



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

AGENDA ITEM 107: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT  
(continued)

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**Distr. GENERAL**

A/C.5/37/SR.26  
10 November 1982  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

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

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and Add.2, A/37/143, A/37/378 and Add.1, A/37/469 and Add.1, A/37/528 and Add.1, A/C.5/37/5, A/C.5/37/6 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/37/24)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

1. Mr. BERTRAND (Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit) said that the rather large number of documents presented by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on personnel questions (three reports for 1982, two of them supplementary to reports issued in 1981) attested to the importance which JIU attached to the item. Since the Joint Inspection Unit's report to the General Assembly (A/37/34) provided summaries of the documents, he would merely highlight those points which might be of interest to the Committee.

2. The report on the status of women in the Professional category and above in all the organizations of the United Nations system (A/37/469), prepared at the request of the General Assembly, indicated that the progress which had been made was far from encouraging; however, that might be due to the fact that the period of two years which separated the current study from the preceding one was insufficient for statistical purposes. The main recommendations made in the report, which were identical to those of the previous report, were nevertheless still valid. He imagined that the General Assembly would once again wish to draw the attention of the executive heads of all organizations to the importance of the issue.

3. With regard to the report on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat (A/37/378, supplementary to A/36/407), it should first be noted that, contrary to what was asserted in certain quarters, there was no disagreement on the issue among the members of JIU; like the General Assembly, they all attached the greatest importance to it and believed that the strictest requirements in terms of the quality of the staff were in no way incompatible with respect for the principle of distribution. Otherwise a genuinely international Secretariat could not exist. Secondly, there seemed to have been a misunderstanding with respect to the report's first recommendation, which called for equitable geographical distribution by main regions, not by individual countries in all the entities of the Secretariat. The controversy which had arisen should soon die away in the light of recent statements made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services, indicating that henceforward care would be taken to ensure reasonable distribution in the major departments. That objective would undoubtedly be difficult to achieve but if JIU, with only seven Professional staff, had always been able to distribute those posts

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(Mr. Bertrand)

fairly among the main regions of the world, the major departments, with their large numbers of staff, should find it still easier to do so. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's announcement of a recruitment plan designed to ensure that the objectives of equitable geographical distribution were met within three years seemed to be fully in accord with the report's recommendations.

4. The principles set out in those first two reports were unlikely to lead to any great dissension; however, he was pleased to see that broad agreement seemed also to exist on the substance of the recommendations made in the report on the career concept (A/37/528, supplementary to document A/36/432 and Add.1) and that on various occasions the Secretary-General, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the International Civil Service Commission and the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had made it clear that their points of view were very similar. For instance, the Secretary-General, speaking to the Committee at its 13th meeting on 15 October 1982, had stated that: "Although the views and positions [of the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission] differ somewhat on specific points, I am pleased to note that there is convergence of views on many others, such as the planned approach to career development and the use of occupational groups for that purpose. I fully concur in the general consensus, reflected in the reports [of the bodies that] I have mentioned, that recruitment, while a necessary instrument for achieving improved geographical distribution, is also crucial to the further improvement of the quality of the Secretariat staff. I should therefore like to see the further development and refinement of competitive methods of selection and their application to an even wider extent. I also believe that the systematic application of the concept of occupational groups in the Secretariat's human resources planning is necessary."

5. Furthermore, the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had not only confirmed the intentions of the Secretary-General but also elaborated on various aspects of them: she had said that the Office of Personnel Services would make more systematic use of competitive methods in recruiting Professional staff at the entry-level grades and would study ways and means of applying that method to the recruitment of candidates at other grade levels; it would implement the three-year recruitment plan designed to ensure full application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution; and it was preparing another three-year plan on the application of career development methods for Professional and General Service staff employed in the Secretariat. The list of six points of basic agreement between the views of JIU and those of ICSC given by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services was accurate but incomplete. For instance, there was also the recommendation in paragraph 15 of annex I to the report of ICSC (A/37/30), relating to its study of the career concept, to the effect that "the General Assembly and the governing bodies of the organizations [should] consider the concept of human resources planning as a basis for a systematic approach to integrated personnel management and ... pursue the development of a planning process based on the particular needs of ... this organization", which also noted that, in that context, "certain recommendations made by JIU concerning standard career paths in clearly defined occupational groups, desirable percentages for external recruitment and average rates of advancement may have particular relevance".

