



Chairman: Mr. E. Olu SANU (Nigeria).

AGENDA ITEM 80

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: report of the Committee on Contributions (concluded)*

Draft report of the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly (A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.9)

1. Mr. RAMBISOON (Trinidad and Tobago), Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.9) on agenda item 80, which was self-explanatory and as concise as was consistent with accuracy.

2. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objection to the text of the draft report. However, he noted that paragraph 10 reflected the positions of delegations with regard to the payment of contributions in currencies other than United States dollars but, apparently for technical reasons, omitted to describe that of his own delegation with regard to paragraph (c) of General Assembly resolution 2654 (XXV). He hoped that the Rapporteur could agree to the addition to the paragraph of a single sentence reflecting that position. He further suggested, in order to reflect what had actually transpired, that in paragraph 11 the word "unanimously" be replaced by the words "without objection".

3. Mr. RAMBISOON (Trinidad and Tobago), Rapporteur, agreed to both suggestions.

The draft report (A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.9), as amended, was adopted.¹

AGENDA ITEM 76

Budget estimates for the financial year 1972 (continued) (A/8322, A/8406, A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2-3, A/8428 and Corr.1, A/8446 and Add.1, A/C.5/1320/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/C.5/1362, A/C.5/1364, A/C.5/1365, A/C.5/1366 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/C.5/1372, A/C.5/1376, A/C.5/1377, A/C.5/1380 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1381, A/C.5/1383, A/C.5/1384, A/C.5/1388, A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.3 and Corr.1, A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.8, A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.10 and Add.1, E/5038)

* Resumed from the 1430th meeting.

¹ For the text, see A/8489.

Honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (concluded) (A/8408/Add.3, A/C.5/1365)

4. Mr. COIDAN (Director of the Budget Division), replying to a request made by the USSR representative at the previous meeting for information on the frequency of meetings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in recent years, read out the dates of the Advisory Committee's sessions during the period from 1967 to 1970. Those dates confirmed the statement in paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1365) that, in recent years, the Advisory Committee had been in session for nearly six months of the year. Yet that was not the complete picture. Since 1957, when the honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had been determined, the United Nations system and the Organization itself had become considerably more complex. For example, the 1957 budget estimates had contained no provision for either UNCTAD or UNIDO, and it was significant that the Advisory Committee's report on the budget estimates for 1957 had consisted of 250 draft pages whereas its corresponding report for 1970 had totalled 400 draft pages. The report on the budget estimates was only one of the many reports which it prepared each year. In addition, the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Administrative Management Service had increased the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee, and the volume of its documentation had grown considerably since 1957. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee must, if he was to keep himself informed of the views of Governments, familiarize himself with all that documentation, much of which was published between sessions of his Committee. The Chairman had also been invited to attend the sessions of bodies such as the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, and in its most recent report the Governing Council of UNDP had expressed a desire for co-ordination and co-operation with the Advisory Committee.

5. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the information provided by the Director of the Budget Division showed clearly that there had been no increase since 1967 in the number of meetings held yearly by the Advisory Committee. That was precisely what his delegation had contended, and arguments based on the assertion that there had been such an increase were obviously invalid. While the budget had grown considerably since 1957, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee was not alone in dealing with the resulting complexities; he was assisted by the other members of the Advisory Committee. He failed to understand, therefore, why so great a distinction should be made between the Chairman and the other members. Furthermore, during the general discussion many delegations, especially those of developing countries, had

emphasized their regret—which his delegation shared—that the growth in the budget was due to the expansion of administrative expenditure, rather than of programmes. He had therefore been surprised to note that some of the same delegations were perfectly prepared to agree to the increase in unnecessary and purely administrative expenditure entailed in the proposal before the Committee. The logic of such an approach escaped his delegation.

