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FIFTH COMMITTEE

60th meeting

held on

Wednesday, 2 December 1981

at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 60th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia)

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

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(a) REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

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8 December 1981

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

AGENDA ITEM 105: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued) (A/36/32 and Corr.1, A/36/167 and Add.1 and 2; A/C.5/36/L.22)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued) (A/36/199 and Corr.1; A/C.5/36/22)

(b) SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations system (A/36/167) contained many helpful recommendations. His delegation was particularly interested in paragraphs 109 and 110, which suggested that the most effective instrument for the control and limitation of the volume of documentation was the programme budget and that reducing the number of meetings would lead to a reduction in the over-all level of documentation. Perhaps the most effective control could be exercised through the programme budget and the establishment of priorities to control demand for conference services. However, his delegation believed that the programme budget did not at present provide the type of information the Committee needed to make sound judgements regarding the level of resources devoted to conference servicing.

2. Under the present system the Department of Conference Services seemed to be given a blank cheque and, if it overdrew, it had always been possible, so far, for it to come back for more. While the method of apportioning conference servicing costs by sections of the budget provided more information, it still did not provide the type of information that his delegation would wish to have. In its present form the programme budget did not give the estimated expenditure for a particular conference, except perhaps in the case of a special conference. The Secretariat should be able to provide - without additional resources - more complete budgetary information for every meeting or conference expected to take place during the biennium. Since the Office of Financial Services and others were generally aware, at the time the programme budget was being drawn up, what meetings were scheduled, more of that detail should be provided in each budget section. Recently, for example, his delegation had attempted to determine whether meetings proposed in a particular draft resolution had been included in the budget estimates; although it had appeared that they should have been, it had been unclear whether they had, in fact, been included. He therefore suggested that the Committee on Conferences, in co-operation with the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, should study ways of remedying the inadequacy of the information provided. His delegation hoped that it would be possible to determine the "price tag" for each meeting, so that the Fifth Committee would be better able to judge whether proposed meetings were worth the expense. Reducing the number of meetings would gradually result in a

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

reduction of documentation. His delegation believed that the Committee on Conferences and the Advisory Committee had adequate authority to consider such matters and it suggested that the Committee on Conferences should take up the issue at its next substantive session.

3. Referring to chapter V of the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/36/32) which dealt with the utilization of conference resources, he recalled that, at previous meetings, some delegations had alluded to the policy of allocating conference resources to groups of limited membership and that it had been suggested that more conference resources should be made available under more formalized arrangements than the present ones. Some delegations had cited particular resolutions which, in their view, provided the necessary legislative mandate for extensive and regular use of conference and other resources for limited membership groups. His delegation was not aware of any current legislative mandate that would authorize such privileged use of United Nations resources. Moreover, it would not have agreed to any resolution that made specific arrangements to provide such resources to such groups. A number of the resolutions cited in that context were subject to various interpretations. For example, General Assembly resolution 35/56 - one of those which had been mentioned as providing a so-called "legislative mandate" - referred in paragraph 135, to the provision of "... technical support, as well as conference and secretariat services for the holding of meetings in accordance with the established procedures and practices of the United Nations". His delegation did not object to the provision of such services to groups of limited membership, as long as the meetings were held in accordance with the established procedures and practices of the United Nations. However, the meetings held to prepare for the recent Conference in Caracas and the meeting recently authorized at the resumed session of the Trade and Development Board violated the principle of universality and were therefore subject to rules 107.1 and 114.2 of the Financial Regulations and Rules which required that the United Nations be reimbursed for conference services provided to such groups.

4. Proponents of the idea that the United Nations should accommodate the interests of certain Member States to the exclusion of others often cited the importance of the work accomplished at such meetings noting, inter alia, that they expedited the negotiating process. However, what concerned his delegation and others was the precedent that was being set, for there was no knowing where that trend would lead. Perhaps the United Nations would become a fragmented organization. He hoped that those Member States concerned about the principle of universality would not allow that to happen.

5. Turning to the draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences (A/36/199), he said that his delegation supported the recommendation that the Sixth Committee should be asked to review the document before the Fifth Committee took any decision. Accordingly, it would reserve its substantive comments for another time.

6. Finally, he endorsed the comments made by several delegations concerning the problems of conference and document proliferation and the growing tendency to hold limited access meetings and noted that other delegations, particularly the Austrian delegation, had made proposals to rationalize and control the flow of documentation.

