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FORTIETH SESSION

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FIFTH COMMITTEE  
27th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 5 November 1985  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and  
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEMS 116 AND 117: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1986-1987 AND  
PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 116 AND 117: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1986-1987 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/40/3, A/40/6, A/40/7, A/40/38 and Add.1 and A/40/262)

First reading (continued)

Section 1: Overall policy-making, direction and co-ordination (continued)

1. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) said that if the Fifth Committee, taking into account the point raised by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) in paragraph 592 of its report (A/40/38) in connection with the travel expenses of a staff member of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to attend sessions of CPC, decided not to approve the relevant appropriation for such expenditures, then there would be a reduction of \$6,000 in section 1 of the proposed programme budget.
2. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation did not wish to insist on the proposal it had made at the previous meeting. Nevertheless, it remained convinced that its arguments in that respect were reasonable. Perhaps it would be useful, for the moment, simply to agree to the reduction of \$6,000 as had been suggested, in the hope that the Secretary-General would be able to effect more savings in the cost of travel. It would also be worth while if, in the next programme budget, there were no problems of that type.
3. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that, as he had pointed out at the previous meeting, no decision should yet be taken on the estimates relating to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, in view of the fact that it was necessary to have complete information on the conversion of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) into a specialized agency, information which the Secretariat should provide.
4. The CHAIRMAN said that the Fifth Committee had, on the whole, indicated its agreement with the estimates recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987, which amounted to \$44,702,800. Similarly, it agreed to the reduction of \$6,000 suggested by CPC and to postponement of the voting on the estimates under subsection 1.B.8, Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna, which amounted to \$861,300. For that reason, the estimates under section 1 that were submitted to the Fifth Committee for approval amounted to \$43,835,500.
5. An appropriation in the amount of \$43,835,500 under section 1 for the biennium 1986-1987 was approved in first reading by 102 votes to 2, excluding any provision for subsection 1.B.8.

6. Mr. KRAMER (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that as indicated earlier, his delegation regarded as inappropriate the approval of estimates for matters dealing with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, his delegation supported the approval of the other estimates under section 1, bearing in mind that they would permit the carrying out of constructive activities.

7. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation supported the decision taken to postpone the approval of the estimates for the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna until the necessary information was available, which should be provided as soon as possible, not only to the Fifth Committee, but also to the Industrial Development Board, which was meeting at Vienna.

8. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that, had it been present during the voting, his delegation would have voted in favour.

Section 2A: Political and Security Council affairs; peace-keeping activities

9. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the estimates recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 2A of the programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 reflected a reduction of \$1,319,700 in the estimates submitted by the Secretary-General.

10. The recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 2A.4 of its report (A/40/7) concerning external printing requirements for the Security Council were similar to those which the Committee had made concerning external printing requirements for the General Assembly. In that connection, CPC had also recommended, in paragraph 594 of its report (A/40/38), that the Committee on Conferences should review the external printing requirements for the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies. In paragraph 2A.10 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$5,200 in the Secretary-General's estimate for consultants. In paragraphs 2A.11 and 2A.15, it recommended minor reductions totalling \$17,200. The Advisory Committee had considered the request for resources for staff travel, general temporary assistance and hospitality for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea and had decided to recommend a total reduction of \$115,100, as set forth in paragraphs 2A.19, 2A.22 and 2A.25 of its report. The Secretary-General's estimates for special missions, amounting to \$57,694,200, were dealt with in paragraphs 2A.27 to 2A.39 of the Advisory Committee's report. In paragraph 2A.32, the Committee indicated that the Administrative Management Service had made a study on logistic support to United Nations peace-keeping forces. The Advisory Committee believed that implementation of the recommendations of the Administrative Management Service would result in savings. Accordingly, and taking into account the comments made in paragraph 2A.35 concerning communication requirements, the Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of \$634,200 in the estimates for special missions.

(Mr. Mselle)

11. With regard to the estimates for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Advisory Committee concurred in the proposal to upgrade the post of Deputy Commissioner-General from D-2 to Assistant Secretary-General level, as indicated in paragraph 2A.44 of its report. However, in view of UNRWA's critical financial situation, the Advisory Committee doubted the advisability of approving the five new posts which were requested. Accordingly, it recommended against approval of the posts, and that recommendation would result in a reduction of \$305,300 in the estimates.

