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FIFTH COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Monday, 9 November 1981
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 108: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

First reading (continued)

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 101: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION
UNIT (continued)

OTHER MATTERS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 108: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (A/36/30; A/C.5/36/26)

1. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission), introducing the Commission's report (A/36/30), observed that the Committee's consideration of that report and the relevant decisions taken by the General Assembly would have an important impact on conditions of service throughout the United Nations common system. He also drew attention to two changes in the traditional format of the report: a summary had been provided of those matters contained in the report which had financial implications (p. xi); and the Commission's study on career development, undertaken in response to General Assembly resolution 35/210, had been included as annex I to the report.
2. Referring to chapter III, which reported on changes in pensionable remuneration in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/214 A, he pointed out that, under the newly approved scheme, both pensionable remuneration for benefit purposes and pensionable remuneration for contribution purposes had been increased to the same level on 1 October 1981 (paras. 18-20). He explained that the decline of almost 5 per cent in the WAPA index had been caused by the strengthening of the United States dollar in relation to almost all other currencies during the past year. The dollar's strengthening had resulted in a reduction of post adjustment at duty stations where changes in the consumer price index had not compensated for the decreases caused by the devaluation of the local currency.
3. Chapter IV of the report referred to the studies undertaken by the Commission in connexion with conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories, starting with the comparisons made in application of the Noblemaire principle (paras. 37-44). He pointed out that the current basis for the determination of United Nations Professional salaries had resulted from the continuing concern expressed both by organizations and by staff members over the declining purchasing power of staff salaries. He also pointed out that the margin between the salaries of United States civil servants and those of United Nations staff members would be affected by the United States federal income tax reductions of 5 and 10 per cent, effective 1 October 1981 and 30 June 1982 respectively.
4. At its fourteenth session, the Commission had examined the relationship between United Nations and United States salaries through a comparison of total compensation based on the non-expatriate elements of remuneration (paras. 45-65). In that connexion, he noted that, at its thirteenth session, the Commission had reached two very important decisions, namely, that the methodology developed by the United States Office of Personnel Management for their total compensation comparison studies would be used in the context of the United Nations/United States total compensation comparison and that the total compensation comparison would currently be restricted to a comparison based only on non-expatriate benefits. Following its consideration of the comprehensive report submitted by its secretariat in that connexion, the Commission had concluded that, while the

(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

methodology used was highly complex, it provided a solid foundation on which further improvements could be made. He pointed out that, if the General Assembly wanted the Commission to complete its study of total compensation, including expatriate benefits, additional resources, conservatively estimated at \$350,000, would be necessary (para. 65). If, in future, the General Assembly requested comparisons using the methodology for total compensation comparison developed by the Commission, the reporting on the United Nations/United States margin would thenceforth be based on a comparison of all elements of compensation, not just the net base salaries.

5. As to the study of the highest paid national civil service (paras. 66-79), the Commission had previously decided to consider that matter further in view of continuing doubts as to whether the United States was still the highest paid national civil service (para. 68). Reviewing the background of that undertaking (paras. 69-72), he pointed out that, despite the difficulties and doubts, there had been no evidence to suggest that the United States Federal Civil Service should be replaced as the "comparator" under the Noblemaire principle (para. 78).

6. As indicated earlier, the level of remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories had been a matter of continuing concern; accordingly, FICSA had asked the Commission to consider granting an interim increase of 10 per cent in those salaries, pending completion of the various studies being conducted by the Commission (paras. 80-84). The main reason cited by FICSA had been the fact that the salaries of Professional staff had lost more than 10 per cent of their purchasing power since 1971, a fact which, it had contended, had demonstrated the failure of the post adjustment system to compensate fully for cost-of-living increases and exchange-rate variations. However, on the basis of the results of its studies, the Commission had concluded that, for the time being, it could not support the FICSA proposal.