6. Mr. JOHNSON (Togo) said that, while appreciating the Secretary-General's arguments in support of an increase in the honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the increased complexity of the latter's functions, he felt that there were insufficient grounds for such an increase. He also endorsed the judicious reasoning of the representative of Tunisia regarding the consequences of a decision to increase the Chairman's honorarium. The Fifth Committee might stipulate that its decision was *sui generis*, but that would not prevent the submission of similar proposals from other quarters as a chain reaction. For those reasons, his delegation would oppose the proposal if it was put to the vote.

7. Mr. PICK (Canada) said that the merits of the proposal before the Committee had been thoroughly discussed, and he proposed that it should be put to the vote.

8. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) observed that much had been said concerning the independence of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. He had no doubt whatsoever that, regardless of the level of the honorarium for that office, the incumbent would remain completely independent—as every Chairman had been since the Committee's establishment. The Chairman was not appointed by the Secretary-General, the proposal would not involve the establishment of a new post in the Secretariat manning table, and the honorarium would be voted each year by the General Assembly. The fact that the increase involved was fivefold was tempered by the very low level of the current honorarium. As to its setting a precedent, every similar case would have to be decided on its own merits, and the Fifth Committee would be perfectly entitled to reject a like proposal in future.

9. The information given by the Director of the Budget Division and in the documentation before the Fifth Committee did not show how many meetings the Advisory Committee had held during each session. If the impression had arisen that the Chairman's workload was static, the fault lay in the fact that the proposal had been presented to the Fifth Committee with insufficient supporting detail. The workload had indeed increased, and other bodies were formulating proposals which would increase it further. In any event, he agreed with the representative of Canada that all the merits of the proposal had been thoroughly discussed.

10. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) said his delegation agreed with the principle that the honorarium should be increased but found it difficult to support an increase of the magnitude proposed. It would be wiser to consider the question further with a view to seeking a compromise figure for the increase, assuming that the Fifth Committee agreed that the Chairman's workload had increased. If the proposal was put to the vote as it stood, his delegation would abstain.

11. Mr. DE PRAT GAY (Argentina) said that his delegation would abstain from voting on the proposal because the increase recommended was far from negligible and might have an adverse effect on the Advisory Committee's performance of its vital work.

12. Mr. MAKUFU (Zaire) said that his delegation would abstain for reasons stated during the debate.

13. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the proposal of the Secretary-General that the honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be increased from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per annum, effective 1 January 1972 (see A/C.5/1365, para. 8). Should the Committee approve the increase, the \$20,000 would be included in the amount to be considered for section 1 of the 1972 budget estimates in first reading.

The proposal was adopted by 47 votes to 14, with 17 abstentions.

14. Mr. IZURIETA (Ecuador), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had supported the principle that the honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be increased, for the reasons advanced by the Secretary-General. It had, however, voted at the preceding meeting in favour of postponing a decision on the proposal because the amount of the increase implied a substantive change in the work of the Advisory Committee and created a new situation in that respect.

15. Mr. FERNANDEZ MAROTO (Spain) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the proposal, which it regarded as just for reasons adequately stated during the debate. It hoped that the small expenditure involved would lead to savings of very considerable sums for the United Nations through the removal from its budget of unnecessary expenditure.

16. Mr. AL-QANDI (Kuwait) said that his delegation had abstained for the reasons stated at the previous meeting by the representatives of Australia and the Upper Volta and at the current meeting by the representative of the Sudan.

17. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the preceding meeting the representative of Belgium had proposed the inclusion in the Committee's report of a statement along the following lines: "The Committee is of the opinion that the decision which was taken should be considered *sui generis*, in view of the special character of the post of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee."

18. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) said that he would prefer the expression "*sui generis*" to be in plain English.

19. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation did not object to the wording proposed but wondered whether it was ethical for the Fifth Committee, having increased the emoluments of an officer appointed on its recommendation, to rule out the possibility of higher emoluments for others. Such an action might be construed to mean that the Fifth Committee was concerned only with its own interests.

20. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to overcome the objection of the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the words "*sui generis*", the Belgian proposal might read "...should not be considered as setting a precedent...". It was his understanding that the decision would not prevent another Committee from proposing an increase in the emoluments of any officer. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the Belgian proposal, revised as he had suggested.

