

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

**THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION**

*Official Records\**



UN DEPT. ST.

DEC 3 1981

UN/SA COLLECTION

FIFTH COMMITTEE

51st meeting

held on

Monday, 23 November 1981

at 3 p.m.

New York

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand)

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

**CONTENTS**

AGENDA ITEM 107: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 108: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 105: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

81-58238

**Distr. GENERAL**

A/C.5/36/SR.51

30 November 1981

**ORIGINAL; ENGLISH**

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/495; A/C.5/36/CRP.2)
- (b) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/C.5/36/9, 19, 31)

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued) (A/36/407, A/36/432 and Add.1)

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

1. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the view expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 7 of his report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies (A/C.5/36/31) that the distinction between acts performed in an official capacity and those performed in a private capacity lay at the heart of the concept of functional immunity, was consistent with the Charter and the Conventions on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and of the Specialized Agencies. The national of any State working as an international official of the United Nations or one of the specialized agencies would, for the period of his assignment, be immune from legal process by Member States for activities immediately connected with his official duties; in any other respect, the State's jurisdiction over its national would be preserved.
2. There could be no doubt that spying, or complicity in such a crime, did not belong among the duties to be performed by an international official. Yet that was the crime of which the former UNESCO officer, Mr. Stulz, was accused; his case was described in a lengthy but one-sided presentation in the Secretary-General's report.
3. Mr. Stulz, a national of the German Democratic Republic, had during his assignment to the UNESCO secretariat performed activities against the State on instructions from the secret service of a Western Power. Having violated his obligations as a UNESCO official and the laws of his own country, he had been sentenced by a court of law and his chief administrative officer, the Director-General of UNESCO, had been informed accordingly. The Director-General had not responded to offers of a meeting with the Attorney-General of the German Democratic Republic and possible talks with Mr. Stulz; although Mr. Stulz had written asking the Director-General to terminate his contract of appointment, the Director-General, contrary to the principles of the law of contracts, still considered him an official of UNESCO. In any event, Mr. Stulz had been released, in accordance with the relevant regulations in the German Democratic Republic, having served two thirds of his prison term.
4. The United Nations must not stand by idly while intelligence activities were carried out under the cover of functional privileges and immunities, nor could it

/...

(Mr. Richter, German  
Democratic Republic)

allow the atmosphere in the Organization to be poisoned by the machinations of irresponsible parties. His country categorically rejected the suggestion that it had infringed rights and duties arising from conventions.

5. The report of the Secretary-General indicated that it might be desirable to supplement the existing legal instruments on privileges and immunities; his delegation would be ready to participate in such an undertaking in the appropriate body.

6. Mr. DIENE (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the information that Mr. Stulz had been released after serving two thirds of his sentence had not been formally brought to the attention of the Director-General of UNESCO. The General Conference of UNESCO and the Director-General believed that the arrest and detention of an international official whose immunities had not been waived constituted a violation of the immunity to which any member of the UNESCO staff was entitled. If Mr. Stulz had indeed been set free and the fact was formally reported to UNESCO in accordance with the normal procedure, by the permanent representative of the country concerned, it would be regarded as a positive development. The Member State concerned should take steps to permit the UNESCO staff member to return to the headquarters of his organization, either to resume his functions or to resign in conformity with the staff rules of the organization.

7. Mr. OKLESTEK (Czechoslovakia) said that Table B in the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495) showed that some positive developments had taken place in the Organization's efforts to attain a more balanced geographical representation although the numbers of unrepresented and under-represented countries had grown. The statistics showed a decline in the number of over-represented countries, but the real position had been distorted by the introduction of new desirable ranges. In fact, a number of heavily over-represented countries had become still more so over the current year. Countries in his own regional group had seen virtually no improvement in their situation. The Western European and Other Group of States effectively retained its monopoly of the senior positions in various parts of the Secretariat.

8. His delegation welcomed the increase in the number of women employed even though it had not been possible to comply fully with demands set forth in General Assembly resolution 35/210. It wished to emphasize that, in efforts to increase the number of women employees, the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be upheld. His delegation had supported resolution 35/210 despite its inherent contradictions, believing that the principle of equitable geographical distribution could no longer be disregarded. It now endorsed the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on that subject (A/36/407), which had caused such alarm amongst some countries, particularly those which would have to moderate their demands.

9. JIU had already submitted a considerable number of reports on personnel questions, which could not be considered in the short space of time available owing to their complex nature. The Unit should not, therefore, extend its activities in that area for fear of multiplying the points at issue instead of improving the effectiveness of the Organization in the area of staffing in accordance with established priorities.