12. The Advisory Committee had considered the request for word-processing equipment for the news service in the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs as explained in paragraph 2A.18 of the proposed programme budget. In paragraph 2A.8 of its report, the Committee indicated that it had been informed that the news service had been established in September 1984 and that an evaluation of its usefulness would be undertaken in due course by the Administrative Management Service. In view of the fact that the evaluation was to have been undertaken six months after the service commenced its activities, the Secretariat might wish to inform the Fifth Committee when the evaluation was expected to be completed.

13. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium) said that the Advisory Committee, on studying the estimates for external printing costs for the Security Council, had recommended that they should be reduced by \$242,000. CPC, dealing with the same question, had recommended that the Committee on Conferences should review the external printing requirements for the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies. It had thus raised the same question of procedure as that examined previously by the General Assembly. If established practice was followed, then the Fifth Committee, after studying the question, would adopt the recommendations of CPC, which would give a mandate to the Committee on Conferences to examine the needs of the Security Council. Nevertheless, immediately afterwards, the Fifth Committee would approve the relevant appropriation, as a result of which the task just entrusted to the Committee on Conferences would be pointless. That was an absurd situation which should be remedied if the desire was to give true meaning to the work of CPC. One of the means of achieving that would be, for example, to approve the recommendations of CPC at the beginning of the work of the Fifth Committee, a move that would give those recommendations the required legal force. Another option would be for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution that would require account to be taken of the recommendations of CPC from the moment they were made.

14. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria), referring to the proposal to reduce the capacity, through the abolition of a post, of the Security Council Committee entrusted with implementing the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa (A/40/6, para. 2A.24), said that, taking into account recent developments in South Africa, now was not the propitious moment to submit a proposal that would reduce the force of one of the few positive decisions that the Security Council had been able to adopt on that question. Instead of reducing the functions of the Committee, they should be strengthened. Its productivity should not be judged by the number of meetings which were held, since the Committee carried out many other activities, including

(Mr. Oduyemi, Nigeria)

the preparation of useful information on the basis of which some countries had adopted positive measures to comply with the embargo. In view of all those considerations, his delegation could not accept that proposal.

15. The news service of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs had been the subject of a study at the twenty-fifth session of CPC. On that occasion, many delegations, including Nigeria, had made various remarks concerning the mandate of the service, its level of activities and the nature of its product (A/40/38, paras. 48-53), and had requested that the number of news agency services be broadened to include those which represented in a more adequate manner the totality of the membership of the United Nations.

16. On the basis of the observations made and of what had been recommended by CPC, his delegation had understood that there would be a study of the news service prior to the adoption of any decision. It wished to know whether that study had been made and what had been stated in the relevant information before taking a decision on the question. It also wished to be able to study some output of the service, for example, the information on the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, in order to satisfy itself that the service was adequately complying with its mandate.

17. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation agreed with the remarks made by the Nigerian delegation with respect to the proposal to abolish a post in the secretariat of the Committee entrusted with implementing the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Algeria had participated in the work of the Commission on Transnational Corporations, where it had been shown that South Africa had not only been able to evade the arms embargo imposed against it but had also exported arms to destabilize neighbouring countries. In view of those considerations, it was necessary to strengthen the functions of that Committee and its secretariat. The same measures should be maintained so as not to give an impression of weakness on the part of the Organization towards South Africa. Consequently, he could not accept the proposal that a post in the secretariat of the Committee should be abolished.

18. Mr. KRAMER (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the remarks made by the delegation of Nigeria with respect to the news service. At the twenty-fifth session of CPC, serious concerns have been expressed with regard to that service. Various delegations, including his own, had stated that there was as yet no mandate for its functioning because its programme had been eliminated from the medium-term plan at the twenty-fourth session of CPC. Nevertheless, at the twenty-fifth session of CPC, the secretariat of the service had stated that its staff had been increased from 7 to 14. In view of the fact that the service lacked a mandate, his delegation believed that it should not be permitted to continue its activities, much less be strengthened. In addition, he wished to know the status of the intended review of the service.