7. With regard to supplementary payments received by staff members from their national Governments (paras. 85-94), he pointed out that, after considering further information provided by the Permanent Representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and the United States of America, the Commission had not been able to find any evidence to justify changing its previous recommendation that the General Assembly should call to the attention of all Member States that that practice was unnecessary, inappropriate and undesirable and, moreover, inconsistent with the Staff Regulations (para. 94). That question was also of fundamental importance to the concept of an independent and unified international civil service.

8. The progress made in the review of the purposes and operation of the post adjustment system was reported on in paragraphs 95 to 111. The recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions, on the basis of its studies of the methodology of cost-of-living measurements, were contained in paragraph 99. All those recommendations had been adopted by the Commission and would considerably help to improve the general operation of the post adjustment system. As to alleged anomalies in the post adjustment system (paras. 103-109), the Commission had given serious consideration to various aspects of that system and had concluded that some factors should be studied further.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

9. Referring to the conditions of service in the General Service category (chap. V), he drew attention to the proposals concerning a review of the general methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment, which would be examined by the Commission, in close consultation with organizations and staff, during the following year (paras. 123 and 124). Information was currently available on the cost implications of the salary increases that would result from the Commission's recommendations concerning new salary scales and allowances for General Service and related categories in Vienna. The Commission had also reviewed matters relating to the General Service salary scales in Geneva and in particular, had been informed that ILO had implemented a 3 per cent salary increase, for the majority of its General Service staff recruited before 1 January 1979, over and above the Commission's recommendation, a recommendation which moreover had been accepted by the six other Geneva-based organizations (para. 126). The cost implications of the ILO action directly concerned the General Assembly, and information could be provided on the cost that each organization acting similarly would incur. In the Commission's view, that situation could and should have been avoided (paras. 131-138). Since that problem had already arisen on two occasions, in 1977 and 1980, the executive head of ILO might again come under pressure from the staff to negotiate another increase in salaries, irrespective of what happened in the common system. The Commission had, therefore, suggested that its Chairman should explore with ACC the ways in which the Commission's recommendations could most effectively be brought before the different governing bodies (para. 135). Accordingly, he had recently informed the executive heads that he was prepared to present the Commission's views to the legislative bodies of the relevant organizations. The Commission was most concerned that the organizations of the United Nations common system should not only maintain but should further develop and strengthen a common, united approach to personnel and policy matters. Measures should also be taken well in advance by the executive heads and legislative bodies, in close consultation with the Commission, to preclude any further threat of erosion of the common system. Increased co-ordination between the different governing bodies of United Nations organizations was also essential to the common system. In addition, the Commission had devoted attention to the difficulties UNESCO had encountered in implementing the new General Service staff assessment rates, as was described in paragraphs 139 to 143 of the report.

10. Referring to conditions of service in the field (chap. VI), in particular the classification of duty stations according to conditions of life and work (paras. 150-162), he pointed out that the scheme established for that purpose, as endorsed in section IV, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 35/214 A, would considerably help to ensure the highest calibre of staff at all duty stations and enable organizations to recruit and retain staff at all levels. Chapter VI, section A, of the Commission's report outlined the progress made in that connexion since the thirty-fifth session.

11. Chapter VII dealt with the progress made in the implementation of the Master Standard and other activities conducted by the Commission under article 13 of its statute. The Master Standard, adopted by the Commission the preceding year, was useful in establishing Professional and higher category remuneration more

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

consistently. The next step was to use the Master Standard to determine the grade and, hence, the salary level of individual jobs. During the past year, the Commission had followed the progress made in implementing the Master Standard. The new Master Standard enjoyed the broad support of both administrations and staff, and most organizations had already begun to implement it. The Commission had helped organizations experiencing difficulties to apply the Standard more quickly. It had also assisted the implementation of the Master Standard by promulgating Tier II job classification standards for personnel management specialists, translators and revisers, and economists (paras. 178-194). Standards would be developed in 1982 for, *inter alia*, technical co-operation administration and electronic data processing. The Commission's secretariat had also conducted six workshops in 1981 to provide practical training, in the application of the Master Standard. Furthermore, during 1981, the Commission had taken a number of steps in connexion with the common grading of General Service posts at individual headquarters duty stations (paras. 195-198).

