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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/C.5/40/25)

1. Mr. FLEISCHHAUER (Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/40/25), indicated that that report was based on information received from 24 organizations, agencies and offices of the United Nations and covered the period from 1 September 1984 to 31 August 1985.
2. The arrest and detention of international officials continued to be a matter of grave concern for the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the United Nations agencies. Regrettably, new cases had occurred during the past year, in circumstances which had prevented the Secretary-General or the executive heads from exercising their rights of functional protection. Those new cases were listed in table 1 of the report and in the relevant annexes. On the positive side, it was to be noted that since the preparation of the report, three of the UNRWA officials detained by the Israeli authorities had been released, two (Mr. El-Khatib and Mr. Nijim) in the occupied Gaza Strip and one (Mr. Allan) in the occupied West Bank.
3. The Secretary-General had noted that all of the new cases drawn to his attention involved locally recruited officials, a fact which highlighted the difficult conditions under which that category of staff were required to work in many parts of the world. In that regard, the Secretary-General wished to emphasize once again that General Assembly resolution 76 (I) of 7 December 1946 drew no distinction between locally recruited staff members and those recruited internationally for the purposes of the application and interpretation of those provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations relating to officials. The Secretary-General had also noted that, with one exception, those new cases had arisen in the UNRWA area of operations. That was a reflection of the very large proportion of locally recruited staff members in that area and the extremely difficult security situation which prevailed in the region.
4. As the Secretary-General pointed out in the introduction to his report, a new element of concern for all the United Nations organizations had emerged in 1985, namely the increasing number of cases involving the abduction of officials by armed groups or individuals. One such case was that of Mr. Alec Collett, a British journalist who had been on assignment for UNRWA when he had been kidnapped south of Beirut on 25 March 1985. The Secretary-General had appealed for the release of Mr. Collett, whose detention could in no way aid the cause of those responsible for holding him.
5. In paragraph 5 of his report, the Secretary-General indicated that a number of staff members had been released or amnestied, including two women employed by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The cases of those two staff members, who

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

had been detained since 1979, had been of particular concern to the Secretary-General and the staff representatives. Both had returned to service with ECA.

6. With regard to the consolidated list contained in table 2 of the report, it should be pointed out that the Secretary-General had received, since the issuance of his report, an official notification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan informing him that the court which was competent under the law of Afghanistan had reached decisions in the cases of two UNICEF staff members (Mr. Sabri and Mr. Zaman). No administrative or judicial actions had been reported in respect of the remaining cases on that list.

7. The Secretary-General continued to deal personally with the immediate consequences and administrative burdens of cases involving arrest and detention of staff members. In spite of the new cases, the Secretary-General believed that the overall picture had improved somewhat. That was because the new cases had all occurred in regions where a particularly difficult security situation existed.

8. The Secretary-General had noted a greater understanding of the problems on the part of Member States and a greater awareness by staff members of their rights and obligations as members of the international civil service. The Secretary-General had, of course, repeatedly reminded staff members of their duties as international civil servants. For their part, Member States must continue to respect the privileges and immunities of international officials which safeguarded the independence that was indispensable for the discharge of their duties.

(c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

9. Mrs. PULIDO de BRICEÑO (Assistant Secretary-General and Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat, Office of Personnel Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/40/30), said that 15 years had passed since the General Assembly had expressed the hope, in its resolution 2715 (XXV), that the United Nations would play a pioneering role in improving the status of women. In that resolution, the General Assembly had reiterated the principle of equality between men and women, and since that time it had codified very many aspects of that question.

10. The General Assembly had set forth the fundamental principles for improving the status of women in the Secretariat: first, the unconditional desire to see women participate in decision-making at the highest level; second, the active participation of Member States; third, adherence to the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the recruitment of women; fourth, the responsibility of each department to establish conditions of equality; fifth, the improvement of career prospects for women both in the Professional and higher categories and in the General Service category; and sixth, the elimination of prejudices and stereotypes that hindered recognition of women's abilities.

11. In order for the hope generated in General Assembly resolution 2715 (XXV) to become a reality, the Assembly had decided, in its resolution 39/245, to appoint a co-ordinator for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat with the

(Mrs. Pulido de Briceño)

mandate "to review the situation of women in the Secretariat and to make proposals for its improvement, in the context of the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fortieth session".