It was so decided.

First reading (continued) (A/C.5/XXVI/CRP.3 and Corr.1)*

SECTION 1. TRAVEL AND OTHER EXPENSES OF REPRESENTATIVES AND MEMBERS OF COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (A/8406, A/8408 AND CORR.1 AND 2 AND ADD.1 AND CORR.1, A/8408/ADD.3, A/C.5/1365, A/C.5/1366)

21. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider section 1 of the budget estimates for the financial year 1972 (A/8406) in first reading. In the budget estimates and in his report on the revised estimates (A/C.5/1366), the Secretary-General had proposed for section 1 an amount of \$1,467,700. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its related reports (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) recommended reductions of \$85,000 in the initial estimates by the Secretary-General and \$5,000 in the revised estimates. The total amount recommended by the Advisory Committee was therefore \$1,377,700. Having regard to the decision just taken by the Fifth Committee concerning the honorarium of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, however, the amount of \$20,000 should be added to the total recommended by the Advisory Committee.

22. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the reduction of \$85,000 proposed in paragraph 82 of the Advisory Committee's first report (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2) was a reflection of the Advisory Committee's experience that travel entitlements tended not to be taken up to the full extent.

23. Mr. GUPTA (India) asked whether, in recommending its reductions, the Advisory Committee had taken account of the admission of new Members to the United Nations and the resultant expenditure on travel costs.

24. He noted that the estimate for the Commission on Human Rights included provision for the attendance at its meeting of a representative of the Commission on the Status of Women. He appreciated that the provision had been made in accordance with General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions but thought that the Fifth Committee might suggest to the Third Committee that the procedure was anachronistic. There was no reason why the representative of one intergovernmental body should attend the meetings of another intergovernmental body; the expenditure was entirely unnecessary.

25. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the representative of India, said that no special allowance had been made for the travel costs resulting from the admission of new members; in any event, the Secretary-General expected that such costs could be absorbed. Savings in travel expenses could be anticipated in 1972 as a result of reductions in airline fares, but the Advisory Committee could not be expected to quantify them.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 82, and A/8408/Add.1 and Corr.1, para. 26) for an appropriation of \$1,397,700 under section 1 was approved on first reading by 68 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

SECTION 7. CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAJOR MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES (A/8406, A/8408 AND CORR.1 AND 2, A/C.5/1381)

HEADQUARTERS ACCOMMODATION (A/C.5/1381)

26. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary-General had asked for an initial appropriation under section 7 of \$11,240,500 (A/8406). The Advisory Committee, in its report (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2), recommended an amount of \$11,175,500, a reduction of \$65,000. Provision for any subsequent proposals concerning buildings and improvements at any location would be included in the revised estimates to be submitted to the Committee later in the session and, subject to the Committee's decisions, would be voted on in second reading.

27. Mr. VAUGHAN (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that it might be helpful, particularly to new members of the Fifth Committee, to review the history of the accommodation problem in New York.

28. In 1963, the Secretary-General had made detailed recommendations to the General Assembly for expansion of the lounge and dining facilities for delegates and additions to the Conference Building at its south end to provide additional cafeteria facilities and some office space, which could have been converted into an additional conference room if necessary in the future. The General Assembly had taken no action on those proposals.

29. In 1966, the Secretary-General had submitted a further report to the General Assembly on accommodation problems at Headquarters, with special emphasis on the increasing shortage of office space. He had suggested that, in the absence of major construction, the only short-term alternative would be the rental of outside office space. At the same time there had developed in the local community an interest in helping the Organization to solve its accommodation problem without construction on the existing site. A Fund for Area Planning and Development Inc., had been established and had undertaken at its own expense to study the feasibility of acquiring and developing for United Nations use a tract of land to the south of the United Nations site and east of First Avenue. Consequently, the Secretary-General had informed the General Assembly that he believed it wise to suspend any plans for the construction of additional premises on the United Nations site, pending the appearance of the study in question.

