

**UNITED**



**NATIONS**

# **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL RECORDS: TENTH SESSION**

**SUPPLEMENT No. 10 (A/2951)**

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### NOTE

All United Nations documents are designated by symbols, i.e., capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.



# Report of the Committee on Contributions

## I. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

1. The Committee on Contributions met at the Headquarters of the United Nations from 22 to 27 August 1955. The following members were present:

Mr. Klas BÖÖK  
Mr. S. M. BURKE  
Mr. René CHARRON  
Mr. A. H. CLOUGH  
Mr. Arthur S. LALL  
Mr. Stuart A. RICE  
Mr. Josué SAENZ  
Mr. G. F. SAKSIN

2. Mr. Jiří Nosek, who is a member of the Committee, was unable to attend and designated Mr. Jaroslav Pšcolka to represent him. The Committee accepted the designation on the understanding that Mr. Pšcolka would remain in consultation with Mr. Nosek.

3. Mr. O. Strauch, one of the members, informed the Committee that he was prevented by urgent duties at Rio de Janeiro from attending its meetings.

4. The Committee re-elected Mr. Lall as Chairman and elected Mr. Böök as Vice-Chairman. Miss Karen Petersen acted as Secretary of the Committee.

## II. TERMS OF REFERENCE

5. In resolution 876 B (IX) of 4 December 1954, the General Assembly instructed the Committee in 1955 to review the scale of assessments and to submit a report for the consideration of the General Assembly at its tenth session. At the same meeting, the General Assembly elaborated its directives to the Committee in the following terms (resolution 876 A (IX)):

"1. *Reaffirms* the decision of the General Assembly at its seventh session to defer further action on the *per capita* ceiling until new Members are admitted or substantial improvement in the economic capacity of existing Members permits the adjustments to be gradually absorbed in the scale of assessments;

"2. *Reaffirms* resolution 582 (VI) of 21 December 1951, by which the Committee on Contributions was requested to give additional recognition to countries with low *per capita* income, and instructs the Committee to continue to do so in the future;

"3. *Instructs* the Committee on Contributions to apply the decision referred to in paragraph 1 above to future scales of assessments, so that the percentage contributions of those Members subject to the *per capita* principle will be frozen against any increase over the level approved for the 1955 budget until they reach *per capita* parity with the highest contributor and that downward adjustments will occur when the conditions cited in resolution 665 (VII) of 5 December 1952 have been fulfilled or changes in relative national incomes warrant lower assessments."

6. The Committee therefore applied the above directives in conjunction with its terms of reference laid down in resolution 14 A 3 (I) of 13 February 1946, and with the directives contained in resolutions 238 A (III) of 18 November 1948, 582 (VI) of 21 December 1951 and 665 (VII) of 5 December 1952. These terms of reference and directives are set out in the annex attached to the present report.

## III. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

7. During the past year, several Governments have been able to improve the quality and coverage of their estimates of national income and to publish revised estimates based on more adequate data. From the economic surveys prepared by the regional economic commissions and from the reports of statistical experts appointed under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, valuable information has been obtained enabling the Statistical Office of the United Nations to improve its method of estimation for countries for which recent official figures are not yet available. In other cases, the publication of more detailed basic economic and financial statistics has enabled the Statistical Office to revise its own estimates

for previous years. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that some of the estimates had to be regarded as tentative figures. In using the material provided by the Secretariat, the Committee therefore took into account the varying quality of the available statistics.

8. In accordance with a procedure established last year, Member States were again informed of the opening date of the session of the Committee on Contributions and were requested to transmit any relevant information, in addition to that already available, which they would wish the Committee to consider in arriving at its recommendations. A number of Members furnished supplementary information in response to this request. The additional information has been

taken fully into account in arriving at the assessments now recommended.