12. The report before the Committee reflected the decisions taken by the Secretary-General on the basis of the co-ordinator's proposals and suggestions. It identified the various obstacles to women's integration into the Organization and presented a programme to overcome them.

13. That programme took into account the ideas, suggestions and recommendations offered by members of the Office of Personnel Services and the various departments of the Organization, by the staff representatives and by the members of the Ad Hoc Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations. It was evident from that report that problems relating to the situation of women in the Secretariat transcended the traditional divide between management and staff, and that their solution involved values that affected everyone in the same way.

14. The time had come to give concrete form to the General Assembly's vision of a Secretariat where women and men would work on an equal footing to achieve the goals of the Charter. The time had come because, throughout the world, the perception of women's role in the political, economic and social spheres had changed dramatically; the past 15 years had shown that development was possible only if women and men worked together as full and equal partners.

15. During the United Nations Decade for Women, which was now coming to an end, the role of women had become more visible than ever. That posed a challenge to international organizations since, if their work affected men and women alike, was it not fair therefore for women and men to participate equally in the formulation and execution of their programmes? Would that not be a way of making the Organization more responsive to the needs of men and women?

16. General Assembly resolution 2715 (XXV) had undoubtedly wished to be prophetic in announcing that the Organization would play a pioneering role in offering new social models. Today more than ever, when all countries were trying to integrate women fully into the process of economic and social development, and when women themselves were trying to participate in the work of institutions which promoted social development, the organization had a unique opportunity to set an example of how men and women could work in concert, each contributing the wealth of his experience and giving the best of himself or herself.

17. The task of the Co-ordinator had been to identify the underlying causes of the problems which affected women in the organization. Those problems were not limited to personnel matters. They permeated not only the Organization but the outside world as well. Their solution therefore required a comprehensive action-oriented approach and a firm determination on the part of the Secretariat. She hoped that in dealing with those problems, which stemmed mainly from mind-sets and attitudes, a climate would be created which would enable the Office of Personnel Services to be effective and open the way for improvements in the status of women in the Secretariat. In that context, the programme of action had been designed as a way to reinforce and diversify policies for the management of human resources.

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18. What was the situation in the Secretariat? The target of 25 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, which had been set in General Assembly resolution 33/143 and should have been achieved by 1982, had three years later still not been reached, and even if 23 per cent of Professional posts were held by women that in no way meant that their participation in the work of the Organization was proportional because few women occupied P-4 or higher posts. Moreover, of every four women in Professional posts in the Secretariat, three were in the services sector (administration and language services). Where in the organization did one find women economists and social scientists in senior posts? In the regional commissions, where better representation might be expected, very few women were to be found. What was there to say about the role of simple observer which women continued to play in the political field in the Secretariat?

19. Another cause of concern was the extreme imbalance between the different regional groups. The relative absence of women from Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East was particularly alarming in that it deprived the Organization of a wealth unique in its originality.

20. Faced with the glaring disparities in the distribution of women by grade, occupational group and region of origin, efforts would be made initially to improve the recruitment process and establish a career development system. In the area of recruitment, the situation was deteriorating. In the past three years, the percentage of women recruited for all Professional posts had fluctuated between 16 and 19 per cent, which was lower than the replacement rate necessary to maintain current percentages. The proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had managed to stabilize in the past years only because more women than men had passed the competitive examination for promotion from the General Service category to the Professional category and because fewer women than men left the Organization.

21. As for career development, equality between men and women was far from being achieved. Men continued to receive more ad hoc and accelerated promotions and the departments hardly made any effort to assign women to posts with good career prospects.

22. The situation of women in the General Service category was even bleaker. Forty years after the founding of the Organization, the establishment of a career development programme for General Service staff members was still only in the planning stage since no funds had been allocated to it. Many women in the General Service category had a university degree. Some routinely used two or three working languages and statistical analysis, data-processing and other techniques which required not only experience but a high level of professional competence, which often went unrecognized. Women in the General Service category also experienced the difficulties inherent in that category and were frequently regarded as second-class international civil servants. Their chances for promotion to a Professional post were shrinking with the decline in the total number of P-1 and P-2 posts. It was therefore indispensable, as a minimum step, to make their work more interesting and enhance their prospects.

