



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (continued) (A/35/11)

1. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas) said that, in reading the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/35/11), she had been struck by what appeared to be a basic, growing imbalance in the evolution of the Committee's terms of reference between 1946 and 1979. Doubtless, that imbalance had been the cause of the dissatisfaction expressed by a majority of Member States over the assessments set by the Committee. While resolutely affirming in its report the importance of the more recent directives laid down by the Assembly, in particular in paragraph 2 of resolution 34/6 B, the Committee on Contributions had delicately relegated the exercise of its functions to the limbo of "future study".
2. However, with regard to the "heavy dependence of certain Member States on export of one product or a few products", a question which the General Assembly had referred to the Committee in resolution 34/6 B, the observations in paragraphs 32 and 33 of the Committee's report made it clear that that question was un-controversial since it pertained to one of the Committee's fundamental functions, namely, the right to apportion the expenses of the Organization.
3. The Fifth Committee should seriously rethink the role of the Committee on Contributions and evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts to mitigate, in monetary terms, the huge disparities between Member States owing to economic and political inequalities. The challenge facing the Fifth Committee was to reverse the trend toward increasing opposition to the scales recommended by the Committee on Contributions and to replace that trend with a spirit of co-operation.
4. The terms of reference of the Committee on Contributions encompassed five functions. The first was the right to apportion the expenses of the United Nations according to capacity to pay on the basis of comparative estimates of national income, refined by recourse to "statistical means", by per capita income, by the ability of Member States to secure foreign currency, and, increasingly, by various other factors affecting the level of development. That first function had been spelt out by the General Assembly in numerous resolutions. Second, the Committee was the arbiter of measures to ensure the equity of the scale of assessments. To that end, the Committee set a ceiling on assessments and avoided revising the scale unless there were compelling reasons for doing so, as the General Assembly had specified in various resolutions. Third, the Committee considered appeals for changes in assessments. Fourth, it recommended the action to be taken in cases when countries failed to pay their contributions. Fifth, it advised the General Assembly regarding the application of Article 19 of the Charter. In the view of her delegation, the Committee seemed to have emphasized only one of its functions, to the virtual exclusion of all other pertinent aspects of its mandate, including those relating to equity.

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(Miss Zonicle, Bahamas)

5. With regard to the determination of capacity to pay, any interpretation which ignored the provisions of the Charter would only serve to hinder the equitable application of the scale of assessments. Before becoming official guidelines, criteria for determining capacity to pay should, therefore, conform to the provisions of the Charter, especially those laid down in Article 4, paragraph 1, and Article 1, paragraph 3.

6. The report of the Committee on Contributions did not cover any new ground. It did not propose any generally accepted principles for calculating an equitable scale of assessments. Even in the quantitative areas where some progress had been made, no breakthrough could be expected in the near future. Given the existing state of affairs, the Fifth Committee would do well to take a more practical approach to the problem of contributions. In addition to economic and social indicators, such as those mentioned in part B of resolution 34/6, other criteria, such as military expenditure and level of official development assistance, had been suggested. That attested to the growing awareness on the part of Member States of the necessity for a systematic approach to the problems of inequality. The methods adopted to resolve those problems, however, would be effective only to the extent that the qualitative and quantitative principles on which they rested were commonly accepted and objectively verifiable.

7. Such a new practical approach had to be based on three overriding considerations. First, the limits of existing approaches, both in their qualitative and quantitative aspects, must be recognized. Second, the Committee on Contributions must fulfil its mandate in its totality before deciding upon any new methods for applying the principle of capacity to pay. Third, there must be positive acceptance of the obligations laid down in the Charter. In that context, monetary contributions to the Organization might be regarded as an integral part of national development plans and not as competing with them. Thus, in the case of all countries, an increased assessment would be the sign of progress towards development and, conversely, any decrease would be an indication that Member States were failing in their responsibilities towards each other.

8. Her delegation supported the resolution contained in paragraph 100 of the report of the Committee on Contributions.

9. Mr. DENIS (France) commended the Committee on Contributions for the perspicacity and seriousness which it had shown in dealing with the priority question of equity, which was becoming increasingly urgent as a result of budgetary growth. There were several problems, however, in seeking to ensure equity. First, a ceiling and a floor contribution had to be set; in that connexion, his delegation favoured an upper limit of 25 per cent and a lower limit of 0.01 per cent. The choice of criteria for evaluating capacity to pay was even more thorny. National income was a monetary criterion which could be distorted by inflation and exchange rates. But what alternative was there? Every other indicator entailed difficulties, and it still remained to resolve differences of view concerning the weight to be given to the various indicators, to obtain the necessary statistics, to harmonize those which were available and so forth. The Committee on Contributions should keep those matters under review.