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(Mr. Bertrand)

6. He was particularly pleased that there should be agreement on the question because in the past the Committee had been told that there had been many differences of opinion between JIU and ICSC. The comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the principles which should govern recruitment and the need for career development followed the same lines. Such a degree of general agreement on such crucial points as a much more systematic use of objective methods of recruitment by competition and the decision to base career development on the occupational group, using the methods recommended in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, was a result which had cost considerable effort to achieve, as would be recalled by the members of delegations who had followed the debates of previous years; the result was particularly noteworthy because it related to personnel policy, a difficult area in which, from the creation of the Organization, groups of States had taken conflicting positions, while different cultural approaches and widely differing administrative practices made the understanding and interpretation of the same concepts a complex and difficult matter, leading to misunderstandings and even conflicts. The result had been achieved through the efforts of all the parties, but particularly thanks to the work of the Committee over the past few years, the many resolutions which had defined the basic principles to be applied and the resolve expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General to modernize the Secretariat.

7. The question that now arose was whether the General Assembly should, under the circumstances, be content to welcome and take note of such general agreement or whether it should continue its endeavours to stimulate and monitor and achieve even greater precision in its recommendations. It was the second alternative that the Committee should examine seriously, for a number of reasons. In the first place, and of great importance, was the fact that the agreement which had recently emerged existed very much more with respect to intentions than to deeds. It was true that, as a result of previous resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210, the idea of occupational groups had been officially defined and adopted as a basis for the recruitment and administration of staff in the Professional category. The recruitment examinations had been organized not according to post, but according to occupational group, and a list of 14 such groups had been established at the United Nations. In addition, a beginning had been made on the systematic implementation of objective methods of recruitment; recruitment examinations for junior professionals had been held internally as well as externally in numerous countries. However, a great deal remained to be done before a modern and efficient recruitment system guaranteeing the recruitment of candidates of the right calibre at all the present grade levels was in place, and career development had yet to get off the ground.

8. Not only was the present situation still far from satisfactory in terms of qualifications and fairness, but there was often fierce bureaucratic resistance to all efforts at modernization and improvement. The manner in which certain departments, in particular in the United Nations, opposed the recruitment of young people who had been successful in the competitive examinations and to whom the Organization had made specific commitments seemed inexcusable, and the optimism shown by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of personnel

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(Mr. Bertrand)

policy reforms (A/C.5/37/5, para. 21) did not seem justified. The recruitment examination contemplated for 1983, for example, would take place not 12 but 18 months after the previous examination.

9. The United Nations Secretariat was in need of encouragement in order to sustain the process of renewal and change, which should no doubt be monitored. Quality was never easy to achieve and, if there was neither encouragement, initiative nor monitoring, those who had made the effort, whether within the personnel services of the Secretariat or in the different organizations, might think that it was pointless to persevere because no one was interested.

10. The reforms which had already been undertaken related almost exclusively to the United Nations itself. The other organizations, each because of or on the pretext of its special character, had done their best to remain outside the movement for reform, which was nevertheless sorely needed by them. If improved co-operation within the United Nations system was really desired, it must be recognized that one of the most notable ways of achieving it would be through the fullest possible harmonization of personnel policies.

11. Under those circumstances, the Fifth Committee would render the Organization and the entire United Nations system a great service if it would consider taking note in a resolution of the substance of those principles on which general agreement had been reached and if it would monitor the implementation of announced plans on a regular basis. In that connection, an effective plan for career development should at least include (a) a precise definition of occupational groups for both Professional and General Service staff, (b) a distribution of all existing posts in those groups, (c) for each group, a precise determination of entry requirements, average rates of advancement and the proportion between recruitment inside and outside the group, (d) a system of consultation of staff members on their career prospects and (e) training mechanisms adapted to the needs of each group and, possibly, to transfers from one group to another. With regard to methods of recruitment, a real effort had yet to be made to reserve systematically the posts to be filled through competitive examinations, to speed up the recruitment process, and to finalize objective and competitive methods of recruitment at levels other than the entry level. The other organizations of the United Nations system should be encouraged to emulate the methods being adopted by the United Nations, to establish, in particular, their occupational groups and the rules applicable to each of them and to participate to the extent possible in the recruitment examinations for junior professionals, at least with respect to the main occupational groups common to all the specialized agencies. If all those measures were recommended and their implementation regularly monitored by the Fifth Committee, the agreement previously noted could be the starting-point for a major reform in the personnel policies of the United Nations system, to the greater good of all.