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7. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) said that, since New Zealand was a member of the Committee on Conferences, it could reasonably be assumed that it supported the recommendations set out in the Committee's report. He endorsed the comments made by the representative of Austria concerning the length and relevance of statements, and said that, if guidelines were drawn up, they should apply equally to statements from the floor and those from the podium. His delegation also supported the group statement concept.

8. Referring to the subject of control and limitation of documentation, he said the problem was simply that the rules of the Assembly were being disregarded. The Secretary-General did not seem to be doing much to remedy the situation, and neither did delegations - sometimes out of design and sometimes out of ignorance. In his view, the Secretariat had the primary responsibility in that area. Virtually all the constructive comments made on the subject during the past two years were based on recommendation 12 of the report submitted by the Committee on Conferences in 1979 (A/34/32), but that recommendation might just as well never have been approved by the Assembly. High priority should be given to the preparation of a handbook for conference secretaries - as the Committee on Conferences had recommended several years earlier and as it recommended again in its current report - and conference secretaries should be required to ensure that the rules contained in the manual were brought to the attention of delegations and that they were not forgotten by members of the Secretariat. In that regard, the idea of an "information campaign", as suggested recently by the representative of Indonesia, was one that merited serious consideration.

9. While some of the additional measures proposed in the JIU report on control and limitation of documentation (A/36/167) might be useful, his delegation had doubts about recommendation 5 concerning multilingual verbatim records. He suggested that that report should be referred to the Committee on Conferences for comment and considered, along with the comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination at the thirty-seventh session, by which time he hoped that it would also be possible to consider the JIU report on the organization of special conferences.

10. The draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences should indeed, once approved, result in the saving of a lot of time by the Secretariat and by preparatory organs of special conferences, and it was a pity that there was not enough time to adopt the rules at the present session. His delegation agreed with the suggestion that the rules should be referred to Member Governments and subsequently considered by the Sixth Committee at the next session of the Assembly.

11. Finally, referring to chapter VII of the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/36/32), which related to future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation, he said that the modernization of existing sound equipment, the possible installation of additional voting machines, the enlargement of the seating capacity of the Chamber and related issues would need to be considered and should be included in a programme of work so that their study could be undertaken systematically and the expenditure spread over a number of years. He suggested that the Secretariat should be asked

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(Mr. Godfrey, New Zealand)

to examine requirements in that area and to submit proposals in time for them to be considered by the Committee on Conferences before being submitted to the General Assembly at its next session.

12. Mr. EL HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation appreciated the difficulties which the Committee on Conferences faced in carrying out its mandate, and it was ready to endorse that Committee's recommendations. However, he noted from the draft calendar of conferences for 1982-1983 that, despite the importance of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, no meetings had been scheduled for that Committee. While his delegation fully realized that the United Nations was in financial difficulties, it did not believe that they warranted dispensing with the meetings of so important a body.

13. He paid tribute to the draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences contained in document A/36/199. They constituted an important step towards achieving appreciable savings in the administrative and budgetary areas. He hoped that they would also result in an improvement in documentation. The problem of documentation was a very important one and all language groups - but more especially the Arabic language group - were being affected by delays in the preparation and distribution of documents. As the Committee on Conferences pointed out in paragraph 39 of its report (A/36/32), there was no lack of rules and regulations on documentation and the main reason for the late issuing of documentation was the failure of most departments to observe deadlines for submission of documents for processing. The Secretary-General must consider measures to deal with that most disquieting problem without in any way adversely affecting the quality of documents or overlooking the need for economy. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would implement all rules and regulations without exception. The proposal to dispense with summary records should be studied in depth, particularly since the experimental period was very short. The possibility should be considered of applying the experiment to all bodies. The process should, of course, be gradual.

14. Turning to chapter V of the report of the Committee on Conferences on the utilization of conference services, he said it was very important that meetings of unofficial bodies should be provided with such services, for they formed an important part of the decision-making process. Moreover, they made it possible for regional groups to prepare common positions, thereby saving much time. With reference to the statement in paragraph 70 that nearly all groups had utilized United Nations facilities in that context, he pointed out that Arabic language services had not been available so far to the African group, even though Arabic was an official language of the United Nations. In the past, his delegation had not objected to the lack of Arabic interpretation; but now that larger number of Arabic interpreters were available, services in all languages should be provided to all the regional groups. His delegation would welcome an explanation in that regard from the Committee on Conferences.