/...

(Mr. Oklestek, Czechoslovakia)

10. His delegation supported all 10 recommendations made by JIU in document A/36/407, which should be considered in conjunction with resolution 35/210. That report rightly called for equitable geographical distribution in individual departments and units of the Secretariat, and the principle should be applied in respect of regional groups as well as individual countries. It would scarcely be possible to increase the level of representation of unrepresented and under-represented countries, however, if those who had to play a crucial role proved unhelpful. His delegation did not regard the problem of reducing permanent contracts in favour of fixed-term contracts as insoluble, nor did it believe that it would necessarily lead to a decline in the professional competence of the Secretariat. It objected to attitudes on personnel policy arising from too great a concern for the interests of Secretariat staff at the expense of policy decisions taken by General Assembly bodies. The interests of Member States and Secretariat staff must be viewed in a balanced way; attempts by the Secretariat to exert direct or indirect pressure were unacceptable. Further consideration should be given to recommendation 7. With the necessary goodwill, it should be possible to effect in a number of cases the conversion described in paragraph 53. An unenthusiastic attitude on the part of the Secretariat should not, of course, be decisive in the matter.

11. Although his delegation by and large supported recommendation 8, there might be a few cases when circumstances would make it necessary to extend a staff member's period of service beyond the age of retirement. He agreed with the Inspectors that it should be possible to shorten the recruitment process. Adherence to the principle of equitable geographical distribution should not prove an impediment to the earmarking of posts for under-represented and unrepresented countries, and recourse to competitive examinations could eliminate many of the obstacles.

12. If all the principles to which he had alluded had been strictly adhered to in the past, his country would not have been seriously under-represented for a number of years. His Government had been sympathetic to the Secretariat's explanations, but hoped that steps would shortly be taken to bring about a change in the situation.

13. In keeping with the Charter, his delegation demanded strict observance of all diplomatic immunities, but it was firmly opposed to any interpretation of such immunities which would allow staff members to enjoy the protection of the Organization even if they had violated the obligations imposed upon them by Article 100 of the Charter.

14. Mr. YEGOROV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the documents before the Fifth Committee forced one to the conclusion that little had been done to comply with the provisions of the Charter concerning the Secretariat of the Organization. The point was confirmed in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495). Almost every year the General Assembly adopted resolutions on personnel questions calling for an end to the preponderance in the Secretariat of a certain group of countries at the expense of other Member States. There had been no improvements to date. The same point was made, in different words, by the Joint Inspection Unit in document A/36/407.

15. As indicated in the JIU report on personnel policy options (A/36/432), recommendations on personnel policy were implemented extremely slowly and resistance

/...

(Mr. Yegorov, Ukrainian SSR)

to change was enormous. In that connexion he drew attention to the geographical distribution of staff who were nationals of the countries of Eastern Europe, a group that had always been under-represented. His own country currently had only half the staff members required to reach the mid-point of its desirable range. Recruitment missions from the United Nations every year selected experienced and competent candidates from his country to put on the recruitment rosters, where they remained. On the basis of an exchange of views between the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services and the Director of the Division of Recruitment, he trusted that steps would shortly be taken to remedy that situation.

16. One of the principal means of achieving equitable geographical distribution in the Secretariat was to reduce the number of permanent contracts and increase the number of temporary ones. The current system was not conducive to the recruitment of highly qualified specialists, did not encourage Secretariat staff to improve their professional qualifications, and discriminated against those countries whose nationals normally served on fixed-term contracts. His delegation hoped that, eventually, the system of permanent contracts would be eliminated. Until that time arrived, the Secretariat must desist from offering permanent contracts to nationals of countries which had already reached the upper level of their desirable range. Additionally, posts liberated by retiring staff should be converted to a fixed-term basis.

17. There was a need for strict compliance with resolution 35/210, section I, paragraph 4, which would allow staff members on fixed-term contracts to be replaced by candidates of the same nationality so as not to affect the representation of countries whose nationals normally served on fixed-term contracts. The heads of various Secretariat units were circumventing that requirement under a variety of pretexts, and the recruitment service was not always active enough in securing the appointment of candidates from the Ukrainian SSR to fill vacancies arising when the contract of a staff member charged against that country's quota expired. That had occurred in the case of a post in the International Computing Centre, and a similar problem was likely to arise in UNCTAD. Such cases could be kept to a minimum if the personnel planning principles set out in section II of the annex to resolution 35/210 were observed.