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(Mr. Denis, France)

10. The solution adopted with regard to the low per capita income allowance formula should be based on social criteria to the fullest extent possible. His delegation therefore favoured a dollar limit of \$1,800 and increasing the relief factor. In choosing a statistical base period, the aim should be to correct the influence of short-term changes and exchange rate fluctuations. The three-year period had been abandoned in favour of a seven-year period, but his delegation would have preferred a middle ground of five years. In that connexion, it was difficult to understand how some delegations could have proposed a fifteen-year period, as indicated in paragraph 68 of the Committee's report.

11. Such difficulties should not obscure the progress which had already been made in ensuring greater equity. It need only be recalled that from 1979-1980 the contribution of 70 Member States was only 0.01 per cent of the budget, while 9 States paid only 0.02 per cent and 10 States paid 0.03 per cent. As a result, France alone paid a contribution that was 5.3 higher than the combined contribution of those Member States. It was difficult to maintain that such a system was inequitable, but there was clearly a great deal more for the Committee on Contributions to do. The Committee should bear in mind that at the international level, as at the national level, there was no such thing as a perfectly fair system of taxation that the more sophisticated a system was, the less it was understood by those to whom it applied.

12. Mr. ALI (Chairman of the Committee on Contributions) said that he was pleased at the number of delegations that had taken part in the discussion of agenda item 97, which showed the keen interest to which the Fifth Committee took in the question of the scale of assessments. He would do his best to answer the questions which had been asked.

13. Some delegations had stated that it might be more useful for the Fifth Committee to receive specific recommendations from the Committee on Contributions rather than assurances that certain topics were under study. Others had felt the need for the Fifth Committee to receive more details on the methods and statistical material used by the Committee on Contributions. The Committee had made every effort to carry out the tasks set for it in General Assembly resolution 34/6 B, but a number of issues dealt with in that resolution were not susceptible to immediate or definitive solutions.

14. Some delegations would have liked more statistical data to have been provided in the Committee's report. There were however a number of statistical tables in the report (for example, the four tables illustrating the application of the low per capita income allowance formula), but the Committee had felt that a mass of statistical data might obscure the statement of the major issues. The comments of delegations would, of course, be brought to the attention of the Committee on Contributions at its next session.

15. With regard to methods for avoiding excessive variations in individual rates of assessment between two successive scales, some members had expressed support for the imposition of limits on changes, maintaining that that would not necessarily distort capacity to pay, while others had felt that the imposition of

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a limit would depart from the principle of capacity to pay. It would be desirable for the Fifth Committee to give the Committee on Contributions some further guidelines on what was meant by "excessive variations" between two consecutive scales.

16. Some members of the Fifth Committee had said that national income as a measure of capacity to pay should be supplemented by other economic and social indicators, while others had felt that such an exercise was not feasible at the current time. The Committee on Contributions recognized that the base for calculating capacity to pay must be broadened, but, failing general agreement among experts on the concepts and techniques to be used and given the lack of statistical information for some Member States, it had been unable to introduce those indicators into its calculations in a systematic way.

17. In reply to the question of the representative of Portugal, he explained that in paragraph 18 of the Committee's report it was not the objectivity of such indicators as life expectancy or percentage of literacy that was called into question but the objectivity of the choice of indicators and the weight to be attached to them. In response to the question of the representative of Trinidad and Tobago about the indicators to be used in the study that the United Nations Statistical Office had been asked to produce (A/35/11, para. 20), he said that those indicators would include, among others, per capita gross domestic product at market prices, per capita energy consumption, percentage share of manufacturing in total gross domestic product at factor cost, and percentage share of manufactured goods in total exports.

18. In reply to a question from the representative of Indonesia about paragraph 13 of the report, he said that a distinction should be drawn between indicators which could be expressed in absolute amounts, which were used in formulating the scale, such as total national income in monetary terms, and those, such as percentage of literate population and life expectancy, which, though useful for ranking Member States, could not be directly converted to percentage points. The general index of development referred to in paragraph 13 belonged to the latter category.