19. Mr. RUSTICO (Benin) said that his delegation supported the position of the Nigerian delegation with respect to the abolition of a post in the secretariat of



(Mr. Rustico, Benin)

the Security Council Committee. That Committee was entrusted not only with implementing the mandatory embargo against South Africa but also with studying the South African information media and making recommendations to the Security Council. In view of the extremely violent situation in South Africa, the capacity of that Committee should not be reduced.

20. The abolition of the post was not justified, for three reasons. In the first place, the peoples of Africa and international public opinion would find it difficult to understand why the United Nations, just as it was celebrating its fortieth anniversary, could not find a better way of practising budgetary economy than by abolishing a support post of the Committee responsible for implementing the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, especially since the elimination of the apartheid system was one of the goals of the Organization. In the second place, by recommending the abolition of the post, the secretariat did not explain why it was maintaining the other posts, nor did it state anything about their usefulness. It did not appear justifiable to accept the abolition of one of the five posts established by the Fifth Committee without having detailed information on how they were used. In the third place, his delegation felt that the Security Council Committee had enough work to do and that, if it did not meet more frequently, that was not the fault of its secretariat staff. In view of the foregoing, he requested that the post in question should be retained and that the related financial implications should be taken into account in the budget performance report.

21. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago), referring to the same question, said that his delegation did not accept that the Committee's work-load should be measured by the number of meetings which it held. The Committee's sphere of action was very sensitive, and its work was better suited to informal consultations than to formal meetings. Moreover, the Committee should have at its disposal all available information concerning the embargo and possible violations thereof; its support staff therefore had to be continuously engaged in a research and monitoring exercise and in verification of information which was crucial to the Committee and, of course, to the Security Council and the Organization as a whole.

22. Furthermore, during the current biennium, the Committee's work-load would increase even more, in view of the number of resolutions adopted by the Security Council in recent months on the question of the South African régime's policies, and the desire indicated by the Chairman of the Committee that it should seek to make an even greater contribution to the struggle to eliminate apartheid. For those reasons, his delegation opposed the recommendation to abolish one temporary P-5 post assigned to the secretariat of the Committee.

23. Mr. OULD MALLOUM (Mauritania), Mr. MUDHO (Kenya), Mr. COULIBALY (Mali), Mr. ZIDOUEMBA (Burkina Faso), Mr. ORTEGA-NALSA (Mexico), Mrs. KNEŽEVIĆ (Yugoslavia), Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba), Mr. FALL (Senegal), Mr. BESTMAN (Liberia), Mr. MOJTAHED (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. DIALLO (Guinea), Mr. ABOLY-BI (Ivory Coast), Mr. PIERRE (Guyana), Mr. SOUMANA (Niger), Mr. RANDRIAMALALA (Madagascar), Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia), Mr. BOKHARI (Pakistan), Mr. BURWIN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and Mr. MUTSVANGWA (Zimbabwe) said that the temporary P-5 post in question should be retained, and that they were against its abolition.