18. His delegation was categorically opposed to reserving more than the established 30 per cent of available Professional posts for the promotion of General Service staff members. It also objected to the idea of allowing staff members without higher education to take the competitive examination for admission to the Professional category. It applauded the steps taken by the Secretariat to recruit more women but stressed that the appointment and promotion of women must take place only within the established desirable ranges of individual Member States.

19. Mr. TOUGOU (Mongolia) said that despite the clear provisions of the Charter and many General Assembly resolutions stressing the need to implement the principle of equitable geographical distribution, the current state of affairs in the Secretariat was unsatisfactory. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495), the number of unrepresented countries had increased from 18 to 19 and the number of under-represented countries from 21 to 26 during

/...

(Mr. Tougou, Mongolia)

the reporting year, while some 30 countries were over-represented. In the view of his delegation, progress towards improving the situation was entirely too slow.

20. His delegation favoured a substantial reduction in the number of permanent contracts granted and an increase in the number of fixed-term contracts. The preponderance of permanent contracts hindered the achievement of equitable geographical distribution and the recruitment of nationals of under-represented and unrepresented countries, and made it difficult to bring new, younger staff into the Organization.

21. His delegation attached importance to increasing the number of women in posts in the Professional category and above, and to improve the representation of nationals of under-represented countries at the senior and policy-making levels. Despite some progress, the pace of improvement was slow and there was an urgent need to redouble efforts to attain the targets set in resolutions 33/143 and 35/210. In that connexion, the earmarking of specific posts for the recruitment of nationals and unrepresented and under-represented countries was a proper approach to the problem.

22. With regard to the age of retirement, his delegation shared the views expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution (A/36/407).

23. The question of the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff was a purely legal problem and was not within the purview of the Fifth Committee. His delegation therefore opposed any discussion of that question in the Committee.

24. Mr. NAGGAGA (Uganda) noted with appreciation the personal commitment of the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services to the welfare of the staff and the Secretary-General's efforts to implement scrupulously the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on personnel matters, particularly resolution 35/210. That resolution had entrusted the Secretary-General with the enormous task of remedying the effects of the previous piecemeal approach to personnel questions. His delegation trusted that the Secretary-General would report to the Committee regularly on the progress made towards that end.

25. He asked whether the Assistant Secretary-General, in his introductory statement at the 41st meeting, had meant to suggest that some of the directives of the General Assembly hampered the provision of personnel services to the substantive departments and offices of the Secretariat. He would also appreciate information on the difficulties to which the Assistant Secretary-General had alluded, and expressed the hope that they were not the result of inertia or resistance to change on the part of Secretariat departments and offices.

26. He commended the efforts being made to increase the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented States and noted with satisfaction that 45 per cent of recommendations for appointments and promotions involving posts subject to geographical distribution between 1 January and 30 June 1981 had been for nationals of under-represented States. Efforts were also needed to correct the imbalance in the representation of developing countries at the senior and policy-making levels of the Secretariat. Several developing countries which were

/...

(Mr. Naggaga, Uganda)

categorized as over-represented were grossly under-represented or not represented at all at such levels, while several developed countries were not only over-represented in numerical terms but saw their nationals appointed to higher-echelon posts year after year. That situation was a cause of great concern. Until the Secretariat was freed of the gentleman's understanding that some key posts were the exclusive preserve of certain Member States or groups, developing countries, particularly the smaller ones, would continue to be excluded from the decision-making process in the Secretariat.

27. The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had referred to the difficulties encountered in finding applicants for posts in duty stations other than New York, Geneva and Vienna. He wished to know what the Secretariat planned to do to induce applicants to serve at such duty stations and particularly in the regional economic commissions. In that connexion, he noted that posts in the Economic Commission for Africa were generally graded lower than equivalent posts in the other regional commissions. That had aggravated the difficulty of filling vacant posts there, and he called upon the Secretariat to take the necessary corrective measures.

28. The Assistant Secretary-General had also informed the Committee that certain difficulties had arisen as a result of the adoption of resolutions on personnel matters by other intergovernmental bodies (for example, UNCTAD, UNIDO and the regional economic commissions) which ran counter to or were inconsistent with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. His delegation found such a situation surprising, since it was the duty of the Office of Personnel Services to bring to the attention of the heads of such bodies the decisions of the General Assembly on personnel which directly affected them. If that was done, the intergovernmental organs concerned would be able to take such decisions into account.