9. In order to arrive at estimates of national income in terms of the currency in which the United Nations budget is expressed, viz., United States dollars, the Committee used the method described in previous reports. In most cases official exchange rates were used, but in a few cases where there have been recent

modifications in exchange rates or where multiple exchange rates prevail, the method of conversion took into account any recent changes in the levels of prices, wages and other factors in the countries concerned. The Committee noted that where multiple exchange rate systems are in operation, the Statistical Office consulted the Governments concerned as to the most suitable rates to be used for converting the national income into dollars.

#### IV. SCALE AND PERIOD OF ASSESSMENTS

10. Under the Committee's terms of reference, "the expenses of the United Nations shall be apportioned broadly according to capacity to pay" on the basis of national income estimates. Up till 1952, the Committee used as a basis for its work national income estimates for a single year—the latest year for which statistics were available. At its 1952 session, with a view to the transition to a more permanent scale, the Committee decided that it would be more appropriate to base its computations on averages of national income estimates for a series of years rather than on estimates for a single year, so as to reduce the effect of short-run fluctuations in economic conditions and variations in exchange rates. Accordingly, that year it used as a basis averages of national income estimates for two years. In 1953, the Committee decided to base its calculations on an average of three years, and this decision, which was widely welcomed in the General Assembly, was applied again in 1954. For its current review the Committee has once more used averages of national income estimates for the three latest years for which figures were available, in most cases the years 1952, 1953 and 1954. In previous years the Committee, in arriving at the individual assessments, also took into account recent economic trends in each country. As its present review indicated the possibility of arriving at a scale for a period of application of more than one year, the Committee gave special attention to such trends.

11. In using national income estimates for measuring the relative capacity to pay of Members, the Committee is required to take into account the following main factors:

- (a) Comparative income per head of population;
- (b) Temporary dislocation of national economies arising out of the Second World War; and
- (c) Ability of Members to secure foreign currency.

12. *Comparative income per head of population.* In 1951, the General Assembly directed that particular attention should be given to countries with low *per capita* income and this directive was reaffirmed at the seventh and again at the ninth session of the Assembly. In compliance with this directive, the Committee at its session in 1952 increased the maximum allowance granted to low *per capita* income countries from 40 per cent to 50 per cent. The increased allowance was applied also in 1953 and 1954 and it was decided to apply it again at the present session. The method of computation, the details of which are set out in the Committee's report of 1952<sup>1</sup> provides in short that all countries with a *per capita* income below \$1,000 per annum obtain a reduction of their basis of

assessment by amounts which for countries with the very lowest incomes per inhabitant approach a maximum of 50 per cent.

13. *Temporary dislocation of national economies arising out of the Second World War.* The Committee has in previous years given careful consideration to this factor and reached the conclusion that to the extent to which it still persisted it was largely reflected in the estimates of national income for the countries in question. At its present session, the Committee again considered the matter and decided that no allowance was necessary for this factor beyond that which is implicit in the national income figures.

14. *Ability of Members to secure foreign currency.* The Committee recognized that difficulty in securing United States dollars, the main currency required for the payment of contributions, still presented a problem for a number of Member States. Although, as mentioned in previous reports, the Committee has not found it practicable to make a systematic allowance for this difficulty, it has again been taken into account in arriving at certain individual assessments. In this connexion, as an additional provision to meet the position of countries experiencing difficulties in obtaining dollars, the Committee noted the arrangements made by the Secretary-General for payment of part of the annual contributions in currencies other than United States dollars. This arrangement has afforded substantial and increasing relief to many Member States. In paragraph 27 of the present report, the Committee recommends that these arrangements should be maintained and, if possible, extended.

15. *Ceiling principles.* The General Assembly in 1948 (resolution 238 A (III)) recognized that in normal times no Member State should contribute more than one-third of the ordinary expenses of the United Nations for any one year, and that the *per capita* contribution of any Member should not exceed the *per capita* contribution of the Member which bears the highest assessment. While the Committee was directed by the General Assembly in 1952 (resolution 665 (VII)) to give full effect to the former principle from 1 January 1954, it was at the same time instructed to "defer further action on the *per capita* ceiling principle until new Members are admitted or substantial improvement in the economic capacity of existing Members permits the adjustments to be gradually absorbed in the scale". This directive was reaffirmed at the ninth session of the Assembly with the interpretation that the percentage contributions of the Members subject to the *per capita* principle will be frozen against any increase over the level approved for the 1955 budget until they reach *per capita* parity with the highest contributors. The countries subject to the *per capita* ceiling principle are at present Can-