19. Some delegations had suggested that the Committee on Contributions should study closely the ability of Member States to secure convertible currency. The representative of Egypt had asked in that connexion what criteria the Committee used when lowering the rates of Member States which devoted a large share of their income to foreign debt servicing. The Committee's method was as follows: it examined the ratio of debt servicing to export earnings and made downward adjustments when the ratio seemed unduly high. To the extent that official statistics were available, the Committee would continue to study closely the situation of countries that devoted a substantial part of their foreign earnings to the servicing of external public debt.

20. He had taken note of the comments of the members of the Fifth Committee on the heavy dependence of certain Member States on the export of one product or a few products, on the application of the low per capita income allowance formula, and *on the different methods of national accounting* used by Member States, and he would convey them to the Committee at its next session. In regard to the possibility of using national income in constant prices as an equitable measure of capacity to pay, he recalled that, although the number of countries providing constant price data was increasing, there were serious conceptual problems which prevented the use of such data for the time being.

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(Mr. Ali)

21. In reply to the representative of India, who had asked to what extent the Committee on Contributions took into account the impact of inflation on domestic prices in determining assessments, he said that the relative changes in rates of assessment of Member States resulted from relative changes in national income corrected for price changes as well as from relative changes in prices. The price element itself comprised two factors: changes in domestic prices and changes in exchange rates in terms of the United States dollar. The exchange rates used for comparison purposes did not always respond adequately to variations in the rate of inflation, which clearly differed to a greater or lesser extent between individual countries and the United States. To the degree that exchange rates remained uncorrected for inflation by the interaction of market forces, by the intervention of Governments or by formal devaluations on their part, national income figures were inflated. In 1979, the Committee had found that 37 countries were in that position, 14 of which were affected by excessive inflation.

22. Opinions differed on the question of using national wealth data to supplement data for national income. Computing national wealth was not an easy task; for example, a monument regarded as a national treasure could represent a very heavy financial liability for the State responsible for its upkeep. On the question of a uniform time period for basic data, he expressed satisfaction that the steps taken by the Committee on Contributions to convert fiscal year data to a calendar year basis had met with the approval of the members of the Fifth Committee. The views expressed in the Committee on the question of the effects of changes in the statistical base period in the scale of assessments had differed widely. In regard to the question raised by the representative of Pakistan, it was difficult to determine at the current time whether the lengthening of the base period would be detrimental to poor countries.

23. Mr. EL-SAFETY (Egypt) recalled that, referring to the draft resolution in paragraph 100 of the Committee's report on a previous occasion, he had observed that if Saint Lucia had paid one ninth of its assessment of 0.01 per cent in 1979, and if that contribution was added to the assessments of other member States, the total of assessments would exceed 100 per cent, although only by a minimal amount. However, by paragraph 4 of resolution 238 (III), adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, the Committee on Contributions had been instructed to recommend how additional contributions resulting from the admission of new Member States could be used to remove existing maladjustments in the present scale or to reduce the rates of contributions of existing Members. The Committee on Contributions should comment specifically on that point and explain how Saint Lucia's contribution would be used.

24. Mr. ALI (Chairman of the Committee on Contributions) explained that the Committee's practice was as follows: once the scale of assessments had been fixed and adopted by the General Assembly, the contributions of new Member States were regarded as additional income. If the scale had to be amended in the light of additional contributions, it would be necessary to convene a special meeting of the Committee, which would be very burdensome.

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25. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that the Assembly had interpreted the paragraph in question as follows: in Section C, of the resolution on the programme budget, which dealt with the financing of appropriations, the Assembly decided that the amount deriving from contributions of new Member States would be deducted from the amounts outstanding from current Member States. Thus, in resolution 34/230, it had decided that a sum of \$104,182, representing the contributions of new Member States for the biennium 1978-1979, would be used to cover expenses envisaged for 1980.

26. Mr. EL-SAFY (Egypt) said that a paragraph should be added to the draft resolution in paragraph 100 of the report of the Committee on Contributions explaining how the contributions paid by new Member States would be used pending the readjustment of the scale of assessments.

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that towards the end of the session the General Assembly would adopt a resolution for the purpose of reducing the assessments of Member States by the amount of the contributions of new members. There was no need, therefore, to amend the draft resolution proposed in paragraph 100 of the report of the Committee on Contributions. He also drew the attention of the Egyptian representative to Financial Rule 105.1 and Regulation 5.2, paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d), of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which dealt specifically with the matter about which he was concerned.

28. The CHAIRMAN observed that no delegation had requested a vote on the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Committee on Contributions in its report.

29. The draft resolution in paragraph 100 of the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/35/11) was adopted without objection.