12. Referring to one of the most important questions with which the Commission had dealt during 1981, namely, studies on concepts of careers, types of appointment, career development and related questions, he drew attention to annex I of the report, and pointed out that JIU representatives had participated in both of the Commission's 1981 sessions, in accordance with section IV, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 35/210. After carefully considering those extremely complex, important and interrelated matters, it had been agreed between ICSC and JIU that, at the current stage, no new recommendations on substantive issues would be made to the General Assembly, since there had not been sufficient time to complete all the necessary consultations. Accordingly, the Commission had submitted only recommendations of a procedural nature and had summarized the substantive recommendations made previously. The Commission had therefore been surprised to see that the JIU report contained in document A/36/432 presented views and sought policy directives in a way which was tantamount to making substantive recommendations. He drew attention to the fact that, under article 14 of its statute, the Commission alone could make recommendations to organizations on career development questions. JIU's duties and responsibilities were somewhat different and tended to prevent it from presenting a system-wide overview of personnel policies. In addition, JIU often put forward recommendations which were not consistent, as occurred in the reports on the concept of career development (A/36/407) and on geographical distribution (A/36/432), both of which also dealt with questions under the Commission's purview. The Commission, for its part, had established a detailed 16-step work programme for the comprehensive consideration of those issues (A/36/30, annex I, appendix I). It had already submitted a report on steps 1 to 9, which the General Assembly had noted with satisfaction. The Commission intended to complete each of the remaining steps before arriving at its decisions, in accordance with its usual methods of work; it would periodically inform the General Assembly of its progress. Accordingly, it should be strongly recommended that the two above-mentioned JIU reports should be referred to the Commission for further study, in accordance with its mandate. The Commission would endeavour to provide a substantive report on career development to the Committee at the thirty-seventh session.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

13. Also in the area of career development, the Commission had recommended to all organizations common prospecting procedures for filling vacancies (paras. 232-236). Such vacancies, although advertised simultaneously within and outside the Organization, would be filled, first, by qualified candidates from within the Organization, then from other organizations of the common system and, lastly, from outside the common system. The Commission had also established a central vacancy announcement bulletin, which grouped together in one publication descriptions of all such vacancies. The bulletin was designed to facilitate the movement of staff among the organizations of the common system and thereby to promote greater career development of serving staff; the first issues of the bulletin had been very favourably received.

14. Chapter VIII described the Commission's action under article 14 of its statute and included its recommendations to organizations concerning training activities, elements of a model management training programme and a new performance appraisal form for use throughout the common system, starting 1 January 1982.

15. In conclusion, he drew attention to two issues which affected the Commission's 1982-1983 budget: a staffing proposal, namely, the addition of one recruitment and training specialist to help the Commission to fulfil its functions under article 14 of its statute, had not been endorsed by the organizations. The Commission had noted some reservations on the part of organizations in connexion with the introduction of personnel policies and standards which the Commission considered to be essential for the development of a unified international civil service. However, previous General Assembly resolutions had called upon the Commission to advance its work under article 14 of its statute and, therefore, he appealed to the General Assembly not to let budgetary austerity slow down the development of recruitment and training activities at the inter-agency level.

16. In view of the same budgetary austerity, the Commission had reduced its original budget proposal, based on a growth rate of some 23 per cent, to one having a growth rate of 6.5 per cent, which it considered to be the minimum compatible with the exercise of its functions. The Commission had reduced the length of one of its sessions from four to three weeks and had reluctantly scheduled both of its annual sessions in New York. However, it hoped that financing would be found to enable it to hold one session outside New York, so that it could be closer to the entire common system for which it existed.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)
(A/36/6, A/36/7, A/36/38)

First reading (continued)

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa (continued)

17. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) formally proposed that the Committee should reject the reduction of \$62,900 in the Secretary-General's estimates recommended by the

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(Mr. El Safty, Egypt)

Advisory Committee in paragraph 13.7 of its report, saying that he believed the general sentiment within the Committee was that all the reclassifications of posts requested under section 13 should be granted.

18. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) called for a vote on the Egyptian proposal.

19. Mr. MOHAMMED (Nigeria), explaining his delegation's vote, said that he would support the Egyptian proposal, having learnt from the Executive Secretary that the budget proposals for the section were based upon the recommendations of an expert group, and as an indication of his support for the activities of the Commission.

20. The Egyptian proposal was adopted by 59 votes to 22, with 8 abstentions.

21. Mr. GEPP (Brazil) said that his delegation did not subscribe to the systematic reclassification of posts as a substitute for promotion and career development. Since, however, the effect of the Egyptian proposal would be to strengthen ECA, he had voted for it.

22. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in view of the decision just adopted, the Committee should approve, in first reading an appropriation of \$35,525,200 under section 13 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

23. It was so decided.

24. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation would have abstained if the appropriation under section 13 had been put to a vote.

25. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that he understood the Committee's approval of the appropriation under section 13 to be subject to any amendments required by decisions taken pursuant to the recommendations of CPC, particularly those appearing in paragraph 494 of its report.

26. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) said that he had been very satisfied by the Executive Secretary's statement, at the 34th meeting of the Committee, on the vacancy situation at ECA. He hoped that, by the time the next programme budget came to be considered, ECA could be held up as an example for the other regional economic commissions to emulate.

27. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that his delegation would have supported the appropriation in a vote, but felt that the Committee's decision was still subject to modification in the light of the recommendations of CPC.

28. Many delegations had spoken out against the imposition of a zero-growth budgetary framework upon the Secretary-General's proposals. He hoped that the notion of zero budget growth would be left out of consideration during the formulation of future budgets: programmes ought to be considered on their merits alone. The point applied to all budget sections, but particularly to section 13.

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29. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) said that his delegation had supported the Egyptian proposal because the Secretary-General's requests for post reclassifications were intended to remedy the chronic undergrading of posts at ECA. He appealed to the Executive Secretary to place greater emphasis upon programme delivery for the African region than on staffing levels in future: the Commission's work-force was only an instrument for the execution of programmes.

AGENDA ITEM 101: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/36/38; A/C.5/36/1)

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued) (A/36/171 and Add.1, A/36/181, 182 and 479)

30. Mr. GREN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he took issue with one point in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/171), which otherwise contained a great deal of sense: the statement in paragraph 1 of the introduction that some States were primarily concerned with the savings in resources which could result from greater systematization, while others were concerned with the effectiveness of programmes. No State was in favour of savings at the expense of efficacy. Economy and efficiency were two sides of the same coin.

31. His delegation shared the widespread concern that so many of the issues relating to programme planning were still unresolved after many years of debate. The theory of programme planning presented no difficulties, but the way it was being put into practice left plenty of room for improvement. Besides its use in pursuing the goals and principles of the Organization, in determining what resources were needed to fund activities, and in identifying obsolete, marginal and ineffective programmes, programme planning should be used in establishing the budget, whose unforgivably rapid growth was causing serious concern among many Member States. There was little point, however, in expanding the extent of planning in the medium term when the decisive planning period was the two-year budgetary cycle.

32. The reports before the Committee showed that too little attention was being paid to the resource side of programme planning: they provided plenty of ideas on programme content, priority-setting and means of evaluating programme effectiveness, but virtually ignored the question of how to programme the necessary resources. Until a decision had been reached on the volume of resources that Member States were able and willing to place at the Organization's disposal, enhancing the effectiveness of planning within the United Nations must remain no more than a pious hope.