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Supplement No. 10, A/2161, paras. 11 and 12.*

ada, New Zealand and Sweden. As the available economic data did not warrant lower assessments for these countries, no changes have been made in their case. The Committee noted the possibility that the admission of new Members during the period of application of the scale might alter the existing relationship between the *per capita* contribution of the Member bearing the highest assessment and the *per capita* contributions of the Member States subject to the *per capita* ceiling directives. The Committee wishes to call attention to the fact that the present directives regarding the application of the *per capita* ceiling principle might in that event have to be reconsidered.

16. As a result of its review, and of the considerations given above, the Committee, with two members dissenting in respect of the increases for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, recommends the following changes in assessments:

	Percentage of total contributions payable by Member States		
	Assessments for 1955	Recommended assessments	Change
Afghanistan .....	0.08	0.06	—0.02
Argentina .....	1.32	1.28	—0.04
Brazil .....	1.32	1.20	—0.12
Burma .....	0.13	0.11	—0.02
Chile .....	0.30	0.33	+0.03
Czechoslovakia .....	0.94	0.92	—0.02
Denmark .....	0.74	0.72	—0.02
Ecuador .....	0.04	0.05	+0.01
France .....	5.90	6.23	+0.33
Greece .....	0.21	0.22	+0.01
India .....	3.30	3.25	—0.05
Iran .....	0.25	0.30	+0.05
Iraq .....	0.11	0.13	+0.02
Mexico .....	0.80	0.77	—0.03
Norway .....	0.50	0.54	+0.04
Pakistan .....	0.67	0.60	—0.07
Peru .....	0.18	0.16	—0.02
Poland .....	1.73	1.70	—0.03
Turkey .....	0.65	0.69	+0.04
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic .....	2.00	2.02	+0.02
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics .....	15.08	15.28	+0.20
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	8.85	8.55	—0.30
Venezuela .....	0.44	0.47	+0.03
Yugoslavia .....	0.44	0.40	—0.04

17. The Committee therefore recommends the following revised scale of assessments. For the reasons set forth in paragraph 18 below, it further recommends that this scale shall be applicable for the years 1956, 1957 and 1958:

#### UNITED NATIONS SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR 1956, 1957 AND 1958

Member State	Per cent
Afghanistan .....	0.06
Argentina .....	1.28
Australia .....	1.80
Belgium .....	1.38
Bolivia .....	0.05
Brazil .....	1.20
Burma .....	0.11
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic .....	0.53
Canada .....	3.63
Chile .....	0.33
China .....	5.62
Colombia .....	0.41
Costa Rica .....	0.04
Cuba .....	0.30
Czechoslovakia .....	0.92

Member State	Per cent
Denmark .....	0.72
Dominican Republic .....	0.05
Ecuador .....	0.05
Egypt .....	0.40
El Salvador .....	0.06
Ethiopia .....	0.12
France .....	6.23
Greece .....	0.22
Guatemala .....	0.07
Haiti .....	0.04
Honduras .....	0.04
Iceland .....	0.04
India .....	3.25
Indonesia .....	0.56
Iran .....	0.30
Iraq .....	0.13
Israel .....	0.17
Lebanon .....	0.05
Liberia .....	0.04
Luxembourg .....	0.06
Mexico .....	0.77
Netherlands .....	1.25
New Zealand .....	0.48
Nicaragua .....	0.04
Norway .....	0.54
Pakistan .....	0.60
Panama .....	0.05
Paraguay .....	0.04
Peru .....	0.16
Philippines .....	0.45
Poland .....	1.70
Saudi Arabia .....	0.07
Sweden .....	1.59
Syria .....	0.08
Thailand .....	0.18
Turkey .....	0.69
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic .....	2.02
Union of South Africa .....	0.78
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics .....	15.28
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland .....	8.55
United States of America .....	33.33
Uruguay .....	0.18
Venezuela .....	0.47
Yemen .....	0.04
Yugoslavia .....	0.40