15. Finally, he pointed out that the frequent changes in the calendar of conferences impeded the timely preparation and distribution of documents. He hoped that in its next report the Committee on Conferences would deal at greater length with that problem.

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16. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that the volume of documents of varying quality and usefulness generated by the increasing number of conferences had exceeded the absorptive capacity of medium-sized delegations and, as a result, the documents were given very cursory consideration. On the other hand, the increasing number of conferences clearly reflected a growing awareness of the need for close international co-operation and that was undeniably a positive trend. While some welcome steps had been taken to deal with the problems - such as, limiting the number of bodies entitled to summary records and limiting the length of documents - there had never been a systematic, system-wide approach to the problem of documentation and conference servicing.

17. His delegation welcomed the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/36/32) and particularly appreciated its emphasis on the need to observe existing guidelines and to restrict requests for additional documentation. The debate on the item "Pattern of conferences" had produced a number of good ideas which the Committee on Conferences should study. Those ideas included a suggestion that requests for new documentation and additional conference services should be limited. While that could be done through internal co-ordination at the level of delegations, he drew attention to the fact that subsidiary bodies liked to manage their affairs independently. The proposal made by the representative of Indonesia regarding an information campaign and the compiling of all General Assembly resolutions into a single booklet which could be sent to all officers of Committees was a very interesting one. He suggested, in addition, that the Committee on Conferences should address the problem of documentation more systematically than it had done in the past. His delegation believed that there was no one single solution and that a step-by-step approach should be taken so as to focus on particular aspects.

18. Particular consideration should be given to the question of servicing special conferences. There were often requests for huge amounts of pre-, in- and post-session documentation for such conferences the validity of which delegations were powerless to assess. Additional attention should also be given to the inter-secretariat co-ordination of preparations for the servicing of special conferences and to the number of Department of Conference Services staff involved. He hoped that that issue in particular would be addressed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its forthcoming report.

19. Doubts had been expressed in the Fifth Committee about the advisability of issuing both summary records and press releases. Unfortunately, at the current session, the official summary records were appearing so late that the press releases constituted almost the only source of information for delegations on the Committee's work. However, he felt that the suggestion that the Fifth Committee should not have press releases should be pursued, so that it could set an example and serve as a testing-ground for arrangements for limiting documentation. Summary records were prepared in one language and then translated. Could they not be prepared on the day of the meeting and issued in one language, and translated subsequently after delegations had had an opportunity to make any necessary corrections? Speedy issuing of the summary records in one language would allow the Fifth Committee to dispense with press releases. He hoped that the Committee on Conferences would be able to address the matter in its next report.

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(Mr. Abraszewski, Poland)

20. On the question of the quality of documents, he said that the unrestrained demand for documentation over-burdened the Secretariat and often resulted in hasty and inadequate preparation. Some documents were barely comprehensible and others had little substance. Their format left much to be desired: all too often they consisted of long introductions followed by summaries of past activities or even of other documents prepared for the same session. He felt that documents should begin with conclusions and recommendations and then give supporting arguments.

21. While he recognized that it was not realistic to expect immediate and radical solutions to all those problems, he hoped that it would at least be possible to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on agenda item 105 was thus concluded. A draft resolution had been submitted on the simultaneous distribution of documents in the different languages of the United Nations (A/C.5/36/L.22). Two errors in the text should be corrected: the third resolution referred to in the third preambular paragraph should be resolution 3190 (XXVIII) and the United Kingdom should be added to the list of sponsors.

23. Mr. BROCHARD (France), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.22 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the six countries submitting the draft resolution represented all the official languages of the United Nations. The text was largely a recapitulation of past General Assembly resolutions calling on the Secretariat to take steps to ensure that documents were produced and distributed simultaneously in all the official languages in accordance with the regulations and the rules of procedure. Some progress had been made in that direction in recent years but the many examples of failure to abide by the rules on the distribution of documents justified further emphasis on the principle of the equality of all languages. That the resolution had been submitted in a spirit of non-discrimination was evidenced by the linguistic distribution of its six sponsors. The implementation of the resolution required only an extra effort to be added to those already being made and he trusted that the Administration would act to ensure that in future it would not have to be reminded of the rules on the official and working languages. Since the draft resolution had no financial implications, he hoped that the Committee would be able to adopt it unanimously.