33. His delegation supported all the recommendations put forward by CPC, and attached particular importance to the call for the budget to provide full information on the cost of each individual programme element. It could not support the view advanced in document A/36/171/Add.1, paragraph 9, that programme elements should be costed only in terms of Professional work months: General Service time and all other associated outlays must be considered as well.

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(Mr. Gren, USSR)

34. As recommended by CPC, individual chapters of the medium-term plan should be discussed in the appropriate Main Committees before the plan as a whole was adopted by the General Assembly. A failure to adopt such a procedure before had led to attempts to have programmes considered by bodies with no competence to do so; the result had been needless arguments and a lack of progress in general.

35. The General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies should indeed become more involved in the analysis of budget proposals at the subprogramme level. Delegations should be entitled to expect the Secretariat to express an opinion in good time as to the programmes with highest and lowest priority. At the same time, enhanced programme planning would require proper co-ordination between CPC and the Advisory Committee.

36. The General Assembly's instructions regarding the identification of obsolete, marginal and ineffective activities must be carried out to the letter and without question. The report of the Secretary-General on setting explicit priorities among United Nations programmes (A/C.5/36/1, para. 58) suggested that new activities might be funded only partly out of the resources released by terminating unnecessary programmes: his delegation objected to that on principle. All new activities not related to the Organization's fundamental tasks must henceforward be supported by reallocated resources and increased productivity within the Secretariat. His delegation would oppose any new programmes for which means of funding from within the budget were not identified.

37. He welcomed the CPC recommendation to extend the practice of setting priorities to subsidiary activities such as administration and conference servicing. Special attention should be paid in that connexion to the provision of information on staff productivity and how to improve it. And programme planning and priority-setting should make allowance for activities wholly or partly funded from extrabudgetary resources, so as to ensure that more effective use was made of the funds at the Organization's disposal.

38. In establishing the relative importance of different programmes the chief criterion applied should be how closely they were related to the purposes and principles of the Organization as defined in the Charter, which made it plain that the maintenance of international peace and security and disarmament had utmost priority.

39. Carrying out the recommendations of CPC should not require any additional resources. Member States had already invested a great deal in the programme planning mechanism and had so far seen very little in the way of practical results. Additional funds could no longer be relied on; the job must be accomplished with the resources already available.

40. Mr. LAGORIO (Argentina) said that the mass of documents on programme planning and the many views and recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had generated a fruitful discussion and had helped to clarify such terms as priorities, evaluation and monitoring.

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(Mr. Lagorio, Argentina)

41. At the present session, when the General Assembly had to study the vast budget documents and discuss the pros and cons of the zero growth concept, it was essential to produce a clear definition of the relationship between priorities and the resources needed to implement them, since priority-setting should facilitate the speedy, rational and efficient execution of programmes. Priority-setting was part of a complex process calling for intensive combined efforts and the recommendations of JIU and CPC constituted an excellent point of departure. That exercise must be accompanied by the elimination of activities regarded as obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, and by better monitoring and evaluation, which necessitated an improvement in information and in the productivity and competence of administrative staff.

42. His delegation supported the JIU recommendations concerning internal evaluation in the United Nations system, contained in documents A/36/181 and 182, in particular the comment in the seventh paragraph of the summary in annex II to document A/36/181, in which governing bodies, top management and staff were urged to improve the quality of evaluation.