AGENDA ITEM 96: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (continued) (A/35/32 and Add.1; A/C.5/35/12; A/C.5/35/L.5, L.6, L.8, L.9, L.10, L.11\*, L.12, L.14 and L.15)

30. The CHAIRMAN said that during the meeting the Committee would have before it a draft amendment to the draft resolution in recommendation 5 contained in paragraph 70 of the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/35/32). A decision on the various draft resolutions and amendments could therefore not be taken before the next meeting. So that delegations would be in a position to take a decision at that time, he suggested that the sponsors of the various draft resolutions and amendments should introduce their texts orally.

31. Mr. OKEYO (Chairman of the Committee on Conferences), replying to a question raised earlier by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany on the formal links established between the Committee on Conferences and the Ad Hoc Committee on Subsidiary Organs, said that copies of all the letters addressed to the chairmen of the various bodies consulted had been transmitted to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee so as to keep him informed of the activities of the Committee on Conferences. He also believed that most of the replies received had been transmitted to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. While those were the only

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(Mr. Okeyo)

formal links between the two committees, it should be noted that the Ad Hoc Committee proposed in the draft resolution it had prepared that in drawing up future calendars of conferences, the Committee on Conferences should take account of the need to reduce the duration of sessions of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and to explore the possibility of scheduling the meetings of such organs on a biennial basis. It appeared that the information provided by the Committee on Conferences to the Ad Hoc Committee might have influenced the latter's position as expressed in the draft resolution. The activities of the two committees could thus be considered as largely complementary.

32. The delegations of Japan, Australia and the Federal Republic of Germany had requested further information on the replies received from the various subsidiary bodies consulted with a view to ascertaining whether their sessions could be shortened. The Chairman of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization had observed that, since he had only become Chairman of the Special Committee in 1980, he was not in a position to pass judgement on the Special Committee's performance of its tasks in 1979. He had considered the duration of the 1980 session of the Special Committee to be only barely adequate. Although some meetings had had to be cancelled or had begun late usually owing to last-minute informal consultations, such cancellations or late starts had nevertheless made it possible to enhance the productivity of the session. The Chairman of the Special Committee had concluded that it did not appear to him that the meeting time allocated to the Special Committee was excessive.

33. The Secretary of the Committee on Disarmament had indicated that the Committee's attention had been drawn to all the relevant resolutions and it had subsequently worked without interpretation. Account had to be taken of the very special nature of the Committee as a negotiating body. Since the subjects it dealt with were closely related to current events, it often became necessary to cancel meetings in order to seek a consensus through informal consultations. To that end, four working groups had been established in 1980 to begin negotiations on four distinct questions, and that had made it possible to use the resources to better advantage during the year.

34. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean had observed that, because of the highly political nature of that Committee's discussions, it had often been necessary to hold informal consultations, sometimes in place of scheduled meetings. The fact that other important meetings had been held simultaneously had caused difficulties for many delegations, particularly the smaller ones, which had been unable to cover all the meetings. That had inevitably led to the cancellation of certain meetings.

35. The Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had drawn attention to the widely recognized quality of the Sub-Committee's work. The under-utilization of resources in 1979 had resulted from the need to hold informal consultations before meetings of the Sub-Committee or its working groups. Those consultations, which had required no interpretation

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(Mr. Okeyo)

services, had often made it possible to reach a consensus - a method which constituted an essential element in the development of law. To shorten the duration of the Sub-Committee's sessions would therefore be a most regrettable step.

36. The Chairman of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies had pointed out that the Board, which was an advisory body of the Secretary-General, and not a Committee of the General Assembly, carried out most of its work in informal consultations, the length of which could not always be determined in advance. Since its work was closely related to that of the First Committee, one of its sessions had to be held during the early weeks of the General Assembly; it was therefore impossible to avoid overlapping of the Advisory Board's meetings with other meetings, as a result of which some members were unable to participate in all the discussions because of their other obligations.

37. The Chairman of the Disarmament Commission had emphasized that in 1979, at its first session, it had been necessary for the Commission to hold many informal consultations, which had sometimes led to the cancellation of scheduled meetings. In 1980, on the other hand, the Commission had used all the conference services allocated to it, which had, in fact, proved inadequate.