* Resumed from the 1441st meeting.

30. In 1968, as a result of the study by the Fund, the Secretary-General had sought and obtained from the General Assembly (resolution 2487 (XXIII)) an allocation of \$250,000 to prepare detailed plans and cost estimates for a major construction project in the area immediately south of the present United Nations site.

31. In 1969, the Secretary-General had submitted to the General Assembly a plan for the expansion of Headquarters facilities for delegates, an additional conference room, a new staff cafeteria, sufficient office space for the Secretariat, UNDP and UNICEF through 1979, and additional areas for storage and documents reproduction, which was urgently needed. The plan had been approved by the General Assembly (resolution 2618 (XXIV)), on the understanding that arrangements could be worked out to permit its financing. The plan involved contributions by the City of New York, the Federal Government of the United States, UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations itself.

32. As explained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1381), it had not proved possible to complete the financial arrangements because the contribution from the United States Government had not been forthcoming, and consequently the Secretary-General had not been able to take further action.

33. Until five weeks previously, the Secretary-General had every hope that the necessary financing for the plan approved by the General Assembly would be forthcoming, and he had therefore not had time in the interval to formulate definite alternative proposals. The plan referred to had been developed over a period of eight years, and it represented a well-considered programme to provide facilities for delegates, additional office space, and space for technical facilities. The project had been discussed in detail in the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee and should not, therefore, be lightly dismissed.

34. The first possibility, in the changed circumstances, was to consider alternative means of financing the expansion of Headquarters in accordance with the existing approved plans. That could involve carrying out either the whole project or parts of it. Another possibility was additional construction on the United Nations site in order to remedy the office space shortage; that would involve reverting to the tentative project discussed in 1963 for the construction of a building on the north end of the present United Nations property. The problem of financing such a new building would, of course, have to be considered.

35. If there was no new construction, the Secretary-General could foresee the obvious necessity of continued rentals of outside premises or the transfer to other locations of a substantial part of the Secretariat and associated organizations, including UNDP and UNICEF. At present, rented quarters were occupied by 490 Secretariat staff, 550 UNDP staff and 245 UNICEF staff at a total cost of about \$2.2 million a year. That included over 55,000 square feet of warehouse space occupied by the United Nations. Through an editorial error, it would appear from the budget estimates for 1972 that \$68,700 had been provided for additional outside rentals in 1972; in fact, that sum was needed to pay in 1972 for the increased cost of maintaining the existing rented premises, and there was no provision for any additional rented space for 1972. The Secretary-

General wished to emphasize that any additions in staff or other activities such as expanded training programmes requiring additional facilities would involve additional outside rentals.

36. Another problem was additional seating facilities in the conference rooms and the General Assembly Hall. The Secretary-General would shortly be submitting to the Fifth Committee a report on the need for further expansion of seating facilities, in view of the possibility of additions to the membership of the Organization.

37. With respect to the General Assembly's request, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 2618 (XXIV), that the Secretary-General should study the possibility and desirability of relocating all or part of certain units of the United Nations and should consider, in choosing potential locations, those other than already established major United Nations centres, the Secretary-General had directed the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to study the matter. However, in view of its complexity, the report could not be available before 1972.

38. The Secretary-General was satisfied that the plan proposed in 1969 was that best suited to the needs of the Organization. Recent developments had left no alternative but to continue the present *ad hoc* arrangements and, while the Secretary-General appreciated the desirability of presenting positive solutions, he believed that, to do so, it was important to obtain an expression of views from the Member States.

39. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that he had expected some more positive proposals from the Secretary-General. It was highly regrettable that the report referred to by the Assistant Secretary-General would not be available until 1972, or much later than the date originally contemplated. It should have been ready for the current session. In the absence of that report, he did not see how Member States could suggest other alternatives, as proposed in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report. He asked to what extent the costly new premises of the Palais des Nations would help to solve the difficulties and how the Secretary-General proposed to make the best use of them, in terms of holding conferences in Geneva or transferring some offices there. The Secretary-General might also indicate the cost of rented accommodation in the various cities where United Nations offices already existed.

40. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) noted that apparently the Secretary-General had not undertaken the study of the optimum distribution of Secretariat functions between various locations which he had been requested, in General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV), paragraph 3, to submit at the twenty-sixth session. Pending submission of that report, his delegation would react negatively to the expensive solution of renting accommodation which, according to paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, was now costing \$1,878,260 per year. If that went on for 20 years it would total some \$40 million, with no equity in the property. It would further aggravate the financial problem, and would only postpone the problem of accommodation for the Secretariat and for delegations.

41. Consequently, during the debate on the supplementary estimates for 1971, many delegations had opposed the

proposal that the \$2 million appropriated for the extension of United Nations Headquarters should be offset against the supplementary estimates of about \$3 million until the General Assembly had pronounced itself on the future of the extension project.

42. As to the extension to the Palais des Nations, the original amount of \$22 million approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 2488 (XXIII) had now risen to \$27.5 million, and following the revaluation of the Swiss franc the cost might rise even further. The Advisory Committee had asked the Secretary-General (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 162) to submit to the General Assembly at the current session detailed information on the reasons for the delays in the project and the rise in costs, and as to how he proposed that further delays and cost inflation in that project should be avoided. Ghana endorsed that recommendation and was awaiting the report.

43. Mr. ALWAN (Iraq) said he was pleased that the extension project had fallen through because, as he had explained on various occasions, Iraq did not regard New York City as a suitable location for the United Nations. Indeed, recent events had shown how unsuitable it was. He would ask the Assistant Secretary-General whether the United States Government had made any further specific offer concerning its proposed contribution of \$20 million to the extension project, and he also wished to know how much had been spent on designs for the project.

44. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) asked what consultations there had been between the Secretary-General, UNDP AND UNICEF concerning alternative solutions, and what the results of such consultations had been. He also asked whether the plans now abandoned included not only the provision of additional space, but also the modifications of existing accommodation that the Assistant Secretary-General had referred to.

45. Mr. YEREMENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said his delegation had voted against General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV) in the belief that further construction in New York was unjustified because the city could not provide the necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the permanent missions of Member States to the United Nations. Although in that resolution, the Assembly had urged the United States to examine the adverse conditions and to consider taking measures to remedy them, no real action had been forthcoming. Conditions had deteriorated further, as evidenced, in particular, by the recent shooting at the building which housed his own Permanent Mission, as well as by further increases in the cost of living which represented a burden both to the budget of the Organization and to that of every mission. In those circumstances, it was certainly unjustifiable to expand the Headquarters in New York, particularly in view of the present financial crisis.

46. As to the \$2 million that would no longer be required in 1971, he thought it would be reasonable to use it in 1972 for construction elsewhere and thus reduce the appropriations requested by the Secretary-General under section 7.

47. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said it was difficult for the Fifth Committee to take any decision on the basis

of the information before it. The question of accommodation at Headquarters had broad implications involving the size of the Secretariat, the budget of the Organization, and so forth. He had expected that at the current session the Fifth Committee would have before it a list of alternative ways of alleviating the acute shortage of space and suggestions as to what the General Assembly should do next—for instance, whether it should take no action once the extension project had fallen through, thus continuing the *ad hoc* arrangements, or whether it should contemplate limited proposals for the accommodation of new Member States. The meagre report by the Secretary-General could not be regarded as satisfactory. Normally the documents supplied by the Secretariat were most useful, but in the present case the Committee, instead of securing the critical analysis it needed, had been given a two-page report that was not even entirely accurate. For example, paragraph 3 referred to “the contribution of \$20 million which it had been hoped would be received from the United States of America”. Since the United States had indicated its willingness to contribute, it would have been more accurate to refer to the contribution as having been “expected”. Paragraph 5 suggested that Member States should have the opportunity of considering the existing situation and suggesting alternative arrangements.