43. The JIU report on the setting of priorities (A/36/171) was an extremely valuable document. He agreed with the oral comment by Inspector Bertrand that a large proportion of the Secretariat appeared to believe that priorities were concerned with the budget and not with programmes. In supporting the recommendation in paragraph 93 of that report, he said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of ACABQ and CPC and therefore supported the proposal made by Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries, concerning a study on how to improve co-ordination between them. His delegation also supported the recommendations in the CPC report (A/36/38), in particular the recommendation in paragraphs 466 and 467 that a central and independent unit should be made responsible within the Secretariat for monitoring the implementation of the commitments made by the Secretary-General in the programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for the delivery of output, the resources for the unit to be provided through redeployment within the existing appropriations, and the recommendation in paragraph 469 to the effect that CPC should be able to examine programme aspects of the budget and formulate recommendations on them before ACABQ started its review of the administrative and financial aspects. As indicated in paragraph 471, each chapter of the proposed medium-term plan should be submitted to the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly before the plan as a whole was adopted by the Assembly, so as to ensure prior participation and subsequent co-ordination with the Fifth Committee.

44. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) said that his delegation attached great importance to the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, which would provide a useful framework for considering the biennial budget and ensure the most profitable use of resources, priority-setting and the elimination of activities that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective. He welcomed the reports now before the Committee but considered that they should be submitted to the various intergovernmental, sectoral and regional bodies - in particular the regional economic commissions - for consideration before the medium-term plan was prepared, and that all those bodies should have an opportunity of commenting on the medium-term plan before it was adopted by the General Assembly.

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(Mr. Younis, Iraq)

45. Priority-setting was a complicated exercise and he agreed with the view that it should involve States and intergovernmental, regional and sectoral organizations. It was important to co-ordinate medium-term planning with international, regional and national plans.

46. While co-ordination existed between the various bodies responsible for the planning system in the United Nations, there was a lack of co-ordination between CPC and ACABQ. The need to improve co-ordination had now become urgent, since CPC and ACABQ were essential organs and were vital to the success of future plans. In that respect he shared the views of the Cameroonian representative. If the two bodies were unable to hold joint meetings, ACABQ should be allowed, as an exceptional measure, to look into the administrative and financial implications of CPC's recommendations and to submit them in a separate section of its report. The General Assembly would then be able to consider those administrative and financial implications when making its decisions.

47. His delegation trusted that the new 1984-1989 medium-term plan would be prepared with due regard to the wishes of Member States and that, as recommended in paragraph 472 of the CPC report (A/36/38), a report on the operation of the new system of setting priorities, highlighting any problems encountered, would be submitted to the General Assembly in 1984.

48. Mr. PAL (India) said that he was pleased to note that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had presented a greatly improved system for setting programme priorities, as one of the most important of its tasks under resolution 32/197. It was only when such a system had been accepted and had started functioning that some order could be introduced into the present chaos of the budgeting process. Subject to certain comments, he supported the recommendations made by CPC.

49. While accepting the thrust of CPC's conclusion on the purpose of priority-setting, as contained in paragraph 453 of the report (A/36/38), he believed that there was not necessarily a relationship between the establishment of priorities and the curtailment or termination of programmes or between the priority of activities and the resources needed for them. The conclusions of CPC on that point were valid when the resource base was predetermined and not expected to grow: they were valid for a zero real growth budget but not necessarily for a budget built on the framework of the rest of CPC's recommendations.

50. The recommendation in paragraph 459 to group low-priority programme elements into a package that could be discarded, if the General Assembly so decided, to free resources, was not an innovation, but a reiteration of the process laid down in paragraph 49 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, in which the Secretary-General was asked to present programme-budget - rather than financial - implications, indicating related programmes already included in the relevant medium-term plan, the percentage increase in the expenditures of the Secretariat units concerned and the resources which could be released from any programme elements which had become obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective.

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(Mr. Pal, India)

51. The treatment of extrabudgetary resources (para. 462) deserved much greater attention from CPC. Voluntary contributions constituted an extremely large percentage of the Organization's resources and in some sectors and units were larger than the regular budget. The critical element in priority-setting was continuing intergovernmental control, without which the priorities set by the General Assembly could be ignored or seriously distorted, or become meaningless. CPC must consider the problem in depth and attempt to find solutions.