12. The CHAIRMAN, after informing the Committee that the report submitted by the staff unions and associations of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/37/24) would be introduced by the Chairman of the Staff Committee of the United Nations Office

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(The Chairman)

at Geneva, recalled that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 35/213, the statement of the latter would be made from the floor of the conference room and that any questions posed by members of the Committee in response to the statement would be answered in writing in a single supplementary document submitted through the Secretary-General.

13. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Kahnert (representative of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat) took the seat reserved for him.

14. Mr. KAHNERT (Representative of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat) said that, in considering the means at their disposal for bringing the many grave problems facing the staff to the attention of Member States, the staff representatives had themselves encountered a serious difficulty. They had decided to set out a number of those problems in the written report (A/C.5/37/24) and to keep the oral presentation for the clarification of their causes and the expression of the feelings that they aroused. He would therefore confine his presentation to a few matters and would endeavour to depict for the members of the Committee the way in which the staff perceived their responsibility with respect to each of them.

15. With regard to the general situation, it should be stressed that staff morale had never been so low. Before turning to the question of the responsibility borne in that regard by Member States as employers, he would review some fundamental aspects of the conditions in which the staff was called upon to work. The majority of the staff members were expatriates and had to live in an environment in which it was difficult for them to preserve their cultural identity. It was not uncommon for them to have problems with the local authorities and they had many difficulties in adapting. Those who were married had difficulty in finding employment for their spouses, and those who had children had to resign themselves to sending them to foreign schools or to national schools located in foreign countries where the social environment was not necessarily akin to their own. Those facts needed to be restated, for while, in the past, the disadvantages had been compensated for by high salaries, such had not been the case for a number of years. The staff of the United Nations were certainly conscious of the present economic difficulties of Member States, but they observed that their real income had not kept pace with that of the national civil servants and, in the absence of compensatory measures or support from Member States, they were forced to the conclusion that they were the subject of a certain amount of hostility, and that was a major factor in their loss of morale. No one could deny that a demoralized staff member was unlikely to be very effective.

16. The staff were the first to notice the inefficiency of the Secretariat on a daily basis and the first to want the situation to change. He thought that the Secretariat's inefficiency was largely due to decisions taken in the Fifth Committee, which seemed to take decisions without being adequately informed and, worse still, without trying to be fully informed. It considered only a limited number of criteria, which were mainly the financial implications of its decisions. If that was the case, the staff felt that the Fifth Committee should review its decision-making procedures and formulate decisions without leaving too much

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(Mr. Kahnert)

latitude for interpretation. An example was General Assembly resolution 35/210, which introduced the possibility for part-time employment in the Secretariat without giving additional information. It had taken two years to find solutions to the dozens of technical problems arising from that question, which was a good example of inefficiency. Two years later, a system, introduced a few weeks ago, restricted opportunities for part-time work to locally recruited General Service staff. It was easy to imagine the problems resulting from such a system in a department in which two General Service staff members, one a local recruit and the other an international recruit, wished to work part time. Not only was there a case of discrimination, but such problems were bound to contribute to the Secretariat's inefficiency. In leaving too much latitude for interpretation of its decisions, in particular by the Administration, the Fifth Committee could cause serious problems.

17. He particularly wished to draw the attention of the Committee to the question of staff members who had been arrested, detained or reported missing, which was of major concern to the staff. As indicated in paragraph 10 of document A/C.5/37/24, the number of such staff members had risen to 21 and one of them had been held in detention for nine years. All members of the Committee must know that the staff wished to see their colleagues return as soon as possible. That was the last time that the staff would try to solve those problems by resorting to the Fifth Committee. A body representing the staff could no longer remain calm in the face of such situations; its patience was not unlimited.

18. In addition to that major question, measures must be taken to solve a number of other problems. The Staff Regulations and Staff Rules must be updated on two particular points: the role of bodies representing staff in the administrative machinery of the Secretariat and the legal remedies available to staff.