24. The CHAIRMAN said he hoped that a decision could be taken on the draft resolution in due course. He understood that consultations on a draft resolution on another aspect of agenda item 105 had been completed and that it would be distributed on the following day.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/30, A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and 2, A/36/495; A/C.5/36/9, 19 and 31; A/C.5/36/L.16, L.18, L.19, L.20 and L.23; A/C.5/36/CRP.2 and CRP.4)

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

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

25. The CHAIRMAN invited the Legal Counsel to reply to a question posed by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany at the 59th meeting of the Committee.

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26. Mr. SUY (Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel) said that the Secretary-General had submitted his report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies (A/C.5/36/31) on behalf of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, as he had been requested to do in General Assembly resolution 35/212. That he had done so was made clear in the report itself.

27. Mr. DIENE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) wished to state his agency's position on the question of principle raised by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Legal Counsel, as the reply given by the Legal Counsel could determine the Committee's position in regard to the distribution of the UNESCO document on the subject. The Legal Counsel had said that the report had been submitted on behalf of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, and there was indeed a statement to that effect in the opening paragraph. On behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, however, he wished to note that it was the traditional practice, when a document was to be submitted to the General Assembly on behalf of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), to show a draft of the document to all the members of ACC so that they could see whether its content and formulation were acceptable. If the question of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany was intended to ascertain whether the submission of the document meant that ACC had had an opportunity to pronounce on it, the answer was that it had not. The Director-General of UNESCO had therefore requested that his contribution in response to the General Assembly resolution should be annexed to the Secretary-General's report. He would not have done so if ACC had had an opportunity to discuss it.

28. Mr. MIYAKAWA (Japan) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495) listed an array of specific measures that he had taken or planned to take in his efforts to implement the directives in General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210. The Japanese delegation congratulated him and the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services on those initiatives, as well as the other departments and offices of the Secretariat that had co-operated in those efforts.

29. As one of the Member States most under-represented in the Secretariat, Japan particularly appreciated the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General to improve the situation in that regard. The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had indicated in his introductory statement that in the first half of 1981 substantial progress had been made towards the 40-per-cent recruitment target. The Japanese delegation would like to receive similar statistical data on the progress made during the entire current reporting period, July 1980 to June 1981, for the purpose of comparison with previous periods. It was not an unreasonable request since the only change that had occurred during the period under study was the redesignation of one country as under-represented, after the revision of the desirable range at the beginning of 1981.

30. Unfortunately, the general progress that had been registered did not apply to Japan. In 1980, Japan had been a little more than halfway towards the lower limit of its desirable range. In the current reporting period, the number of Japanese staff in posts subject to geographical distribution was the same as in 1980. With

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(Mr. Miyakawa, Japan)

the recent change in desirable ranges the situation had actually deteriorated, since the lower limit, and thus the halfway point, had risen, while the number of Japanese nationals on the staff had not. The Japanese delegation therefore strongly urged the Secretary-General to make further efforts to correct that serious under-representation through appropriate action, including the periodic holding of competitive examinations for Japanese nationals and the dispatch of recruitment missions to Japan.

31. Although Japan welcomed the new recruitment scheme whereby 50 per cent of all available vacancies were to be earmarked for the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented or under-represented countries or of women, with the remaining 50 per cent being filled in accordance with the normal assignment, promotion and recruitment procedures, it recognized that it posed a number of problems. General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 had called for an increase in the recruitment of women "in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution". Although it appreciated the general progress in that area, the Japanese delegation stressed that the implementation of those directives would require that, in recruiting more women to the Secretariat, particular attention should be paid to female candidates from under-represented and unrepresented Member States. Furthermore, the effort to introduce fresh talent into the Secretariat should not be weakened by undue emphasis on internal candidates. The Secretary-General should be urged to establish a proper balance between preferential treatment for internal candidates and the securing of new talent. In addition, when earmarking posts by occupational groups to be filled by qualified nationals from unrepresented and under-represented Member States, thorough consideration should be given to the availability of qualified candidates in such occupations in general and in those States in particular. In that connexion, there was a reference in paragraph 35 of document A/36/495 to surveys of the availability of qualified candidates from unrepresented and under-represented Member States conducted since 1979, but no details were provided. The Japanese delegation would like more specific information on those surveys.