52. Regarding the practical implications of CPC's recommendations, the plan and programme budget would be useful only if properly prepared, presented and reviewed. The General Assembly had foreseen that and in resolutions 32/197 and 33/202 had asked for or anticipated a number of changes. A comparison between the relevant provisions of those resolutions and the present situation, however, showed that little improvement had resulted. There was at present no contact at all between CPC and ACABQ, let alone the continuous contact asked for by the General Assembly, and the Chairman of ACABQ was on record as believing that the Fifth Committee needed only to consider CPC's report in the same way as it would consider that of the Industrial Development Board. There had been scarcely any improvement in the presentation of the programme-budget documents and CPC could not meet earlier than at present because they were not available. No attempt was being made to submit programme-budget implications to any Committee: decisions were taken on financial implications only. Neither CPC nor the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination had facilities for effective co-ordination of the implementation of guidelines, directives and priorities. The Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, as noted in the JIU study (A/36/419), was more often than not by-passed and was not performing the functions envisaged for it. In spite of assurances given by the Secretary-General in his annual reports on restructuring, there had been no attempt to make the adjustments in the functioning and administrative arrangement of the Secretariat that had now become necessary.

53. It was clear that functions and structure had remained fossilized and that the remedy might best be achieved in two stages. In the first stage, which involved interim measures to be undertaken immediately, ACABQ should be asked by the General Assembly to take CPC's programme review into account and its report on each section of the budget should present two alternatives: recommendations on the Secretary-General's proposals and recommendations on those proposals as they would be modified if CPC's programme recommendations were approved by the General Assembly; the Secretary-General should ensure that the programme budget documents were ready early in the year so that CPC could complete its programme review before ACABQ started its work, the Fifth Committee should have the benefit of the presence of spokesmen of both CPC and ACABQ when considering the budget, so that it could carry out programme and financial reviews simultaneously (that would be all the more necessary if the Secretary-General submitted programme-budget, rather than financial, implications to the Fifth Committee for decision); the Secretary-General must immediately ensure that the Director-General could effectively co-ordinate the process of plan and programme budget formulation and presentation and that co-ordination between the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination and the Budget Division was much closer than at present.

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(Mr. Pal, India)

54. In the second stage, the budgeting function would be transformed from the Office of Financial Services to the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, in order to integrate the process of programme budgeting; the Director-General, with the assistance of the transformed Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, would directly supervise the entire process of planning, programming and budgeting and the process of internal review and evaluation; and ACABQ and CPC would be replaced by a body which would carry out a programme and financial review of integrated proposals made by the Secretary-General.

55. With regard to monitoring and evaluation by the Secretariat and the intergovernmental bodies concerned of the implementation of mandated activities, he said that evaluation was the first of the tasks given to CPC in General Assembly resolution 32/197, but had unfortunately never received enough attention. In its recommendation on the setting of programme priorities, however, CPC had suggested that the Secretariat should set up a unit to monitor the implementation of programmes, the intention presumably being that CPC, with the help of the Evaluation Unit in the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, should carry out more formal evaluation exercises. He suggested that the two functions might be integrated and a small Secretariat unit be set up to carry out continuous monitoring and more formal evaluation. The unit would report direct to CPC and thus be independent of the Secretariat and the pressures that would arise if it were part of a larger body.

56. In his opinion, the activities of the Organization could and should be planned and programmed in all sectors and he therefore agreed with the recommendations in paragraph 461 of the CPC report on the scope of priority-setting. Personnel requirements should receive the closest attention, since the United Nations budget was largely a personnel budget and the financial implications of its plans and programmes were mainly staff costs. In the present year, there was once again confusion over the recruitment and placing of staff; unless some order could be brought into the process, the best of plans was likely to fail.