100.00

18. Each year the Committee has attempted to arrive at a scale of assessments which could be recommended for application for the normal period mentioned in rule 161 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. In its report last year, the Committee mentioned that there still remained certain inequities which could not be removed in one step. It therefore felt compelled to recommend a scale for only one year. However, this year the Committee considers that the adjustments which it has made in accordance with the directives of the General Assembly are sufficiently complete to warrant the recommendation that the scale now submitted should be applied for a period of three years. The Committee is aware that over a three-year period there may be substantial changes in world economic conditions affecting the relative capacity to pay of individual Members or groups of Members. Furthermore, during this period new Members may be admitted which might necessitate the revision of the scale. They note, however, that rule 161 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides a mechanism by which the scale of assessments could be reviewed at an earlier date to meet such circumstances. Rule 161 provides in part as follows:

"The scale of assessments, when once fixed by the General Assembly, shall not be subject to a general revision for at least three years, unless it is clear that there have been substantial changes in

relative capacities to pay. The Committee shall also advise the General Assembly on the assessments to be fixed for new Members, on appeals by Members for a change of assessments...."

## V. OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

### ASSESSMENT OF NON-MEMBER STATES

19. As in previous years, the Committee has reviewed the rates at which a number of States which are not Members of the United Nations but which participate in certain of its activities should be called upon to make contributions resulting from their obligations. In arriving at percentage assessments for these countries, the Committee has applied the same principles as for the establishment of the assessments of Member States. For this purpose, in certain cases the Committee has had to use very tentative estimates of national income and *per capita* income. The approximate nature of the statistics has been taken into consideration in arriving at the following percentage rates at which the States listed below may be called upon to contribute toward the expenses of the various United Nations activities in which they participate:

Country	For the years 1956/58
	Per cent
Albania .....	0.04
Austria .....	0.39
Bulgaria .....	0.15
Cambodia .....	0.04
Ceylon .....	0.12
Finland .....	0.41
Germany, Federal Republic of .....	4.61
Hungary .....	0.50
Ireland .....	0.21
Italy .....	2.27
Japan .....	2.15
Jordan, Hashemite Kingdom of the .....	0.04
Korea, Republic of .....	0.14
Laos .....	0.04
Liechtenstein .....	0.04
Monaco .....	0.04
Nepal .....	0.04
Portugal .....	0.27
Romania .....	0.55
San Marino .....	0.04
Spain .....	1.25
Switzerland .....	1.26
Viet-Nam .....	0.17

These rates are subject to consultation with the respective Governments.

20. The United Nations activities to the expenses of which the various non-member States are under obligation to contribute on the basis of the rates recommended in paragraph 19 above are:

#### *International Court of Justice:*

Japan	San Marino
Liechtenstein	Switzerland

#### *International control of narcotic drugs:*

Albania	Ireland
Austria	Italy
Bulgaria	Japan
Cambodia	Jordan, Hashemite Kingdom
Ceylon	of the
Finland	Laos
Germany, Federal Republic of	Liechtenstein
Hungary	Monaco

Portugal	Spain
Romania	Switzerland
San Marino	Viet-Nam

#### *Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East:*<sup>2</sup>

	Effective date of membership
Cambodia .....	20 August 1954
Ceylon .....	10 December 1954
Japan .....	24 June 1954
Korea, Republic of .....	20 October 1954
Laos .....	16 February 1955
Nepal .....	6 June 1955
Viet-Nam .....	23 August 1954

#### *Economic Commission for Europe:*<sup>2</sup>

Italy .....	19 July 1954
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As Laos became a member of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East on 16 February 1955, the Committee recommends that it should contribute 0.04 per cent of the expenses of the Commission for 1955. In the case of Nepal, which became a member of ECAFE on 6 June 1955, the Committee recommends that it should contribute three-quarters of the rate of 0.04 per cent of the expenses of ECAFE for the same year.