32. The Japanese Government had fully supported the idea of competitive examinations for the recruitment of junior officers. In April 1981, examinations for external recruitment had been administered for the nationals of two countries, one of which was Japan. On the basis of that experience, the Japanese delegation suggested that the following points should be considered in the administration of future examinations, in the hope that other Member States would also benefit. First, it was essential that central responsibility for administering examinations and co-ordinating all the units involved should be assigned to a single office or person. In the case of the recent examination for Japanese nationals, the scattering of responsibility had greatly impeded its efficient and coherent administration. The lack of co-ordination had caused both the applicants and the Japanese Government great difficulty. Responsibility for deciding on the type of job, the specific posts to be earmarked, the eligibility of candidates, the acceptance or rejection of applications, the collection of references and the issuing of notices of acceptance had all been handled by separate units. Applicants had therefore been obliged to contact each of those units, with a resulting loss of time and energy and delay in organizing and preparing the

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(Mr. Miyakawa, Japan)

examination. It was, of course, a first attempt, but considerable improvement should be required in future exercises. If the delegation of responsibility to a single office was not currently feasible, perhaps the functions of the relevant units of the Office of Personnel Services should be reorganized.

33. Second, some of the examination questions in the written tests, in particular those relating to knowledge of the United Nations, were not altogether appropriate for applicants from outside the United Nations system. The examinations were designed to test the potential ability, language proficiency and adaptability of the candidates, and knowledge of specific minor details of the United Nations was not therefore essential. Candidates could acquire such knowledge rapidly after appointment, through orientation programmes. It was also inappropriate to apply the questions or testing methods used for internal competitive examination for movement from the General Service to the Professional category to recruitment from outside.

34. Lastly, more than six months had elapsed between the holding of the examination and the issuing of offers of appointment. Such delay must inevitably inconvenience applicants, by forcing them to forgo opportunities for other employment, or result in the loss of potential talent by the United Nations. It would certainly act as a disincentive for future applicants. He hoped, therefore, that the Office of Personnel Services would try to speed up the decision-making process, and suggested that the Joint Inspection Unit might study the current procedure and submit recommendations on ways of improving it to the General Assembly.

35. In conclusion, on the question of career development, he noted that the Committee had received only one report on the question from the Joint Inspection Unit and that the International Civil Service Commission had asked that consideration of it should be postponed until the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The Japanese delegation had no objection to agreeing to that request and hoped that the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission would co-operate fully in preparing their recommendations for 1982.

36. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the Committee would be able to devote greater attention to personnel matters at the next session of the General Assembly, which would not be taking place in a budget year. Nevertheless, the Moroccan delegation had given careful study to the reports of the Secretary-General, the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit, as well as the various statements by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services and the representatives of the staff. While it was wrong to say that nothing had been done to implement the various resolutions of the General Assembly on the matter, it would be equally false to say that great progress had been made. The situation might, of course, change in the near future and the considerable progress to which the Assistant Secretary-General had referred be more visible.

37. In connexion with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/210 on personnel questions, which reiterated the request that the Professional staff of the United Nations should be encouraged to work at more than one duty station, he regretted that the information which his delegation had requested on the

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(Mr. Lahlou, Morocco)

unwillingness of staff to serve away from Headquarters had not been made available, and he expressed the hope that the matter would be pursued. Regarding section V of the resolution, on the status of women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system, he said that in implementing its provisions the order of priorities must be observed and the fact that some Member States were unrepresented or under-represented should take precedence. Morocco had been a Member of the Organization since 1956 but other States that had joined the United Nations more recently were better represented in the Secretariat. If there were no Moroccan women candidates with the right qualifications for particular positions, he trusted that the Secretary-General, bearing his country's under-representation in mind, would nevertheless take steps to see that it was more adequately represented.

38. Mr. NINGATA (Central African Republic) said that the measures relating to the composition of the Secretariat referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/495) and supported by the Joint Inspection Unit reflected the concern for fairness, justice and equality which the General Assembly had expressed in resolutions testifying to its conviction that equitable geographical distribution would make the Organization more effective in settling problems of all types peacefully and in establishing justice and equality amongst its Members. Despite some progress, much remained to be done to achieve equitable geographical distribution and the patience of the unrepresented and under-represented States - and they included his own - was not unlimited. He drew attention in that connexion to section I, paragraphs 3 and 5, of General Assembly resolution 35/210 and noted that the unrepresented and under-represented countries continued to suffer from flagrant and intolerable discrimination in an organization in which all States were supposed to be equal but in which recruitment policy continued to favour the already over-represented and privileged States.