29. Turning to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution (A/36/407), he said that, while his delegation agreed that, where qualifications were equal, preference should be given in filling vacancies to staff members already in the Secretariat, it concurred with the observations of JIU that such preference should be balanced with the need to recruit fresh talent. He endorsed the recommendation of JIU that vacancy announcements should be issued simultaneously for internal and external candidates and that the selection of the best candidate should be made in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly (recommendation 5). The practice of making vacancy announcements only when an internal candidate was not available was unfair and tended to lead to patronage. Vacancy announcements should be issued well in advance so as to give ample time to candidates from distant places.

30. He noted with concern from the same report that the number of nationals of developed countries of Western Europe and North America in senior and policy-formulating posts had increased from 117 in 1970 to 152 in 1980, although the proportion of such nationals in the grand total had decreased from 48.3 per cent to 41.5 per cent. He agreed with JIU that greater attention should be paid by the Secretariat to the weighted desirable ranges in order to ensure a balanced representation of Member States, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

/...

(Mr. Naggaga, Uganda)

31. While some progress had been made in enforcing the mandatory age of retirement, still more could have been done. Since the retirement date of a staff member was known long in advance, the process of seeking a replacement could be initiated well before that date.

32. Mr. FRASER (Guyana) said that his delegation was fully convinced that the efficiency, integrity and competence of the international civil service and the co-operative spirit of the Secretariat could be maintained without doing violence to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It supported the view expressed in many General Assembly resolutions that there should be a truly independent international civil service and, in that connexion, shared the concern of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations over the effects of growing political pressure and interference. However there was a need to distinguish carefully between the desire on the part of some States to influence the recruitment of staff as a means of enhancing their own State power or simply finding employment for their nationals, and the legitimate desire of States to be adequately represented in the Secretariat. The efforts of the Fifth Committee to redress the geographical imbalances existing in the Secretariat were therefore fully consistent with the purposes of General Assembly resolution 35/210.

33. His delegation shared the view expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in document A/36/407, that, in practice, many heads of organizations of the United Nations system were still not paying due attention to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Little attention was paid to Article 101 of the Charter when it came to recruitment, and it was no secret that appointments were often made on the basis of considerations having nothing to do with quality, competence or geographical representation. His delegation was not satisfied that all deliberate efforts were being made to improve the situation of under-represented and unrepresented States. Behind the apparent momentum lay a continuing desire to maintain the status quo. His delegation was determined to contribute to all efforts aimed at eliminating the factors which delayed the full application of the principle of equitable geographical representation and intended to take up the matter in greater detail at the thirty-seventh session. •

34. His delegation supported the increased use of fixed-term contracts as a means of offsetting the adverse effects of permanent contracts and facilitating the mutually enriching exchange and rotation of staff between the Secretariat and national Governments. He noted that the majority of organizations in the system had successfully increased the percentage of fixed-term contracts, and it was expected that the United Nations Secretariat would follow their example. The greater use of fixed-term contracts would increase the opportunities for injecting new blood into the Secretariat without affecting the continuity of its work.

35. Fresh efforts should be made to meet the target of 40 per cent for the appointment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries so that the new desirable ranges approved at the preceding session could be achieved more rapidly. His delegation took note of the modest progress being made in increasing the representation of developing countries at the senior and policy-making levels, and encouraged further efforts towards that end. Unless recruitment procedures were

/...



(Mr. Fraser, Guyana)

followed more stringently, the targets set for improving the geographical distribution of staff would remain unfulfilled. He regretted that there was still an absence of very close co-operation and co-ordination between substantive departments and the Office of Personnel Services.

36. Substantial improvement had been made with regard to the recruitment of women over a short period; his delegation would continue to support efforts to recruit more women and, generally, to end all forms of discrimination based on sex in conditions of employment, recruitment, assignment, training and promotion. His delegation welcomed the new approaches to recruitment activities referred to in the Secretary-General's report (A/36/495), in particular the introduction of the computerized system, which allowed for easier monitoring and early publication of vacancies, and the adoption of the first annual work plan of recruitment.

37. There was a mood of pessimism and cynicism among some segments of the United Nations staff which undermined the effectiveness and cohesion of the international civil service. Every reasonable effort should be made to dispel that mood, but that could not be done without taking account of the views and concerns of staff members. Staff should be administered with due regard to the principles of consistency, equal treatment and fairness. He was convinced that the suggestions made by the staff were in the interests of increasing the efficiency and integrity of the Secretariat and his delegation had taken careful note of their concerns and recommendations for further study. The physical security and protection of staff when discharging their duties should be guaranteed and the existing security arrangements urgently needed review.