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23. The report before the Committee was a direct response to the wishes expressed by the General Assembly over the past 15 years. It dealt with all aspects of the question: recruitment, career development, training, conditions of employment and recourse procedures. It presented a programme of action designed to establish an institutional structure which recognized the need for women and men to participate equally in the formulation and execution of the Organization's policies and programmes.

24. The task of the Co-ordinator was not only to change attitudes, which would undoubtedly take many years, even if one could see the first signs, such as the very establishment of the post of Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator was also there to change behaviour, and it would not take so much time to do that. Behaviour could be changed rapidly, by administrative measures if necessary.

25. The proposed programme would cover a period of two years. In the first stage, efforts would be made to establish specific goals and effective strategies. In the second stage, which should end sometime in 1987, those policies and strategies would be implemented. Finally, a process of evaluation, adjustment and integration would be established which would help to make the system self-sustaining.

26. To make the necessary changes, every one had to be and feel accountable. That was why it had been decided to establish a steering committee to facilitate the implementation of the programme of action and mobilize the participation of all offices and departments so as to achieve a proportion of 30 per cent women in the Professional category by the end of the Decade. The Secretary-General's intention was that the functions of the Co-ordinator should be taken over in the near future by the Organization itself. Two years would obviously not be enough to effect a radical change in the status of women in the Secretariat, but she hoped that it would be enough to give to the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat an impetus which nothing could stop and intensify the rethinking of values and attitudes so as to make it an irreversible process.

27. The success of the new strategies would depend in large part on the support of Member States, to which the Secretariat, moreover, was accountable, because many measures in the programme had been inspired by steps taken at the national level. The task before the Organization of ensuring equality between men and women in the Secretariat was an exciting one because it would enable the Secretariat to make use of all the potential and creativity humanity could offer. That task was in keeping with the mission of the Organization, which in the year 2000 might witness the inauguration of an era of true equality between men and women, as envisaged forty years before in the United Nations Charter.

AGENDA ITEMS 116 AND 117: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1986-1987 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/40/3, 6, 7, 38 and Add.1, A/40/262; A/C.5./40/17)

Section 29. Conference and library services

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in addition to the appropriation requested under section 29, estimates for temporary assistance and language staff were also included under

(Mr. Mselle)

other sections of the proposed programme budget. As indicated in paragraph 29.4 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/40/7), the calendar of conferences had not yet been finalized when the Committee had considered the initial estimates. Consequently, requests for additional appropriations for conference services might be made for the biennium 1986-1987. Any such requests would be considered at the forty-first and forty-second session of the General Assembly.

29. The staffing proposals for section 29 were discussed in paragraphs 29.5 to 29.12 of the Committee's report. Eleven new posts had been requested, while nine would be abolished, for a net increase of two posts under the section. Six reclassifications had also been proposed. The Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the new posts and reclassifications were contained in the paragraphs enumerated in paragraphs 29.8 and 29.9 of its report.

30. The Advisory Committee's observations on requests for temporary assistance for meetings were contained in paragraphs 29.13 to 29.17 of its report. As indicated in those paragraphs, the estimates for Headquarters covered only the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the General Assembly. In that connection he drew attention to a typographical error in paragraph 29.13 of the report. The estimate related only to requirements for servicing the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the General Assembly, and not the fortieth and forty-first sessions, as mistakenly indicated in the paragraph.

31. With regard to the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Advisory Committee noted that, in response to comments it had made in the past, the Secretariat had now eliminated non-recurrent estimates for meetings and special conferences held during the biennium 1984-1985. With regard to work-load statistics, the Committee had inquired whether the figures provided for Geneva were accurate. It had noted that for the purpose of forecasting the requirements under the budget the statistics had been revised, as indicated in paragraph 29.16 of its report. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee believed that further improvements could be made in the method of compiling such statistics.

32. The Committee was likewise not completely satisfied with the accuracy of the work-load statistics for the United Nations Office at Vienna. The introduction of word-processing and data-processing equipment should reduce the need to recruit additional staff. The Committee therefore regretted the delays in the introduction of new equipment at Geneva and hoped that the system would be in place in 1986 as promised. As indicated in paragraph 29.19 of its report, the Advisory Committee considered that technological innovations should lead to a reduction in the work-load of various categories of staff and that, consequently, there was a need to review work-load standards.