21. As Finland, Ireland and Portugal are also mentioned in Economic and Social Council resolution 517 (XVII) as eligible for membership in the Economic Commission for Europe, the Committee recommends that if they become members before the next review of the assessments, they should be called upon to contribute an amount calculated, as from the quarter in which membership becomes effective, on the basis of the following rates applied to the expenses of ECE for the year in question:

	For 1955	For 1956-1958
Finland .....	0.42	0.41
Ireland .....	0.25	0.21
Portugal .....	0.27	0.27

22. *International Bureau for Declarations of Death of Missing Persons.* No non-member States have so far become parties to the Convention on the Declaration of Death of Missing Persons. If any non-member States should become parties to the Convention before the next review of the assessments, the Committee recommends that they should be assessed retroactively.

### COLLECTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

23. The Committee took note of a report by the Secretary-General on the status of collection of contributions. This report showed an improvement in the collection of contributions for 1955 as compared with 1954. As at 15 August 1955, collection for the current year totalled 73.86 per cent, as compared with 67.49 per cent for 1954 at the same time last year. For the 1954 and the 1953 contributions, the collection as at 15 August 1955 totalled 92.99 per cent and 97.64 per cent respectively, while the corresponding figures a year ago were 93.42 per cent and 97.84 per cent.

<sup>2</sup> See Economic and Social Council resolution 517 (XVII).

COLLECTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN CURRENCIES  
OTHER THAN UNITED STATES DOLLARS

24. The General Assembly, on 4 December 1954, resolved (resolution 876 B (IX)) that the Secretary-General, as in previous years, should be authorized to accept, at his discretion and after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions, a portion of the contributions of Member States for the financial year 1955 in currencies other than United States dollars.

25. Under this authority, the Secretary-General has found it possible to accept from Member States (other than the United States of America) a total of 34.35 per cent of their 1955 contributions in currencies other than United States dollars, namely, 20.40 per cent in Swiss francs, 7.65 per cent in pounds sterling and 6.30 per cent in eight other currencies. This shows an increase over last year in the proportion of contributions acceptable in currencies other than dollars, when the total percentage acceptable was 30.70 per cent, of which 18.15 per cent was in Swiss francs, 6 per cent in pounds sterling and 6.55 per cent in other currencies.

26. The Committee noted that under this arrangement twenty-five Member States had elected to make payments in one or more of the designated currencies and that the total amount allocated for payment was the equivalent of \$9,090,000.

27. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should be authorized to continue these arrangements and that efforts should be made, wherever possible, to raise the proportion of contributions payable in currencies other than dollars.

SCALE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

28. The General Assembly, on 24 November 1949, (resolution 311 B (IV)) authorized the Committee "to recommend or advise on the scale of contributions for a specialized agency if requested by that agency to do so".

29. Under this authority, the Committee supplied information to the World Meteorological Organization, at its request, on the theoretical probable percentage in the United Nations scale for one country which is not a Member of the United Nations. In accordance with the arrangements made in pursuance of the above resolution, the Secretary-General also supplied statistical data and other information, including the formula used for making allowance in the United Nations scale for low *per capita* income and other explanatory material on the technical methods used by the Committee, to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.



## ANNEX

### Terms of reference of the Committee on Contributions

#### *Original terms of reference*

The original terms of reference of the Committee on Contributions are contained in chapter IX, section 2, paragraphs 13 and 14, of the report of the Preparatory Commission (PC/20) and in the report of the Fifth Committee (A/44), and were adopted at the first part of the first session of the General Assembly on 13 February 1946 (resolution 14 A 3 (I)).

