, conversion rates, Low Per Capita Income Adjustment, debt burden adjustment based on debt stock approach, floor, ceiling for LDCs etc. has evolved over the last 65 years, as a result of careful and deep thought involving lengthy deliberations by our predecessors in this very house.

Recognizing the credibility of the current methodology, the General Assembly in 2006, unanimously decided to maintain the methodology for the 2007-2009 period.
The suggested figures for contribution by different Member-States to the regular UN budget before us now using the current methodology clearly account for changes in relative growth rates of different Member-States. This fact by itself provides all the validation to the methodology's integrity that should be required. Indeed, as the Chair of G77 has noted, a majority of the developing countries will see a substantial increase in their assessed contributions in 2010-2012 based on the current scales of assessment.

We are all confronted today by a global economic and financial crisis, in which developing countries have been hit the hardest, despite not being responsible for creating the crisis. In these times, mere fair-play demands that developing countries are not asked to shoulder a greater burden of financing the Organization and that too by changing the methodology, according to the convenience of a few and adversely effecting the vast majority, especially developing countries.

We have many arguments and evidence in support of each element of the current scales methodology, but we would not like to go into the details at this stage, as they are also well known to the others. My delegation is firmly of the opinion that given the circumstances, it would be in the interest of all us to maintain the current methodology for the 2010-2012 period and do so now. Attempts to selectively target developing countries will unravel the consensus around the current methodology, which has been carefully crafted over the years.

While statistics can be manipulated to prove any self-serving argument, we believe that all Member States should fulfill their financial obligations towards the Organization, in full, on time, and without conditionality, especially when these obligations are determined by the General Assembly, on the basis of clear, transparent, logical and unanimously agreed guidelines.

On the other important issue of exemption from Article 19, we fully support the conclusions of the Committee on Contributions on the submissions before it by six Member States for exemption from the application of the provisions of Article 19. We endorse the recommendation to permit the six Member States to vote in the General Assembly until the end of the 64th session of the UNGA.

Normally, while concluding, my delegation would have said that we were looking forward to discussing the issue of the scales of assessment in greater detail during informal consultations of this Committee. However, in this instance, I would echo what the Chair of G77 emphatically said in his statement, that given the clarity on this subject amongst the overwhelming majority of Member States, we like to see the adoption of the existing scales of assessment methodology for the 2010-2012 period right now. This would not only save us precious resources on conference services, but would also give us more time to deliberate on other more pressing issues before the United Nations that have to be decided in this main session.