

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

Brussels, 19 November 1997

12401/97 (Presse 349)  
P 108/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding the financial situation of the UN**

The European Union strongly deplores the fact that the US Congress has suspended its autumn session proceedings without adopting any legislation concerning the payment of the arrears due to the UN, and that the USA – which is the largest contributor to the Organization but primarily its largest debtor – is not signifying any intention to start settling its debts.

It is very worrying that one of the major Member States continues not to fulfil its responsibilities under the UN Charter, which fall within its commitments under international law. The absence of any decision by the US Congress on the payment of arrears comes at a time when the UN is making an unprecedented effort to reform its structures and methods of operation.

The fact that the USA is continuing not to pay the arrears in contributions it owes the Organization perpetuates the serious financial crisis with which the UN is struggling, and seriously affects the climate of trust within the Organization.

The European Union is counting on all UN Member States to honour their obligations vis-à-vis the UN promptly, in full and unconditionally, in accordance with the scale of quotas adopted by the General Assembly.

That is the approach taken by the Member States of the European Union, whose combined contributions account for 35,4% of the Organization's regular budget and 37,9% of its budget for peace-keeping operations. They act in this way because they are convinced of the need to preserve the irreplaceable role of the UN as the only international organization of a universal character which takes global action in the cause of peace, social equality and justice.

---