57. He therefore suggested that the feasibility of integrating a staffing plan with the medium-term plan should be seriously studied. Briefly, staff requirements would be listed at each stage of planning and as soon as the medium-term plan had been cleared by CPC, the Office of Personnel Services should submit the corresponding staffing plan to ACABQ for comment. Thus, when the General Assembly took decisions on the medium-term plan it would also be authorizing the staffing plan and giving the Secretary-General a clear indication of the personnel resources that would be at his disposal. The main advantages would be that: the Budget Division and ACABQ would have objective criteria for proposing or recommending staffing requests; the Office of Personnel Services could institute a long-term recruitment plan which would remove many of the existing bottlenecks and unforeseen difficulties; and the Fifth Committee could decide immediately, on objective criteria, whether requests for new posts made in a budget were justified on programme grounds. He suggested that the appropriate Secretariat units should look into the feasibility of drawing up a staffing plan which could be integrated into the process of planning, programming and budgeting.

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58. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that the present item was clearly one of great importance and efforts to refine and strengthen the programme planning process would undoubtedly continue to be a matter of major concern to the Committee for some time to come. The key recommendations endorsed by the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Secretary-General was that in future priorities should not be set at the level of major programmes. His delegation supported the recommendation, which should result in the elimination of the anomalies produced by the present approach and bring about more rational programme plans and budgets.

59. With regard to the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (A/36/38), his delegation noted with especial approval the recommendations in paragraphs 461, 462 and 465 that: priority-setting should be applicable to all activities covered by programme budget procedures, namely, the substantive activities in the political, economic, social, legal, humanitarian and public information sectors; that the medium-term plan and the programme narrative should continue to describe all activities to be undertaken by the United Nations, including those financed wholly or partly from extrabudgetary sources, and that the General Assembly at the current session should request the Secretary-General to submit proposals to it at the thirty-seventh session, through CPC, for rules and regulations to govern programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, and performance monitoring and evaluation procedures.

60. His delegation supported in essence the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the setting of priorities (A/36/171) and endorsed most of its recommendation. Some of the recommendations, however, appeared counter-productive. For example, recommendation No. 4, which suggested that the medium-term budget should be transmitted to all the Main Committees for consideration and approval, would probably result in an unworkable expansion of the review process in terms of time, manpower and cost and in a decrease in objectivity: recommendation No. 10, on the adoption of special procedures for dealing with conflicting criteria, would do little more than add an unnecessary additional level of review; recommendation No. 15, which proposed the establishment of a single body to review plans, programmes and budgets, was against the best interests of the United Nations: it was essential that the respective roles of CPC and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) should remain separate and be strengthened; and as far as recommendation No. 16 was concerned, a special session of the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly on the matter of priorities would not, in his opinion, be sufficiently productive to justify the time, cost, and staff resources involved.

61. He commended the Joint Inspection Unit on its valuable work on evaluation, as reported in document A/36/181 and A/36/182. He noted the emphasis placed by the Joint Inspection Unit on the need to ensure that evaluation became a solid part of organizational structure and not merely a facade giving an illusion of activity. His delegation firmly supported the recommendations contained in document A/36/182, in particular recommendations 2 to 6.

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

62. The reports of the Joint Inspection Unit had been made with a view to benefitting not only the United Nations but all the organizations in the United Nations system. They were of special importance to the United Nations Development Programme because of its central funding role. He trusted that all members of the Committee would take appropriate steps to see that the reports were given careful attention by their delegations to the governing bodies of the other organizations in the United Nations system.

63. The United States of America continued its longstanding commitment to support of the evaluation process and his delegation would be happy to join in any positive step by members of the Committee to promote evaluation. It reserved the right to consider the Joint Inspection Unit report on the setting of priorities (A/36/171) in connexion with agenda item 100 rather than agenda 101.

64. Mr. KAMBIRIGI (Burundi) said that, although his delegation had spoken more than once at the 34th meeting, none of its comments had been reflected in the press release.

65. Mr. DUQUE (Secretary of the Committee) said he had already been notified by DPI that there had been an error in the press release relating to the 34th meeting. A corrigendum had been issued, as soon as the error was discovered, to reflect the statement made by the delegation of Burundi.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.