48. In 1969, the Secretary-General had submitted to the Committee a comprehensive plan involving \$80 million, with designs and architectural mock-ups. Now the Fifth Committee was supposed to provide alternatives *in vacuo*. Any constructive debate leading to objective conclusions must be based on precise information about the various possible alternatives. There was a choice between doing nothing—which meant continuing the existing *ad hoc* arrangements—exploring the various possibilities of limited construction, and going ahead with the 1969 extension plan. Before choosing a given course, the Fifth Committee must have the necessary information. The Advisory Committee had recommended (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 161) that the Secretary-General should report to the General Assembly on the matter at its twenty-sixth session and make proposals. No proposals had been made, and he felt the Fifth Committee should have them.

49. Mr. ARBOLEDA (Colombia) said that, like the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, he would be interested to know whether the Secretary-General had asked UNDP and UNICEF how they proposed to solve the problem posed by the demise of the extension project, and what their reply had been.

50. Mr. REFSHAL (Norway) associated himself with those who had suggested that further discussion of the matter should be postponed until a later date. He agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General for General Services that the project had been a well-considered one which should not be dismissed lightly. However, to attempt to modify it on the basis of the information available to the Committee would be tantamount to dismissing it lightly. Not enough was known about the possible alternatives adumbrated by the Assistant Secretary-General. Since the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV) were still in force, the Committee could presumably do nothing more than decide to postpone implementing them, but it must have more material on which to base its consideration of the project.

51. Mr. VAN DER GOOT (Netherlands) said that he shared the general concern of Members of the Committee. In particular, he endorsed the comments of the Brazilian and Norwegian representatives and would be interested to hear the Secretariat's answers to the very pertinent questions put by the representatives of France and the United Republic of Tanzania.

52. Mr. GUPTA (India) endorsed the comments of previous speakers concerning the paucity of documentation. It was a matter for regret that it had not been possible to go through with the plan approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 2618 (XXIV). It appeared that it might be possible to continue the project at some future date. If that was so, perhaps the United States representative, whose delegation had played an active role in promoting that project, would indicate what were the possibilities of the project's getting under way within the next year.

53. Mr. FAROOQ (Pakistan) endorsed the comments of the representatives of Brazil and the United Republic of Tanzania. It would be interesting to learn from the United States delegation whether the decision of the Congress was final and irrevocable, or whether the required amount would be appropriated later. It would also be interesting to learn what had become of New York City's contribution of \$20 million.

54. Mr. VAUGHAN (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services), replying to the questions raised by the representative of Iraq, said that the United States delegation had made no further representations to the Secretary-General than those mentioned in his report (A/C.5/1381). Some \$250,000 had been spent on designs and in preparing cost estimates for the extension project.

55. As to the questions raised by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, UNDP and UNICEF had not, so far as he was aware, been requested to suggest alternative courses of action. The Secretary-General had felt that the Fifth Committee should first consider the matter and provide the Secretariat with some guidance. The project had been approved by the General Assembly, but the question of its financing had to be settled before construction work could begin. The Secretary-General had been unable to inform the Advisory Committee that the question of financing had been settled because the host country had been unable to make the needed contribution. Where the remodelling of existing space was concerned, a breakdown of the cost of the various parts of the project had been given in document A/C.5/1246 and Add.1,² but if there was no financing for the project as a whole there would be none for its various parts.

56. Since contributions from all other sources were contingent on that of the host country, the \$20 million from New York City, to which the representative of Pakistan had referred, would presumably revert to the City unless a contribution from the United States Government was forthcoming.

57. With regard to the comments of the representative of Brazil, he had said in his introductory statement that the

Secretary-General had been unable, for lack of time, to make specific proposals, that he (the Secretary-General) had hoped that the Fifth Committee would assess prospects for maintaining the project, in whole or in part, and suggest ways and means for its financing, that if there was any increase in staff the Secretariat would be obliged to rent additional premises outside the Headquarters building, and that the proposal to erect a new building at the north end of the Headquarters site could be reactivated. As to the distribution of Secretariat functions between different locations, reference to document A/C.5/1372 would show that the study called for in General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV), paragraph 3, would not be completed until the twenty-seventh session.