33. The Advisory Committee emphasized in its report the need for closer co-ordination and consultation between the various conference centres and Headquarters with a view to avoiding duplication and overlapping and making better use of available resources. In paragraph 29.2 of its report, it indicated that such co-ordination was especially important in matters related to the harmonization of methods for compiling work-load statistics and the introduction of new technology.

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34. In consideration of all those concerns, as indicated in paragraph 29.23 of its report (A/40/7), the Committee had deemed it appropriate to accede to the request for the establishment of a D-1 post to assist the Under-Secretary-General in planning and co-ordinating conference services.

35. In the course of its deliberations, the Advisory Committee had come to the conclusion that there was room for further savings. Accordingly, it proposed a reduction of \$2,024,100 in the estimates under section 29.

36. Ms. ZHANG Xian (China) drew attention to the proposal in paragraph 29.28 of the proposed programme budget to redeploy two translator posts from the Chinese Translation Service in order to establish a Chinese unit in the Official Records Editing Section and to supplement those staff resources by temporary assistance during the sessions of the General Assembly. In her view that was an extremely costly solution. She therefore asked what qualifications were required of editors and why, if the unit's functions were to be ongoing, its staff would remain so small while the editing units for the other languages were staffed by six to seven editors.

37. Mr. RIESCO (Director, Editorial and Official Records Division) said that since the language qualifications for editors were similar to those for translators, it seemed appropriate to redeploy translators from the Chinese Translation Service to the Official Records Editing Section. Furthermore, although the unit, which had begun work in 1984, still had a very small staff, that was because its work-load had not yet become very heavy. The Chinese editing unit, like the other editing units, dealt with the records of meetings of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council at least a year after the meetings had been held. The number of staff in the unit would be increased as its work-load went up, bringing it into line with the other language units.

38. Mr. van den HOUT (Netherlands) suggested that the Committee should defer its consideration of programme 29B.5, Conference and library services (Vienna) and 29C.3, Support services (Vienna) which would be affected by the conversion of UNIDO into a specialized agency. His delegation was not in favour of the adoption of sections of the budget that contained elements associated with the change in UNIDO's status before full information was available on all the budgetary implications of that change.

39. Mr. DITZ (Austria) said he had no objection to the proposal by the representative of the Netherlands. Noting that the Committee had not approved the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee in the estimate for temporary assistance for meetings in Vienna, since the Secretariat would be using the full amount in its report on the conversion of UNIDO, he asked whether that would create difficulties with regard to that document.

40. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) suggested in reply to the representatives of the Netherlands and Austria that the Committee should follow the same procedure in dealing with those parts of section 29 relating to conference services at Vienna as it had in connection with section 28M. The situation would become much clearer in a few days when the Committee would have before it the

(Mr. Annan)

report on UNIDO, since in preparing that report both UNIDO and Headquarters had taken as their starting point the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

41. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) asked whether any special methods had been considered or used for compiling the work-load statistics for conference services at Geneva and Vienna. She also asked why the requirements for conference servicing were not calculated in the same way for Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna. It was to be hoped that if the Committee approved the establishment of a principal officer post with responsibility for planning and co-ordinating conference-servicing activities, the incumbent's duties would include the development of a single method for such calculations.

42. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the questions asked by the representative of the United States, said that the Advisory Committee had noted for several years that the initial work-load statistics for Geneva and Vienna tended to be very high, only to be revised downward at a later stage. The Committee had also noted that for 1986-1987 the statistics for Geneva had become somewhat more reasonable. That was an encouraging trend which should continue. The difficulty stemmed in part from the lack of refined methods of compiling and analysing such statistics. That was one of the reasons why the Committee was recommending the establishment of a principal officer post (D-1) whose responsibilities would include carrying out the necessary consultations and ensuring co-ordination of methods for compiling statistics. There was also a need to harmonize methods for calculating conference-servicing requirements for Geneva and Headquarters.

43. Mr. ORSATELLI (France) said his delegation was dissatisfied with the provision of services for the translation and editing of United Nations documents in all official languages. With particular reference to documents in French, he noted that delays in the translation of documents, the original of which was generally English, had become almost routine and that the translations were frequently clumsy and sometimes even incorrect. Despite the fact that his delegation was continually pointing out major defects in the system, the situation did not seem to be getting any better. He asked what the Secretariat intended to do to remedy the situation and what practical proposals it might be able to put forward towards that end.