19. Concerning the first point, any body seriously representing the staff should be kept constantly informed of the day-to-day problems confronting staff members and administrative units. If a General Assembly resolution was not applied, it was the first to know why; if a resolution was poorly applied, it was the first to try to correct the situation and, if only the letter of a resolution was applied, it could identify the shortcomings in its application and, consequently, in the resolution itself. The bodies representing the staff therefore suggested that the Fifth Committee should take greater advantage of that wealth of information which, in the past, had not been sufficiently tapped. Attempts to set up bodies to represent staff merely as a face-saving device had failed. The staff was convinced that the role of those bodies in the administrative structure of the Secretariat should be strengthened so that measures could be taken rapidly to remedy both the general situation and problems in various specific areas.

20. With regard to recourse procedures, the staff were quite aware of their difficult legal situation. There was no independent legal organ outside the Organization to which staff could resort in cases of conflict with the Administration. It was therefore of the utmost importance that recommendations made by existing bodies should in future be taken into account in administrative

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(Mr. Kahnert)

decisions. He was thinking, in particular, of the recommendations of the Panel to Investigate Allegations of Discriminatory Treatment in the United Nations Secretariat. It was also imperative to review the existing machinery and either to add new mechanisms or provide it with the necessary weight and resources to function adequately.

21. As service in the field ought to be the rule and not the exception in the United Nations Secretariat, a sensible system of rotation and reasonable working conditions for staff members in the field should be formulated and implemented. One of the major problems which they faced was housing. Among employers having an expatriate staff, the United Nations was practically the only one that did not provide its employees with suitable housing. In that connection, he cited the situation in Hong Kong, where there were skyrocketing rents, and it had taken months to find a "solution" in co-operation with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which had resulted in a decrease in take-home pay for 80 per cent of the staff. Medical insurance was also a serious problem for staff members in the field, particularly for locally recruited personnel who also found themselves faced with many other problems, as yet unsolved. They had no career development prospects, hardly any training opportunities, and the adjustment of their salaries to local inflation and fluctuations in exchange rates was entirely unrealistic.

22. With regard to salary levels, staff were fully aware that, at present, the objective must be the maintenance of real income. Nevertheless, that objective had not been achieved in recent years. In that respect, he wished to comment on what the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit had said concerning equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat. If a deliberate attempt was made to reduce the real income of international civil servants to a greater extent than that of national civil servants, such a distribution would inevitably become impossible to implement, since the Secretariat would no longer be able to attract nationals from certain countries.

23. The salaries of General Service staff were a source of serious problems. As those salaries were determined at the local level, rather than on a system-wide basis, the development of salaries was not the same at all duty stations, or even within a single duty station, as was the case, for example, at Geneva. ICSC had been established to ensure that a common system existed also with regard to salaries. However, disparities in the development of salaries were even more marked than before the Commission's establishment. Even if one accepted that the situation might have been worse without ICSC, one had to conclude that its success in that area was far from outstanding.

24. As for financial benefits, it was again apparent that there were marked disparities between duty stations and that, in some of them, completely inappropriate solutions had been adopted with respect to health insurance schemes. There were also disparities between duty stations and between categories of staff with respect to the education grant, dependency allowances, etc. Those disparities had not been eliminated by serious efforts aimed at setting up a genuine common system.

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(Mr. Kahnert)

25. The independence of international civil servants was one of the most important elements for ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations Secretariat, and it was imperative that staff members should be given at least a minimum of latitude in their work. However, innumerable cases could be cited in which staff members felt that that latitude was not sufficiently specified or respected. In order to have an independent international civil service, a minimum number of conditions must be met. By way of illustration, he stressed that staff members did not think that to reduce the number of permanent contracts or even to maintain that number at its present levels would enhance the quality of the services provided to Member States.

26. Reverting to the question of Member States' responsibility, he said that the Fifth Committee should seriously reconsider its decision-making process, ascertain that it had the minimum amount of necessary information at hand before taking decisions and reconsider in due honesty the role of the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, particularly ICSC. While the Commission had been established to provide the Fifth Committee with the necessary technical basis, over the years it had in practice encroached more and more on the prerogatives of the Committee and occasionally on those of the Secretary-General. In many instances, ICSC action had delayed rather than promoted decisions that would provide staff members with more satisfactory working conditions.