38. The Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts to Study the Implications of Establishing an International Satellite Monitoring Agency had acknowledged that the Group had made little use of the interpretation services available to it. Its members had often worked in drafting groups without interpretation. Since the work of the Group of Experts related to two highly special fields, it was often advisable to settle differences of opinion outside the formal meetings. Furthermore, small drafting groups were particularly well-fitted to formulate texts on delicate positions. In 1980, only two meetings of a three-week session had been cancelled.

39. The Chairman of the Committee on Contributions had pointed out that, at its 1979 session, the Committee had had to draw up a scale of assessments for the years 1980, 1981 and 1982. For that purpose, the Committee had required 50 statistical tables, which could not be obtained in a few hours. As often happened, it meanwhile had to adjourn its work. It had therefore been necessary to extend the session and the Committee had reached a consensus only a few days before its closure.

40. The Legal Counsel had indicated that there must have been some misunderstanding with regard to the International Law Seminar held at Geneva. Since its inception in 1965, the International Law Seminar had met only when the International Law Commission was not in session, since one of the activities of the Seminar was to attend meetings of the Commission. The Seminar could therefore hold only five meetings a week and it was by error that it had been allocated 30 meetings with interpretation services in 1979. In 1980, that error had been drawn to the attention of the Conference and General Services Division at the United Nations Office at Geneva by the Secretary of the Seminar and rectified.

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(Mr. Okeyo)

41. The Chairman of the International Law Commission had indicated that he had referred the letter of the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the Planning Group of the Commission's Enlarged Bureau. The Commission had adopted the Bureau's recommendations which were set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of its report to the General Assembly (A/35/10). It had considered it absolutely essential to maintain an annual session of 12 weeks in order to comply with the General Assembly's recommendations concerning the implementation of its current work programme. The considerations which had led the Commission to recommend to the General Assembly in 1974 that its annual session should be brought up to 12 weeks were now even more valid. The number of topics included in its programme of work pursuant to recent recommendations of the General Assembly had increased considerably in recent years. In addition, several of the new topics were complex questions to which the special rapporteurs between sessions, and the Commission itself during its sessions, had to devote considerable time. Moreover, the Commission had to codify the topics on which it had begun study and at the same time to complete the codification of other topics already included in its work programme.

42. The programme of work of the Committee on Conferences for 1981 was extremely demanding and was indicative of the Committee's enhanced role in matters related to the calendar, in the sphere of documentation and as a de facto advisory body to the Fifth Committee. On 20 October 1980 the General Assembly had adopted a draft resolution which had been proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Subsidiary Organs and which called on the Committee on Conferences to perform further tasks. Moreover, the Chairmen of the regional groups had agreed, at a recent meeting with the President of the General Assembly, to entrust the Committee on Conferences with the elaboration of guidelines on the circulation of documentation submitted by delegations to the Secretariat; that matter had been under consideration by the General Committee since the previous year. It was no exaggeration to say that the Committee on Conferences had become a full-fledged standing committee of the General Assembly.

43. He wished to associate himself with those delegations which had paid tribute to the Committee Secretary, who had contributed significantly to its success. The post level of the Secretary fell somewhat behind the usual grading pattern of his colleagues: such an imbalance should be corrected and the Secretary-General should take appropriate measures to bring the post of Secretary of the Committee on Conferences into line with the grading pattern for secretaries of other subsidiary organs.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on item 96 of the agenda had concluded and invited sponsors of draft resolutions and amendments to introduce their texts.

45. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand), introducing the draft resolution and amendments in documents A/C.5/35/L.9, A/C.5/35/L.10 and A/C.5/35/L.14, which had been drafted and then adopted by consensus following informal consultations that he had chaired, regretted that it had not been possible to merge those texts in a single document. The draft amendments (A/C.5/35/L.14) to Recommendation 3 of the Committee on

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(Mr. Godfrey, New Zealand)

Conferences contained in paragraph 70 of its report (A/35/32) would do no more than confirm the continuation of current arrangements regarding the publication not only of technical papers or national reports but also of the Journal. The amendments in document A/C.5/35/L.10 were required in order to achieve a better balance in the text of Recommendation 5 of the Committee on Conferences.

46. He then introduced draft amendment A/C.5/35/L.15, which had been the subject of informal consultations and which might perhaps be adopted by consensus. Referring to the provisional version of the text, he said that the words "preparatory process and" should be deleted and the remaining text modified accordingly. The invitation to the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake an evaluation study of the secretarial organization for special conferences was consistent with the statement made by the New Zealand delegation to the Fifth Committee regarding the pattern of conferences.

47. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the draft amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.15 had been submitted by New Zealand only and not on behalf of the delegations which had participated in the informal consultations.