The relevant paragraphs of the report of the Preparatory Commission incorporating the amendments of the Fifth Committee are as follows:

#### *"The apportionment of expenses"*

"13. The expenses of the United Nations should be apportioned broadly according to capacity to pay. It is, however, difficult to measure such capacity merely by statistical means, and impossible to arrive at any definite formula. Comparative estimates of national income would appear *prima facie* to be the fairest guide. The main factors which should be taken into account in order to prevent anomalous assessments resulting from the use of comparative estimates of national income include:

- "(a) Comparative income per head of population;
- "(b) Temporary dislocation of national economies arising out of the Second World War;
- "(c) The ability of Members to secure foreign currency.

"Two opposite tendencies should also be guarded against: some Members may desire unduly to minimize their contributions, whereas others may desire to increase them unduly for reasons of prestige. If a ceiling is imposed on contributions the ceiling should not be such as seriously to obscure the relation between a nation's contributions and its capacity to pay. The Committee should be given discretion to consider all data relevant to capacity to pay and all other pertinent factors in arriving at its recommendations. Once a scale has been fixed by the General Assembly it should not be subjected to a general revision for at least three years or unless it is clear that there has been substantial changes in relative capacities to pay.

"14. Other functions of the Committee would be:

"(a) To make recommendations to the General Assembly on the contributions to be paid by new Members;

"(b) To consider and report to the General Assembly on appeals by Members for a change of assessment; and

"(c) To consider and report to the General Assembly on the action to be taken if Members fall into default with their contributions.

"In connexion with the latter, the Committees should advise the Assembly in regard to the application of Article 19 of the Charter."

#### *Resolution 238 A (III) adopted by the General Assembly on 18 November 1948*

#### *The General Assembly*

#### *Recognising*

(a) That in normal times no one Member State should contribute more than one-third of the ordinary expenses of the United Nations for any one year,

(b) That in normal times the *per capita* contribution of any Member should not exceed the *per capita* contribution of the Member which bears the highest assessment,

(c) That the Committee on Contributions needs for its work more adequate statistical data,

#### *Accordingly,*

1. *Reaffirms* the terms of reference of the Committee on Contributions accepted by the General Assembly in its resolution of 13 February 1946 (resolution 14 A 3 (I));

2. *Calls upon* Member States to assist the Committee on Contributions by providing the available statistics and other information essential to its work;

3. *Accepts* the principle of a ceiling to be fixed on the percentage rate of contributions of the Member State bearing the highest assessment;

4. *Instructs* the Committee on Contributions, until a more permanent scale is proposed for adoption, to recommend how additional contributions resulting from (a) admission of new Members, and (b) increases in the relative capacity of Members to pay, can be used to remove existing maladjustments in the present scale or otherwise used to reduce the rates of contributions of present Members;

5. *Decides* that when existing maladjustments in the present scale have been removed and a more permanent scale is proposed, as world economic conditions improve, the rate of contribution which shall be the ceiling of the highest assessment shall be fixed by the General Assembly.

#### *Resolution 582 (VI) adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 1951*

#### *The General Assembly*

#### *Resolves*

...

3. That the review to be undertaken in 1952 by the Committee on Contributions shall be based on the General Assembly resolutions relating to the criteria for determining the scale of assessments, on the views expressed by Members during the sixth session of the General Assembly, and on rule 159<sup>a</sup> of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, with particular

<sup>a</sup> Rule 161 of the present rules.

attention to countries with low *per capita* income which requires special consideration in this connexion.

...

*Resolution 665 (VII) adopted by the General  
Assembly on 5 December 1952*

*The General Assembly*

1. *Notes* with satisfaction the action taken by the Committee on Contributions to implement the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 582 (VI) of 21 December 1951 by giving additional recognition to countries with low *per capita* income, and urges the Committee to continue to do so in the future;

2. *Instructs* the Committee on Contributions to defer further action on the *per capita* ceiling until new Members are admitted or substantial improvement in the economic capacity of existing Members permits the adjustments to be gradually absorbed in the scale;

3. *Decides* that from 1 January 1954 the assessment of the largest contributor shall not exceed one-third of the total assessments against Members.

*Resolution 876 A (IX) adopted by the General  
Assembly on 4 December 1954*

*Note:* For the text of this resolution see page 2 of the present report.

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