



The
Bahamas

**58TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

FIFTH COMMITTEE

**AGENDA ITEM 133: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE
APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF UNITED NATIONS
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. PAULETTE BETHEL
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Mr. Chairman

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor in the Fifth Committee during this session of the General Assembly, may I congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I wish to assure you of my delegation's continued cooperation and support.

Mr. Chairman

We have taken note of the Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236, contained in document A/58/157 of 15 July 2003. In particular, we note that for the triennium 2004-2006, The Bahamas would move upwards from level "D" to level "B" in the scale of assessments for the apportionment of expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is within this context that I wish to highlight a few issues of critical national importance, given our unique set of circumstances.

Mr. Chairman

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is a small island developing state with a population of less than 300,000 people. We share the characteristics of all small states, i.e., vulnerability in areas of defence, environmental disaster, susceptibility to external economic shocks, and limited human and economic resources. Further, as an archipelagic state, The Bahamas faces peculiar difficulties in the delivery of social and other services to the populations of each of its twenty-two inhabited islands. Notwithstanding these difficulties, however, the Government of The Bahamas has committed itself to providing social and other services to the entire population of the country, a commitment that has necessitated duplication of infrastructure in each of the islands, and the allocation of scarce resources in this regard.

With this background, we wish to place on record the fact that The Bahamas has on numerous occasions argued in the General Assembly and other international fora that per capita gross national income (GNI) should not be given undue weight in determining 'capacity to pay', as it often leads to distortions. Nowhere is this distortion more visible than in the case of the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations, which today finds The Bahamas, a small island developing state, in the same category as the most developed economies of the world, with the exception of the permanent members of the Security Council.

It is our view that the current scale not only places an increased burden on The Bahamas, but also penalizes, from a de facto standpoint, the efforts and success of The Bahamas to achieve economic growth. Moreover, The Bahamas is indirectly disadvantaged by the GNI criterion, which does not adequately reflect

either the vulnerability of our economy, or the extraordinary costs of infrastructure duplication due to our archipelagic configuration.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, we feel compelled to point out the irony that while The Bahamas is being called upon to assume a greater share of the financial burden for peacekeeping operations, its economy is facing serious challenges, due to actions that have been promulgated in other international fora, in which we are not able to participate.

Mr. Chairman

Despite our vulnerabilities, we have never flinched from our responsibilities as a fully-fledged member of the international community, and to this end would continue to meet our obligations to the United Nations in the manner prescribed and agreed. My Government is committed to paying its assessed contributions, in full and in a timely manner, without imposing any conditions. The United Nations is indispensable for small States in particular, and it is in our interest that all UN activities are effective, efficient, and well and stably financed, including peacekeeping operations.

The Bahamas looks forward to working with Member States when the time comes to review the structure of the levels that were implemented in GA resolution 55/235 for scales of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of UN peacekeeping operations.

thank you, Mr. Chairman.