58. Referring to the question raised by the representative of France, he said that the Secretariat would shortly be issuing a report making it clear that completion of the extension of the Palais des Nations at Geneva would not necessarily solve all the problems involved. It would be unwise to hope that upon completion of that building it would be possible to move sufficient staff from New York to Geneva to provide all the additional space that was required in New York.

59. In making *ad hoc* arrangements for additional space, the Secretariat had always tried to obtain as much of the space as it needed in a single building; that had not been possible, and the Secretariat was now dispersed in five buildings.

60. Mr. BENDER (United States of America) said that his delegation reserved the right to make a detailed statement on the question at a later stage. At present it would only comment on some points raised in the debate.

61. The representative of Brazil had said that it would have been more accurate in document A/C.5/1381, paragraph 3, to use the word "expected" instead of "hoped". The factual situation was that at the twenty-fourth session the United States delegation had informed the Committee that the President of the United States would request the Congress to appropriate the sum of \$20 million towards the cost of the project. The President had done so, and the Congress had enacted the authorizing legislation. At its current session, however, the Congress had decided not to make the corresponding appropriation.

62. It would be appreciated that he could not possibly give an authoritative answer to the question raised by the representatives of India and Pakistan, namely, whether the decision of the Congress was final or was subject to modification or reversal.

63. Mr. GUPTA (India) explained that he was interested in discovering whether, in view of the enthusiasm for the project displayed by the United States delegation at the twenty-fourth session, the United States Government proposed to submit the matter to Congress again.

64. The situation with respect to the Secretariat's reports on the question was disturbing. It was because the report on space requirements submitted at the twenty-fourth session (A/C.5/1263) had been unsatisfactory that the General Assembly had included the wording of paragraph 3

² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 74.

in its resolution 2618 (XXIV). The study requested in that paragraph had nothing to do with the extension project in New York and it was difficult to understand why, if the subject-matter was as complex as the Secretariat claimed, two years had been allowed to elapse before work on the study had been started.

65. Mr. REFSHAL (Norway) said he appreciated that the events which had dashed the Organization's hopes were so recent that it had not been possible for the Secretary-General to work out comprehensive alternative proposals. It would be interesting, however, to know whether the Secretary-General considered that execution of the original project should merely be postponed or whether he regarded the original project as impracticable or even undesirable. If the latter, the Committee would have to decide on an alternative course of action and must have data on which to base its decision.

66. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that the United States representative's statement confirmed his opinion that in document A/C.5/1381 the word "expected" should have been used instead of "hoped". It would be interesting to know how much time the Secretariat would require to prepare more detailed information on alternatives to the plan and on retention of the plan itself.

67. Mr. VAUGHAN (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that, as he had already explained, the Secretary-General had made provision, in his 1969 extension plan, for all foreseeable facilities that would be required at Headquarters up to the end of 1979. The Secretary-General had not made any mistake in computing his figures. The problem lay in the financing of the project. If it could not be financed, consideration would have to be given to other courses of action. One such course would be to reactivate plans to erect a building at the north end of the Headquarters site. It must be understood, however, that funds would also be required for that course of action. Alternatively, additional space outside Headquarters could be rented. What was certain was that, with the increase in the Organization's membership, immediate steps would have to be taken to acquire additional space on either a permanent or an *ad hoc* basis.

68. Mr. NAUDY (France) said he appreciated that completion of the extension of the Palais des Nations at Geneva would not provide a complete solution to the problem, but he would like to know to what extent it would contribute towards a solution. He hoped that the information he required would be supplied in the special report on the subject to be submitted to the Committee.

69. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation had always felt that the allocation of funds for the Headquarters extension project was unjustified. Its opinion was based on the fact that conditions in New York, where the permanent missions were required to function, deteriorated from year to year. In addition, it felt that the existing building should be used more rationally.