38. His delegation had supported the access by staff representatives of the Fifth Committee because of its respect for their concerns and the useful contribution they could make to the difficult decision-making process, and it looked forward to the continuing participation of staff in the Committee's deliberations.

39. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said it was natural that even greater attention than usual was being paid to personnel questions, since the current discussion was the first of its kind to have taken place following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 35/210. His delegation welcomed the fuller information given in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Joint Inspection Unit.

40. Although the Secretary-General's efforts to apply the directives in General Assembly resolution 35/210 were encouraging, the results achieved still fell far short of the objectives. A number of disturbing features persisted, and in some cases had worsened. Firstly, despite the clear provisions of the Charter and of numerous General Assembly resolutions emphasizing the need for applying the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts, the composition of the Secretariat was still far from satisfactory. There were continued imbalances, discrimination and inequities in all geographical areas. Romania was among the countries that were under-represented, both as to numbers and levels of posts. While it did not expect to see any radical improvements in so short a time, it was disturbed at the trend towards still further imbalances. Paragraph 19 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on equitable geographical distribution (A/36/407)

/...

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

showed that the number of unrepresented and under-represented Member States had increased from 33 in 1963 to 40 in June 1980 and that the number of over-represented States had increased from 38 to 60 during the same period. The subsequent reduction of the number of over-represented countries to 26 had been brought about by the application of the new method, whereby the upper limit of the desirable range had been raised for many countries. There was no guarantee that the former trend would not reappear, since many countries were close to their upper limit. A large number of developing countries continued to be unrepresented or under-represented.

41. The continued imbalances were caused by the recruitment of a relatively large number of candidates from over-represented countries and by the maintenance of a large number of posts that were not subject to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. His delegation had noted with regret that, in more than one case, candidates from unrepresented or under-represented countries had not been recruited even though they had the requisite qualifications. It was not surprising, therefore, to note from paragraph 25 of the JIU report (A/36/407) that, in the United Nations Secretariat as a whole, the percentage of appointments from unrepresented and under-represented Member States had decreased.

42. There was also a perpetuation of qualitative imbalances. It was wrong to concentrate high-level posts in the hands of a few countries. Table 9 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/495) showed that, on 30 June 1981, approximately 50 per cent of high-level posts were occupied by nationals from 18 countries, while no such post was held by a national from any one of 65 developing countries. The number of high-level posts occupied by nationals of developed countries of Western Europe and North America had increased from 117 to 152 during the past decade. The reports before the Committee thus showed that the quantitative and qualitative imbalances in the representation of States in the Secretariat were widening.

43. Discussions had been taking place in the Committee for a number of years on the changes required to make the distribution of Secretariat posts more equitable, but such discussions would continue to be fruitless while only a small proportion of posts were subject to the principle of geographical distribution. His delegation could not accept that abnormal situation. The relevant provisions of the Charter and of General Assembly resolutions on the subject were expressly designed to place the representation of States in the Secretariat on a just and democratic footing. The predominance of permanent contracts, and of recruitment and promotion procedures favouring staff members with such contracts, would not help to eliminate the current imbalances, inequities and discrimination, particularly with respect to higher-level posts. The situation was illustrated in paragraph 33 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/407).

44. His delegation strongly favoured a substantial increase in the number of posts subject to equitable geographical distribution and the establishment of equitable recruitment and promotion standards, particularly for high-level posts. It was essential to respect the principle of equitable representation of States, not of representation by regions, which virtually sanctioned inequities by disregarding individual cases. A system of rotation of high-level posts should be introduced. Attention should also be given to General Service posts, even though they were not subject to geographical distribution.

/...

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

45. To facilitate an assessment of the current situation, clear information should be provided on the posts occupied by the nationals of individual countries, including posts not subject to geographical distribution. More consistent and effective efforts must be made to interpret the relevant General Assembly resolutions to apply them properly.

46. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) said that he wished to make a further statement when the document to which reference had been made at the previous meeting had been submitted. Meanwhile, he would be interested to hear the reasons for the delay in submission of the document. Efforts had been made to prevent the Committee from considering agenda item 108. He shared the view expressed at the previous meeting by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago concerning the Committee's sovereignty.

47. The subject under consideration occupied a central place in the Organization's operations. The various documents and reports of the Secretariat, the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit had given a broad picture of the approaches to consideration of career concepts, career development, types of contracts and related questions.