48. Mr. FALL (Senegal), introducing the draft amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.11\*, said that the strict application of General Assembly resolution 34/50 regarding the elimination of summary records had led to many difficulties and hitches in the work of a number of subsidiary organs. With a view to solving such problems as quickly as possible, his delegation together with that of Zambia, proposed that draft resolution A/C.5/35/L.9 should be amended.

49. Paragraph 1 of the draft amendment would confirm the provisions of General Assembly resolution 34/50 and thus would do no more than repeat the words of the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 9 (a) of his report (A/C.5/35/12). Paragraph 2 of the draft amendment proposed to grant exceptions from the rules set forth in paragraph 1 in the case of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the United Nations Council for Namibia, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Paragraph 3 of the draft amendment was restrictive in that it requested the four subsidiary bodies to limit their requirements for summary records.

50. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) introduced, on behalf of the delegations of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, the draft amendment (A/C.5/34/L.12) to the draft resolution in document A/C.5/35/L.9. His delegation supported the proposal made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 9 (b) of his report (A/C.5/35/12) that specific requests for exceptions from the rule discontinuing summary records should be referred to the Committee on Conferences for study and decision early in 1981. In the view of the sponsors, any exceptions to the rule adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 34/50 should be made only after careful consideration of all the relevant budgetary and administrative factors; such careful consideration would be achieved if the requests for exceptions were referred to the Committee on Conferences. Secondly, under the Secretary-General's

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(Mr. Stuart, United Kingdom)

proposal, the requests for exceptions would be considered by the Committee on Conferences early in 1981 so that there would be a minimum of delay. He could not therefore understand why certain delegations were so concerned to rush through hasty decisions immediately. The Committee on Conferences was the right and proper forum for consideration and decision on those issues. His delegation hoped that the sponsors of the amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.11\* would withdraw it and allow the Fifth Committee to reach a consensus on document A/C.5/35/L.12.

51. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that he had been unable to join in all the informal consultations and would therefore like to suggest amendments to the texts just introduced by the representative of New Zealand. In document A/C.5/35/L.10, paragraph 2, the words "determine whether" should be replaced by "ensure that". In the same paragraph, a time should be specified by, for example, adding the words "within a reasonable time frame" after the words "cannot be pursued".

52. He supported the draft amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.11\* but had reservations regarding the last paragraph. If summary records were reintroduced for the specified organs, it would be because of the importance of their work. Those organs were themselves capable of deciding on the need for summary records and their elimination wherever possible. The last paragraph of document A/C.5/35/L.11\* should be deleted, for reasons of style and in deference to the sense of responsibility of the organs concerned.

53. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the General Assembly, in its resolution 33/56, Part I, paragraph 2, had called on all United Nations bodies to review periodically, on the basis of statements of the financial implications, the requirements for meeting records, to explore possibilities for reduced services with regard to records and to dispense whenever possible, with meeting records. The last paragraph of draft amendment A/C.5/35/L.11\* would do no more than give effect to that request.

54. Mr. TCMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) suggested that the words "to keep their requirements for summary records to a minimum and" should be deleted from the last paragraph of draft amendment A/C.5/35/L.11\*.

55. The draft amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.14 could lead to confusion in cases where the relevant working language of the Secretariat was different from the working language of the conference specified in paragraph 4 of annex III of the report of the Committee on Conferences regarding the format to be followed in the presentation of national or technical papers. Moreover, the 10-page rule stipulated in Recommendation 3, paragraph 11 (c), did not seem reasonable; it should apply only to summaries in languages other than that in which the paper had been submitted.

56. He was concerned by a question of substance in regard to draft amendment A/C.5/35/L.11\*. In so far as the convening of earlier special conferences had been justified, as had been recognized by the Committee on Conferences, it would not seem possible to invite the General Assembly or Member States to limit their competence in the matter.

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57. The CHAIRMAN said that differences of opinion clearly continued to exist and asked delegations to try to reach agreement through informal consultations.

58. Mr. FALL (Senegal), supported by the representatives of Morocco and, as a sponsor of document A/C.5/35/L.11\*, the United Republic of Cameroon, proposed that the last paragraph of that document should be redrafted as follows: "and requests these bodies to keep their requirements for summary records whenever possible to a reasonable minimum and to dispense, whenever possible, with meeting records".

59. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft amendment would be available as document A/C.5/35/L.11/Rev.1 at the Committee's next meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.