70. In the main, the references to General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV) had been confined to paragraph 1, under which the Secretary-General was authorized to

proceed with the execution of the project. Attention should also be paid, however, to other paragraphs of the resolution. According to the eighth preambular paragraph, for example, the United States Government had given assurances that it would immediately seek accession to the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations; it would be interesting to know what progress had been made in that matter. Similarly, the provisions of paragraphs 3, 4 and 6 did not appear to have been implemented. It would seem, therefore, that the provisions of the resolution—which the Soviet Union had opposed—were not viable. In addition, difficulties concerning financing had arisen, so that it had been impossible to start work on the project. Those developments were not a source of regret to his delegation. On the contrary, by preventing the expenditure of funds on the Headquarters extension project, they would serve to alleviate the financial difficulties facing the Organization. Of course, \$250,000 had already been spent on unnecessary designs, but it was satisfactory to learn from document A/C.5/1381, paragraph 5, that the \$1 million requested in the initial estimates for 1972 would not be pressed for appropriation. As to the \$2 million appropriated in 1971, it would seem that the Committee had no alternative but to transfer that sum to construction work in other localities, such as Santiago, Chile, and Geneva. That would be much better than freezing the money, particularly if account was taken of continuing inflation and the devaluation of the United States dollar. It was not surprising that the Assistant Secretary-General for General Services had had difficulty in replying to the Norwegian representative's questions concerning the Secretary-General's opinion of the project. The Secretary-General had taken account of realities, and the Committee should do likewise. The original project could not be executed; it should be abandoned and the funds saved should be allocated to construction projects in other localities.

71. The increase in the cost of the extension of the Palais des Nations at Geneva was a source of concern to his delegation, which had always favoured that project. It was with particular satisfaction, therefore, that the Soviet Union had noted the requests made in paragraph 162 of the Advisory Committee's first report (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2).

72. Mr. BENDER (United States of America) said that the United States Government had acceded to the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations in April 1970. The Informal Joint Committee on Host Country Relations, of which the USSR was a member, had been informed of that fact.

73. He would not comment on the steps taken to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2618 (XXIV), paragraph 6, because an item relating to the status of the work of the Informal Joint Committee was before the Sixth Committee. The USSR representative should be fully aware of what had been done, however, because a full report on the matter had been given to the Informal Joint Committee.

74. Mr. TURNER (Controller), replying to the question raised by the representative of France, said that a report on the extension of the Palais des Nations at Geneva had been

prepared; it would be submitted to the Advisory Committee during the following week and then to the Fifth Committee. In the meantime, he could say that the new offices would be ready for full occupancy by about mid-1972. One and a half floors had been held in reserve; the rest of the space would be occupied by staff brought in from rented premises in Geneva.

75. Document A/C.5/1381 was admittedly brief, but brief reports were now popular. It dealt with a single project, namely, the Headquarters construction project and its financing, and said everything that needed to be said. The financial package had not been put together and he would venture to say that, in his judgement, it would never be put together. The simple issue, therefore, was to determine what the Committee wished to be done with the \$2 million appropriated in 1971 and the \$1 million proposed in the initial estimates for 1972.

76. In reply to the question raised by the representative of Colombia, he said that UNDP and UNICEF had been fully informed of the financial situation in respect of the project. They had no alternative but to maintain existing arrangements for the time being. What they did in the future would depend on the decisions of their governing bodies.

77. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) asked why the item relating to the Informal Joint Committee on Host Country Relations was before the Sixth Committee and not the Fifth.

78. Mr. VAUGHAN (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that he assumed it was because the report dealt with legal questions.

79. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to the statement made by the United States representative, said that, as a member of the Informal Joint Committee on Host Country Relations, his delegation was aware that the United States had acceded to the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. He had put his question because, as events had proved, the accession had not resulted in any change in the situation of the diplomatic corps in New York.

80. Mr. BERTRAN (Uruguay), observing that \$2 million appropriated in 1971 remained unspent, suggested that the question of the supplementary estimates for 1971 should be settled before the Committee took any decision on the Headquarters construction project.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.