48. The terms of reference of the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit had given rise to certain difficulties. In addition to the time factor, there were some technical difficulties. Account had to be taken, above all, of the need for a clear definition of the concept of an international civil service. The task could be carried out provided the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit were given a choice of criteria that had stood the test of time, both at the national level and in other international organizations.

49. In order to be viable, an international civil service must be based on equitable geographical distribution, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The existing criteria in that respect were incapable of guaranteeing the desired objectivity and impartiality.

50. While ensuring permanent employment to the staff member concerned, any definition of the career concept with respect to international civil servants must include the right to retirement, and the staff member must, throughout his career, have a clear idea as to his career development. His delegation largely shared the view expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 44 of document A/36/432.

51. Further study was required as far as the proportion between career staff and non-career staff was concerned. The idea of a proportion based on continuous functions as opposed to non-continuous functions, or on application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, did not appear to have been elaborated sufficiently to make it acceptable a priori. Some States might prefer fixed-term contracts for their nationals in posts with continuous functions. Systematic application of a given proportion might have the effect of excluding certain countries or groups of countries from some of the Organization's important operations. The proportion between career staff and non-career staff should, as far as possible, be the same in all the organizations of the United Nations system in order to make the definition of a unified international civil service more homogeneous.

/...

(Mr. Bouzarbia, Algeria)

52. The only contracts suitable for career staff were permanent contracts awarded after a probationary period, which should not exceed five years. A fixed-term contract could be for a period of between three and five years. If, on completion of a five-year period of service, a staff member not seconded from his Government wished to obtain a permanent contract, he should have the opportunity to do so, provided he met the desired criteria. There had for too long been a tendency to deny permanent contracts to competent staff members on the basis of spurious concepts of performance.

53. While the principle of holding competitive examinations for General Service, P-1 and P-2 posts in as many centres as possible, including centres in the developing countries, was generally accepted, such examinations must not be allowed to bring about a qualitative imbalance in the quotas of developing countries, particularly the unrepresented and under-represented developing countries.

54. Another important aspect of staff policy had to do with the definition of occupational groups. The most rational approach would be that an international civil servant should be assured some continuity in a single field in which he could pursue a normal career. Occupational groups should be defined on the basis of qualifications, performance and a spirit of justice and equity. The International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit should co-operate further in seeking a satisfactory definition to ensure a balance of rights and responsibilities for international civil servants while safeguarding the future of the Organization.

55. Grade linking was essential in the interest of continuity and performance. ICSC and JIU might be able to explore the matter further and provide an agreed definition as far as occupational groups were concerned. His delegation entirely shared the view expressed in annex VI, paragraph 12, of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/432); where job descriptions were concerned, the classifiers could not take the place of the heads of service. He asked what criteria were used for job descriptions and whether there was any supervision of the decisions taken by the Classification Section. In the absence of geographical balance in that Section, there was a danger that arbitrary classifications might be made. Without an equitable geographical distribution, both qualitative and quantitative, any objective ideas would be illusory and their application of limited scope. That question should be given a prominent place in the Committee's discussions at its thirty-seventh session on the basis of recommendations to be submitted by ICSC and JIU.

56. Mr. BOUSHEV (Bulgaria) said that personnel questions were of vital interest to the Committee's work. The major share of the budget was allocated to Secretariat activities. In a vast international organization like the United Nations, there was bound to be a certain critical mass beyond which efficiency declined. While the main criterion for determining the scale of assessments was the capacity to pay, the criterion in personnel policy was the capacity to stay, and such capacity was largely conditioned by the system of permanent contracts. It was strange to note that, while the Committee discussed the distribution and application of financial resources in great detail, it never considered how the Secretariat's vast human

(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

resources were deployed and utilized. Activities should be considered firstly in relation to staff resources and secondly in relation to financial resources, not the other way round.

57. The indicators used in relation to the composition of the Secretariat were nationality (geographical distribution), sex, age and type of post. His delegation welcomed the frank descriptions in the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/495) of what had been achieved and what had still to be done to meet the targets established by the General Assembly. The inclusion of the additional chapters on recruitment and staff administration complied with General Assembly resolution 35/110 and demonstrated a sound scientific and creative approach, which his delegation would like to see applied to the full.

58. The current situation, however, was far from ideal. A continued trend towards staff increases of the kind described in the report was hardly compatible with the zero-growth budget policy for the biennium 1982-1983. Between June 1979 and June 1981, the number of unrepresented States had remained at 19 and the number of under-represented States at 22. The way out of that alarming situation could be found in the report of the Secretary-General and in the statement made at an earlier meeting by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services. While the gaps with respect to sex, age and geographical distribution should be bridged as soon as possible, the pursuit of those goals should not serve as an excuse for unnecessary quantitative staff increases. The critical mass of the staff should always be borne in mind.

59. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that the report of the Committee of Governmental Experts (A/36/44) not only showed a comprehensive analytical approach to the problem of Secretariat structure but also pinpointed many vital aspects of the existing structure. Paragraph 11 rightly referred to the need for examining the evolution of functions and services for which the structure had been designed and for evaluating the structure in relation to the purposes for which it had been established. His delegation would like to see the clearly formulated ideas in the document translated into clear-cut recommendations. There were organizational structures in many parts of the world that might be used as models in the formation and structure of research groups for scientific projects. Such groups usually consisted of a small administrative body and a staff of collaborators, and the structures and terms of work were conditioned by the specific project problems. Such structures were dynamic and flexible and presented little danger of bureaucracy, since their administrative centre was small.

60. There were two further aspects of the relative advantages and disadvantages of permanent and fixed-term contracts in addition to those summarized by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 31 of its report on equitable geographical distribution (A/36/407). The first related to the feedback of United Nations activities to Member States. Consideration was generally given only to the supply of human resources to the United Nations Secretariat, which required highly qualified specialists to maintain its high standard of work. If the training and experience of such specialists were to be lost to Member States, that would represent a new form of brain drain affecting the developing countries in particular. There should

/...

(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

be an opportunity for the purposes and ideals of the United Nations to be propagated by those who had served in the Secretariat. Those important matters should be considered in future reports of the Secretary-General on personnel questions.

61. Another important aspect was the correlation between quality of work and duration of contract, to which reference was made in the report submitted by the Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/36/19). While fully agreeing that standards of work in the Secretariat should be maintained at a high level, his delegation did not agree that that could be achieved only through a system of permanent contracts or that the dependence and independence of civil servants were functions of the duration of the contract. A civil servant could hardly feel independent if he knew that his career depended on his position in the Secretariat.

62. Individuals seconded by Member States for international service were confronted with a political and psychological dilemma. Although nationals of Member States, they nevertheless had to pledge themselves to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interest of the United Nations only in view (regulation 1.1 of the Staff Regulations). Yet the ideals of the United Nations could not and should not interfere with the vital interests of States which had seconded their nationals to the United Nations Secretariat. Each of the difficult cases referred to in document A/C.5/36/31 was specific, and the bodies considering them should exercise extreme care to avoid the creation of undesirable precedents.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued) (A/36/32 and Corr.1, A/36/167 and Add.1 and 2)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

63. Mr. DITZ (Austria) said that Member States were clearly willing to find viable solutions to the problem of documentation. The problems which persisted were caused by inadequate observance of existing rules and regulations. His delegation would continue to insist on the recruitment of qualified personnel to the Secretariat, capable of preparing succinct and analytical reports rather than evasive, lengthy documents. Of equal importance was the determination of Member States to avoid rhetoric for the record and requests for new studies or meetings as a way to avoid taking substantive or political decisions.

64. It would be useful if the Secretariat prepared a consolidated list of all documents requested by the Main Committees of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, indicating the anticipated length of the documents and the date by which they would have to be prepared to be of practical value. Such a consolidated list would enable Member States to see exactly what documents they had requested. The Secretariat should at the same time inform Member States of any difficulties in issuing documentation, so that time and effort would not be wasted in holding meetings for which documentation was not available. The consolidated

/...

(Mr. Ditz, Austria)

list should be drawn up with the aid of the relevant sections of the Secretariat, which should be able to provide an accurate assessment of their respective capabilities; no additional resources would be required for its production.

65. His delegation supported the suggestion that the General Assembly might contemplate suggesting to the Economic and Social Council that the Committee on Conferences should begin to examine proposals submitted to the Council which affected the schedule of conferences and meetings, as it was doing for the General Assembly.

66. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was concerned about the obsolete equipment in the conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters and considered that Conference servicing equipment should be kept up to date.

67. Mr. GALLEGOS (Chile) commended the intelligent role played by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences in its work. His delegation was concerned about the volume of documentation, the discriminatory treatment of some of the official languages and the delays in issuing documentation, which at times rendered it of doubtful value. It was in the interests of Member States to support the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences, especially recommendations 6 and 7.

68. Mr. FRASER (Guyana) said that excessive documentation was hindering the work of the United Nations and was consuming a vital part of its limited financial resources. In many cases documents were issued very late. His delegation had been startled to learn that some 30 tons of surplus documents were destroyed every year in Geneva alone. Urgent action should be taken to eliminate such waste. The cost-effectiveness of publishing such large volumes of documentation was questionable.