44. Mrs. CESTAC (Director, Translation Division) said that in the Department of Conference Services the process of translation came at the start of the document processing chain, which began with the assignment of priorities by the Documents Control Section and ended with document distribution. In that context a distinction should be made between documents proper and the summary records of meetings. There were no delays in translating the former. The comment made by the representative of France could therefore refer only to summary records, where delays did in fact occur as a result of the rule requiring simultaneous distribution of meetings records in all languages. The Division was endeavouring to bring out summary records with the least possible delay despite the fact that it had to give priority to documents, such as reports and other sessional documentation required by legislative bodies for their deliberations.

(Mrs. Cestac)

45. With regard to the quality of French translations, she said that the comments made by the representative of France were extremely serious, since the Division had always been known for the high quality of its output. Documents sent for translation were increasingly specialized, but translators were recruited at very high levels and stringent control of the quality of their work was exercised throughout their careers. In addition, the Division endeavoured to provide the translation services with the best terminology tools available and, in that connection, it had great hopes for the future computerized terminology bank, which should considerably shorten the time taken by the terminology searches which translators had to carry out.

46. She wished to point out that the French Translation Service, in particular, made it its practice to contact the authors of documents and, where necessary, delegations, to settle any translation problems that might arise, since it was not unusual for the quality of original texts to be less than satisfactory.

47. Mr. BARAC (Romania) asked what the grading structure of language posts had been 10 years earlier in order to compare it with that for the posts proposed for 1986-1987 in paragraph 29.12 of the first report of the Advisory Committee.

48. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) said that the information requested would be provided to the Romanian delegation.

49. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$277,128,000 under section 29 for the biennium 1986-1987 was approved in first reading without a vote.

50. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus on the recommended appropriation for section 29, but reserved its position with regard to the decision on the consolidated statement of conference-servicing costs and on the appropriation in second reading.

Section 30. United Nations bond issue

51. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled his delegation's position of principle to adhere scrupulously to all the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Consistent with that position, his delegation continued to oppose the use of the United Nations regular budget to finance bonds issued by the Organization in order to cover illegal expenditure associated with the Congo and Middle East operations undertaken in violation of the Charter. The Soviet Union refused to contribute towards the cost of those operations, the financial responsibility for which should be borne solely by those countries which had initiated them.

52. His delegation requested that the appropriation recommended for section 30 should be put to the vote and expressed its intention to vote against it.

53. Ms. ZHANG Xian (China) said that her delegation would also vote against the appropriation recommended for section 30.

54. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) noted that a few days earlier, during the discussion of the financial emergency of the Organization, the Controller had referred to the possibility of floating a new loan. To oppose the issuing of bonds was to prevent the Organization from acting in that area. Everyone was perfectly familiar with the question and there was no link between the bond issue and any given operation carried out by the United Nations. Furthermore, the Organization's financial difficulties were essentially due to the failure to pay certain contributions.

55. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Toqo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: None.

56. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation of \$16,758,600 under section 30 for the biennium 1986-1987 was approved in first reading by 91 votes to 10.

57. Ms. BYRNE (Ireland) and Mr. MALAGA (Peru) said that, had their delegations been present during the vote, they would have voted in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

Income section 2. General income

58. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) explained that the reduction of \$280,300 recommended by the Advisory Committee for income section 2 represented a net amount, which comprised an increase of \$145,000 to correct a technical error and a reduction of \$425,300. The reasons for the changes were set out in paragraph IS2.4 and IS2.9, respectively, of the Advisory Committee's report.

59. Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) asked whether the rental income mentioned in table IS2.3 came only from specialized agencies. A complete list of tenants showing changes in rents over the last three years should be made available.

60. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) said that most of the tenants were specialized agencies but that the United Nations also rented premises to commercial undertakings (Don Travel, Chemical Bank, ITT World Communications, etc.), which provided services to the staff and to delegations. The Secretariat would draw up the list requested by the representative of Morocco.

61. Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden) said that he would like to know, for purposes of comparison, the total amount of rent paid by the Organization.

62. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that in paragraph 28D.18 of the Advisory Committee's report, it was indicated that of the amount of \$46,810,200 requested for rental and maintenance of premises for the biennium 1986-1987, \$27,475,500 was for rental of premises at Headquarters.