39. The answer must be a new recruitment policy. The procedure for announcing vacancies had to be improved because notices from New York or Geneva often reached the permanent missions too late. Sufficient time must therefore be allowed for States to find candidates and forward their names to the Secretary-General. Semi-annual publication of all vacancy notices, to be valid for several months, would be more effective, and recruiting missions should be sent to all of the unrepresented and under-represented countries. The recruitment procedure must also be made simpler and shorter because it was pointless to keep candidates waiting for several years or more without taking action.

40. Both the Secretary-General and the Staff Union had spoken of political pressure exercised by States Members to obtain posts for their nationals. His delegation thought that such pressure did not come from the unrepresented and under-represented States, which, it would be recalled, were developing countries. It must also be kept in mind that in some countries the most qualified staff were to be found in the civil service and it was to their Governments that the vacancy notices were sent in the search for candidates. The initial selection was made at the national level and the Government forwarded only the files of the most suitable candidates. At that point, close collaboration must be established between the recruitment service and the States concerned. Furthermore, if a Government forwarded the name of a candidate to the Secretary-General, it was to be expected that it would follow up its recommendation.

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(Mr. Ningata, Central African Republic)

41. His delegation supported all the recommendations made by the Joint Inspection Unit to improve the situation of the unrepresented and under-represented States and thereby make the Organization more effective.

42. Mr. MARTORELL (Peru) said he was pleased that steps had been taken to deal with the understandable difficulties caused by personnel recruitment problems but he was also concerned with the performance of those already serving in the Secretariat. He wondered to what extent the staff did in fact meet the standards laid down in the Charter. Long-term contracts, for instance, often made staff members feel that they were secure in their jobs for ever and could therefore act without regard to efficiency.

43. One problem facing the Office of Personnel Services had to do with the relationship between the staff and the Administration. The report submitted by the Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/36/19) reflected the hopes and aspirations of the staff but none of their obligations. Their primary concern, as expressed in chapter I, section B, was diplomatic immunity, which in his view would only be conducive to the abuse of privileges. He also wanted to know what kind of evaluations were made of staff members and whether they reflected competence or only political factors. In his experience, some administrative units exerted no effective controls over the time spent by staff members away from their offices. Measures should be taken to correct that situation. The staff must show readiness to work effectively and co-operate with the Administration, and in that connexion he commended the hard work done by the interpreters and translators who worked with the Fifth Committee.

44. Mr. FARIS (Jordan) said that he endorsed the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/36/31, but requested a corrigendum for paragraph 11, which erroneously referred to "east Jordan" instead of "the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan".

45. As for the substance of that document, he noted that, while Jordan respected all international laws and conventions governing the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials, it considered that they did not cover the violation of the laws of the host country by local citizens subject to those laws. Jordan strictly observed the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/212. He noted that no names were provided in connexion with the arrests and detentions referred to in paragraphs 11 and 12 of document A/C.5/36/31. His delegation felt that all references to Jordan should be omitted from the document unless names were provided, since otherwise his Government would be unable to find out why the measures reported had been taken and to check the accuracy of the reports.

46. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) recalled a previous statement in which he had urged that a greater effort should be made to improve employment opportunities for women, and particularly to give them greater access to policy-making posts. He had stressed his delegation's hope that more of the small number of Spanish women staff members in the Secretariat would be promoted to positions of responsibility and that steps would be taken to facilitate the promotion of women, once hired.

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(Mr. Sagrera, Spain)

47. His delegation was aware of the frustration felt by women staff members of the United Nations. There were many complaints about the serious obstacles in the path of those who wished to move from the General Service category to the Professional category. In particular, there was the case of certain Spanish women staff members who, although working to the complete satisfaction of their supervisors, had been repeatedly failed in the competitive promotion examinations without apparent justification. It was ironic that women staff members fulfilling professional duties to the entire satisfaction of their supervisors were denied promotion by another, unrelated section of the Secretariat.

48. His delegation had also noted that the new system of competitive examinations had cost some \$5 million, and it felt that so high a cost could not be justified because the number of promotions from the General Service category to the Professional category had decreased since the system was instituted. As if that were not enough, competitive examinations would soon be held to fill Professional category vacancies with external candidates, which meant even fewer opportunities for internal candidates.

49. His delegation wanted information about the opportunities afforded to women staff members for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category, what recourse procedures were available, who was responsible for making the selection and whether action could be taken to appeal the selection.

50. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the preceding meeting the representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the members of the European Economic Community, had formally requested that a document by the Director-General of UNESCO regarding the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be issued as a conference room paper. That request had been supported by the representative of the United States but had been formally opposed by the representative of the Soviet Union. He therefore had no choice but to treat the request as a proposal and to ask the Committee to take a decision on it. He invited the Committee Secretary to state its financial implications.

51. Mr. DUQUE (Secretary of the Committee) said that the full cost of issuing the document as a conference room paper was estimated at \$4,000, an amount which could be absorbed by the Secretary-General without additional appropriations.

52. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the issue, in so far as it concerned his country, had already been settled, as his delegation had explained at the 51st meeting. After serving two thirds of his prison term, the person concerned had been released in accordance with his country's penal legislation; he was now working in the scientific field. There had been no doubt that he had been working with the secret service of a Western Power. His delegation opposed the request for the circulation of a conference room paper on the grounds that no new facts had been presented and that the issue was not relevant to the item under discussion. The financial resources of the Organization should not be used to further the political purposes of a particular group.

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53. Mr. DIENE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) wished to clarify his organization's position on the issue. UNESCO had not sought to have the issue discussed in the General Assembly and had not transmitted the document in question on its own initiative. The request in General Assembly resolution 35/212 - that the specialized agencies should furnish information on cases in which the international status of staff members had not been fully respected - had been brought to the attention of the Executive Board of UNESCO, which had asked the Director-General to respond by setting out in a document the facts of the case in question. The framework within which that document had been transmitted to the United Nations was therefore General Assembly resolution 35/212; it had not been discussed by ACC.

54. A legal point would arise should the Committee decide to vote on the document of the Director-General of UNESCO, as such a decision would imply that votes could be taken on documents submitted to the United Nations by the specialized agencies in response to resolutions of the General Assembly. The agreement between the United Nations and UNESCO was that UNESCO could ask the United Nations to circulate any document. In the case under consideration, however, the document in question would be circulated on the basis of resolution 35/212 and not at the request of UNESCO.

55. UNESCO had no other motive in the matter than to uphold the principle that international conventions should be respected and resolutions implemented.

56. Mr. PAL (India) said that the issue was political and would not normally concern the Fifth Committee. Furthermore there would be no time for detailed discussion on the conference room paper if it was issued. He suggested that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.16 and the delegations which had submitted amendments thereto should consult with a view to producing an agreed draft and devising a means of settling the question of the document of the Director-General of UNESCO.

57. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that, since there were no financial implications, no delegation need be inhibited on ground of cost from voting in favour of his proposal. As the document in question had not been circulated by the Secretary-General with his report, the Committee had no alternative but to vote on the issue.

58. Mr. PAL (India), supported by Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana), moved that the debate on the item under discussion should be adjourned under rule 116 of the rules of procedure.

59. After a procedural discussion, in which Mr. STUART (United Kingdom), Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) took part, the CHAIRMAN put the Indian motion to the vote.

60. By 63 votes to 22, with 8 abstentions, the Committee approved the motion of the representative of India that the debate on the item under discussion should be adjourned.

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AGENDA ITEM 103: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (continued)
(A/36/641)

(a) REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

61. Mr. OREBI (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that co-ordination was an extension of the ability to communicate, to exchange information and experience and to establish a bond of common endeavour. It was in that context that the Advisory Committee's reports on co-ordination were invaluable. On the surface they simply provided factual information, but that information shed light on the different approaches to common problems in the United Nations system, so that each organization was able to learn from the others.

62. He was somewhat dubious about the wisdom of standardizing methods completely, since in that approach the catalytic spark of inventiveness, ingenuity and the spirit of individual resourcefulness was sacrificed to mediocre conformity. By being different, the organizations of the system could contribute constructively to the common cause. A case in point was the special merit increments awarded at ILO, to which the Advisory Committee referred in paragraphs 36 to 38 of its report (A/36/641). Thus ILO had devised, and successfully implemented, a procedure which could presumably be adopted by all the organizations. A further example was the system of reclassifying posts in his own organization, FAO, where programme managers had the flexibility to request, during the biennium, the upgrading of any post in their jurisdiction provided they could counterbalance it by a parallel downgrading of another post or, better still, by what had come to be known as the cannibalization of an existing vacant post. The system worked for FAO; it was practical and, above all, it did not entail financial implications. It might not be suitable for the United Nations, but it existed in the system and was effective.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.