69. Much of the responsibility lay with delegations, which continually requested additional studies, reports and meetings. Ultimately, the excessive volume of documentation proved a hindrance rather than a help. Members might be unwittingly serving the interests of some delegations which preferred to see issues remain clouded, unresolved and buried in tons of paper, at a financial cost which the United Nations could ill afford. The failure to control documentation reflected the failure to find solutions to the problems besetting the international community. The never-ending stream of documents would continue until the political will to implement resolutions and decisions was found.

70. A substantial reduction in the volume of documentation produced could be achieved with very little effort by delegations. Delegations should conscientiously appraise their real needs for documents. The Secretariat could also contribute by setting lower limits on the number of copies distributed.

71. The volume of documentation was affected by the number and length of meetings, the types of records kept and the different languages used. His delegation saw some merit in the comments of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning the preparation of the programme and budget (A/36/167, paras. 18 and 19) and in the multilingual system of record-keeping as practised at WHO, UNESCO and FAO. Steps should be taken by those organizations to reduce the volume of documentation had achieved positive results. His delegation considered that no new group should be established to consider the problem, as the time had come for action.

/...



72. Mr. VOSS RUBIO (Uruguay) said that his delegation was pleased by the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Conferences. In that regard, the Committee should bear in mind the need for an appropriate interval between the sessions of particular organs to allow Member States adequate time for preparation. United Nations organs should consider the length and frequency of their sessions, with a view to rationalizing the Organization's excessive workload.

73. The enormous cost of meetings held away from established United Nations offices was of concern. Such meetings involved costly transfers of staff, equipment and documents.

74. The draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1982-1983 seemed dynamic; it had apparently been determined on the basis of the current needs of the organs involved, rather than their workload in earlier years.

75. His delegation was concerned over the wide range of documentation issued, the delays experienced and the selective treatment apparently given to some language versions, to the detriment of those in Arabic and Spanish. It was a question not merely of a budgetary anomaly or an operational shortcoming but of something more serious, which affected a fundamental principle of the Organization. Accordingly, his delegation was of the view that the question of documentation warranted priority treatment.

76. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) said that delegations at the United Nations had become the slaves of an endless succession of conferences and meetings, yet they had only themselves to blame. The question arose as to whether meetings were themselves the raison d'être of the United Nations or whether they were a means to an end. The purpose of some meetings was a mystery to all present; many meetings were held merely to perpetuate the positions of the individuals involved, either in their Government or in the Secretariat; while the only justification for some meetings held away from headquarters offices seemed to be to give participants an opportunity to sightsee. Meetings were often convened simply as an excuse to postpone more substantive action. People who had left the United Nations a decade before could return and participate in current meetings without any difficulty since there had been virtually no progress in the questions under consideration. In short, to restore the image and vitality of the United Nations and to reduce waste, it was desirable and necessary to identify meetings of marginal usefulness.

77. The question of quality apart, meetings had proliferated to such an extent that it was hardly possible to keep abreast of developments in other committees at Headquarters alone. If that trend continued it would eventually be impossible to co-ordinate effectively or to avoid duplication.

78. His delegation regretted that there had been no progress in implementing the various resolutions which had sought to improve the situation. Serious consideration should be given to the proposal that budget resources required for additional meetings or conferences should come only from the termination, or reduction in number, of meetings with a low priority. The resources thus released might be transferred to programme activities.

79. The mandate of the Committee on Conferences was limited while a number of the recommendations made in the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/36/32) offered

/...



(Mr. Kuyama, Japan)

the prospect of progress, they would have to be implemented in full before it could be claimed that the first step had been taken.

80. His delegation supported the Venezuelan proposal that the General Assembly should instruct the Committee on Conferences to devote more attention to the question of documentation. Yet the problems were well known and relevant resolutions and recommendations already existed. What was really needed was the will of Member States to take remedial action. As to the documentation for meetings of specific groups of Member States, it should be available to all Member States.

81. General Assembly resolution 35/5 contained a number of suggestions for rationalizing subsidiary organs of the General Assembly. Implementation of the resolution was due to be reviewed by the General Assembly at its current session. It might, however, be premature to conduct a review after so short a time. The moratorium stipulated in the resolution on the establishment of new subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be extended for a further year.

82. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations Conferences (A/36/199), it would be more appropriate if the Sixth Committee considered that report first, as it contained a number of elements of a legal nature.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.