63. The estimate of \$36,148,400 recommended by the Advisory Committee under income section 2 for the biennium 1986-1987 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Income section 3. Revenue-producing activities

64. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew the attention of the Committee to paragraphs IS3.21 to IS3.25 of the Advisory Committee's report, dealing with garage operations. In paragraph IS3.24, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of an appropriation of \$200,000 for the purchase of an electronic surveillance system for the garage at Headquarters, which would obviate the need for six Security Officer posts and eliminate the overall deficit projected for the garage operations (para. IS3.25).

65. He drew attention to the Secretary-General's report on the catering operation in document A/C.5/40/17 and suggested that the General Assembly should take note of that report, on the understanding that the Advisory Committee would keep abreast of developments in the situation.

66. In paragraphs IS3.30 to IS3.33 of its report, the Advisory Committee made a number of comments and recommendations concerning arrangements for public information assistants and tour co-ordinators, which he hoped the Secretariat would implement.

67. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium), noting that the anticipated revenue from the sale of postage stamps had decreased sharply for the reasons given in paragraph IS3.10 of the proposed budget, asked what changes had taken place in recent years in the market served by the United Nations and what developments were anticipated.

68. Mr. YAKOVENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked the Secretariat to explain why it expected such a large decrease in sales of postage stamps.

69. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) pointed out that, in paragraph IS3.10 of the proposed budget, the expected decrease in sales of postage stamps was explained, inter alia, by the change in the exchange rates of Swiss francs and Austrian schillings vis-à-vis the United States dollar, which would also seem to be partially responsible for the expected deficit in the garage operations at Geneva and Vienna (A/40/6, paras. IS3.60 and 61). He wondered whether, given the recent currency fluctuations, the projections had been or would be modified. He would also like to know how the projections relating to the guided lecture tours at Vienna had been established, since they showed a great increase in the number of visitors from one biennium to the next.

70. Ms. WEIL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that the information requested by the representative of Belgium was available. The fall-off in the philatelic activities of the Organization reflected a general trend which also affected national postal administrations. The hobby of philately was less popular than formerly with young people, and patrons were not being replaced. Given the current global economic situation, there had also been a loss of speculative buyers. Moreover, 1985 had been distinguished by an exceptional event; the stamp issue commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Organization. The commemorative stamps issued in 1986 would necessarily be of a less attractive character. In order to increase its turnover, the United Nations Postal Administration was proposing to launch a campaign among young people, in order to interest them in philately, and to appeal to world-renowned artists to design the stamps.

71. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division), replying to the questions asked by the representative of the United States, said that all the projections would be reviewed towards the end of the fortieth session in order to take account, inter alia, of fluctuations in rates of exchange.

72. Regarding the guided lecture tours at Vienna, the Secretariat had based itself not only on the experience of previous years but also on the fact that the Vienna International Centre was becoming increasingly active. The development of activities conducted in the German language was also a factor that should attract more visitors.

73. Miss DURRANT (Jamaica), referring to the last sentence in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/40/17, asked whether announcements soliciting bids had been published, and in what terms.

74. Ms. WEIL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that the Secretariat had not solicited bids for the management of the catering and related services but had followed a much used procedure. With the assistance of a consulting group specializing in corporate catering, it had drawn up a list of 11 companies with the experience and financial standing considered necessary and had asked them to formulate proposals. Three of them had provided detailed proposals that were under study. Under the new financial arrangements, the contractor would retain all of the profit but would absorb any loss. The Organization should, thereby, be protected against a deficit except in the case of a breach of contract which was always possible.

75. Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia) said that he favoured the installation of an electronic surveillance system in the garage but hoped that staff would continue to control traffic in order to prevent bottle-necks.

76. Ms. WEIL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) pointed out that it would be easier to park and to drive in the garage if representatives made use of the 100 parking spaces reserved for them in the second basement, which were often vacant.

77. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/40/17.

78. It was so decided.

79. Mr. YAKOVENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of his delegation's position, said that the United Nations Postal Administration should increase the sale of stamps or, if that was not possible, reduce the costs incurred by that activity.

80. The estimate of \$7,595,500 recommended by the Advisory Committee under income section 3 for the biennium 1986-1987 was approved in first reading without a vote.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.