24. Mr. MOUSSAKI (Congo) said that the Security Council Committee established to implement the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was to have met at the beginning of the fortieth session; it had not yet done so, however, and did not plan to meet until 19 November 1985. As everyone knew, that situation was a result of the underhanded activities of some well-known countries. The abolition of the P-5 post in question was not justified, especially since its retention did not involve any additional cost.
25. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium) said that he shared the concerns that had been expressed, and he felt that the Committee was performing an important task. Nevertheless, he wondered whether the current work could not continue to be done even if the P-5 post were to be abolished.
26. Mr. BOKHARI (Pakistan) said that before taking a decision on the news service it would be a good idea for the representative of the Secretariat to inform the Fifth Committee as to whether any progress had been made in the work of reviewing the service.
27. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that, although his delegation completely supported the redistribution of posts, he was surprised at the doubling of the number of staff assigned to the news service, about whose mandate and operation, according to the report of CPC (A/40/38, para. 50), there were many doubts. Furthermore, it appeared that the redistribution of posts had been completed before the results of the envisaged review could be taken into account. His delegation wished to know if the results were available yet.
28. Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden) said that, before his delegation took a position on the Nigerian proposal, he would like the representative of the Secretariat to indicate whether, since the programme budget had been prepared, the circumstances had changed enough to justify the adoption of the proposal.
29. Mr. FORAN (Controller), in reply to the questions raised by the delegation of Nigeria, said that, with regard to the abolition of the temporary P-5 post referred to in paragraphs 2A.23 and 2A.24 of the proposed budget (A/40/6), it should be noted that the section of the budget under consideration had been finalized at the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985. On the basis of the estimated work-load at that time, it had been thought that the temporary post in question could be abolished. However, under the present circumstances that recommendation would not have been made. It should also be noted that, if the Committee wished to reintroduce the post in the programme budget, it would represent additional costs of \$157,000 in section 2A and \$48,600 in section 31 (Staff assessment). The latter sum would be offset by the same amount in income section 1.
30. With regard to the review of the news service, the study was in progress and was expected to be completed by February 1986; it was therefore too soon to be able to report on the conclusions to be drawn from it.

31. Mr. KRAMER (United States of America) asked the Controller, in the first place, whether his statement that under the present circumstances he would not be willing to recommend the abolition of the Security Council Committee's P-5 post was due to the current general situation or to the formulation of new recommendations by the Committee whose implementation required the retention of the post, and, in the second place, how many meetings the Committee had held in 1985.

32. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) asked the Controller whether the decision to review the staffing of the secretariat of the Security Council Committee had emanated from an intergovernmental body or from the Secretariat itself.

33. As to the news service, his delegation noted that, at the twenty-fifth session of CPC, which he had attended as an observer, it had been unclear whether there was a need to increase the staff of that service, and he had therefore requested that the Secretariat should review the question again. As long as the results of the review were not available, the question should be dealt with most prudently.

34. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) wished to know whether, when the Advisory Committee had considered the proposed budget, the Secretary-General had reconsidered his proposal concerning the abolition of the Security Council Committee's P-5 post, and, if so, whether he had asked the Advisory Committee to reintroduce it.

35. Mr. FORAN (Controller), in reply to the questions asked by the United States delegation, said that, thus far, the Security Council Committee had held only two meetings in 1985, and that in the present circumstances he would not make the recommendation to abolish its secretariat's P-5 post because, in his view, the five posts initially anticipated would be required in order to complete all the work indicated in the proposed programme budget.

36. In reply to the Algerian delegation, he said that it should be clearly understood that the body which determined what resources the Secretariat needed to fulfil its functions was the General Assembly, on the basis of the Fifth Committee's proposals, and that in changing the staffing of a Secretariat unit the Secretary-General did not intend to change the composition of the body to which that unit provided services, but purely to reflect the work-load resulting from the provision of such services.

37. Mr. ORSATELLI (France) said that, like CPC, many delegations had serious doubts about the activities of the news service, its mandate, its justification and the quality of its products. Another reason for concern was the possibility that it was duplicating the work of the Department of Public Information. It would therefore be helpful for the Secretary-General to submit the review of those activities requested by CPC. Meanwhile, a moderate position would have to be taken, perhaps by maintaining the activities of the service at a minimal level until the review became available.



38. The CHAIRMAN said that the Nigerian representative's proposal seemed to have considerable support and that enough information was available for a decision to be taken on it in due course. With regard to the news service, the views expressed by delegations supported the request made by CPC in paragraph 595 of its report (A/40/38). The proposed programme budget was a flexible instrument which would allow the findings of an evaluation of the service to be taken into account later. If the members of the Fifth Committee so desired, a decision could be taken during the current session on the basis of the Nigerian and French proposals.

39. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that the estimate relating to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea, amounting to \$6,231,400, implied a resource growth of 2.2 per cent at revised 1985 rates, which was much higher than the budget average. The resource growth for the Office was due chiefly to the sizeable increase in expenditure on general temporary assistance, consultants and rental and maintenance of equipment. His delegation doubted whether the resources for the Office needed to be increased. Since the holding of the Conference on the Law of the Sea and the adoption of the associated Convention, all that was required was to await a sufficient number of ratifications for the latter to enter into force. Only a minimum of activities should be pursued so as not to hamper the ratification process, already beset by political and economic difficulties. CPC and the Advisory Committee seemed to agree that the resource growth was unjustified.

40. He would like CPC to clarify paragraph 599 of its report and to make its recommendation and the financial implications more specific. His delegation was in favour of the reduction in the activities of the ad hoc expert groups implicitly proposed in that paragraph. The Advisory Committee's report recommended reductions in the estimates relating to hospitality, travel of staff and general temporary assistance. Those were very sound recommendations. The estimate relating to consultants, amounting to \$113,800, likewise warranted close scrutiny, on the basis of details the Secretary-General's representative could provide on the use of funds for that purpose during the current biennium.

41. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that although the Conference on the Law of the Sea had ended, having approved a relevant Convention, the latter had not entered into force. Moreover, both the Convention and the resolutions subsequently adopted by the General Assembly had conferred on the Secretary-General considerable responsibilities in the areas of information and technical assistance. Accordingly, the funds requested were not excessive, and he hoped that the Fifth Committee, once it had heard the explanations to be given by the Secretary-General's representative, would feel that, in the current instance at least, the funds were being used effectively.

42. Mr. FORAN (Controller), referring to the Polish representative's question about consultants' services, said that the amount of \$113,800 requested under that heading for the biennium 1986-1987 was less than the cost of a P-3 post. Consultants' services were used almost exclusively for sea-bed mineral resource development, an area in which the Secretariat lacked experts. To engage consultants for the preparation of studies on such development was felt to be more economical and efficient than training experts within the Secretariat.

43. Mr. SCHLAFF (Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination), referring first to the Polish representative's question about temporary assistance, said that the amount of \$36,000 at revised 1985 rates, requested in paragraph 2A.54 of the proposed programme budget represented an increase in respect of the resource base for the biennium 1984-1985. The amount related to the transfer of a data base for the Convention of the Law of the Sea from a manual to a computer system, a job which had been done already for other spheres of treaty observance and which would have to be done sooner or later in order to conserve information on the Convention.

44. With regard to the Polish representative's question on the activities of ad hoc expert groups, the Secretariat's understanding was that CPC had not recommended the deletion of such activities but had merely expressed doubts about them. Accordingly, the financial implications of deleting them had not been determined. Should it be decided not to convene the expert groups, the financial implications for the biennium 1986-1987 would amount to \$37,600. Provision had been made for two meetings, each attended by five experts, lasting roughly one working week, to study some of the legal and technical implications of the Convention's provisions. The task was a highly complex one, calling for a range of specialized knowledge not to be found among the Secretariat's permanent staff.

45. Mr. FIGUEIRA (Brazil) said that his delegation attached great importance to the convening of the two meetings of ad hoc expert groups to facilitate the acceptance and consistent application of the Convention. The comment in paragraph 599 of the CPC report (A/40/38) did not imply that CPC had questioned the usefulness of those meetings, and it was hoped that the Fifth Committee would accept the Secretary-General's proposal.

46. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium) said that although his delegation had been convinced by the explanation given by the Secretary-General's representative of the need for consultants' services, it did not agree with the provision requested in subparagraph 2A.55 (b) of the proposed programme budget (A/40/6). The task in question was the preparation of administrative rules and procedures, which could be carried out by Secretariat personnel.

47. Mr. MONIRUZZAMAN (Bangladesh), referring to the requirements for the ad hoc expert group meetings (A/40/6, para. 2A.56), said he wondered if there were experts who could advise Governments about acceptance of the Convention. The Fifth Committee should receive further details from the Secretariat justifying the holding of those meetings, including an explanation of the way in which experts would be chosen, since it was they, in the end, who would be influencing Governments.

48. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the information which the Advisory Committee had received was the same as that just presented by the representative of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, namely that each group would have five members so as to ensure an appropriate geographical balance among the major regions and would meet for one week. The Advisory Committee had agreed to the request.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.