27. At the previous session, Member States had elected a Secretary-General who had made no secret, even before his election, of his concern about the internal workings of the Secretariat or his conviction that reforms were needed in that regard. It would therefore be illogical for Member States to withhold from him the resources he required to solve problems which concerned them. The staff believed that the general approach which the Secretary-General had in mind could eliminate a number of the causes of the current staff malaise. They also felt that the plan which the Secretary-General had begun to implement needed encouragement and that Member States should provide him with resources for carrying it out. At the same time, he himself had no illusions as to the speed with which the situation might change, since the Secretary-General was not the only member of the Administration. Logically, the Member States, which had elected him, although not his advisers, should at least give him a chance.

28. He greatly feared that neither document A/C.5/37/24 nor his oral submission would motivate many members of the Fifth Committee to pay attention to the situation of the staff, for which they were partly responsible. He hoped none the less that he would be proved wrong and promised to make a written reply to any questions that might be put to him.

29. Mr. Kahnert withdrew.

30. Mr. JOHNSTON (United States of America) said that his country was convinced that such success as the United Nations and its specialized agencies had achieved to date was intimately related to the quality of its personnel. Many of the bodies within the United Nations system had enviable reputations. Those staff members constituted the Organization and the cost of their services represented over

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(Mr. Johnston, United States)

three quarters of its budget. One of the more encouraging developments in personnel matters was the upsurge of interest in human resources planning and career development, as evidenced by the JIU and ICSC reports and the comments made on them by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. His delegation believed that such planning would demonstrate the need to maintain an international civil service staffed chiefly by career professionals, complemented by personnel recruited on the basis of fixed-term appointments.

31. The United States was convinced that geographical distribution was a prerequisite for the efficiency and integrity of the international civil service and helped to ensure full representation of the regional and cultural diversity of Member States. The United States commended the Secretariat for the progress made in the past four years towards a more representative staffing of the Organization. That progress showed that the current methods used for attaining equitable geographical distribution could work, and argued against any major readjustment. The United States was therefore opposed to the recommendation that regional quotas should be applied to all organizational units of the United Nations. If a system of quotas was adopted for the various regional groups, each group would receive a fixed proportion of posts and there would be no guarantee that under-represented countries within a region would receive their share of appointments. The United States also opposed the recommendation that a desirable range for each region be set for policy-making posts, for the simple reason that all regions were well represented at that level.

32. His delegation could not support an increase in the number of fixed-term appointments in an attempt to solve the problem of geographical distribution, as recommended in paragraph 36 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. It believed that each organization must solve that problem for itself. It noted in that connection that Member States whose nationals had the largest proportion of fixed-term appointments were chronically under-represented; those countries also had the lowest ratio of women employees. Consequently, the United States supported retention of the current recruiting methods.

33. With respect to the selection of consultants, the United States did not believe it necessary to elaborate complex procedures or to place more emphasis on the geographic origin of consultants, as proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on experts and consultants (A/37/34). In view of the short-term nature of consultancies, geographical distribution was insignificant in comparison with the importance of securing services of the highest quality. Of course, there had been major increases in expenditures for experts and consultants, and those costs must be more strictly controlled. Currently, there were no restrictions on the salary paid to a consultant who was also receiving pension benefits from the United Nations. The United States strongly supported the JIU recommendation that consultants retained for longer than one month should receive a consultancy fee which, when combined with their pension payments, would not exceed the salary they had received prior to retirement. That restriction would discourage the retention of retirees as consultants to perform tasks that should perhaps be assigned to career staff. However, the Secretary-General should have the necessary flexibility to use former staff members whenever he deemed it useful.

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(Mr. Johnston, United States)

34. All those problems were due to the fact that the age of retirement had been arbitrarily set at 60. The United Nations was almost the only organization to maintain that barrier. The United States Government had eliminated mandatory retirement for its own civil servants in 1978. Many people remained active well after the age of 60 and, besides, the World Assembly on Aging had affirmed that all barriers to employment based on age should be eliminated. His delegation believed that the retirement age should be raised from 60 to 65, with an accompanying study aimed at eventual elimination of any mandatory retirement age.

35. With regard to the question of the arrest and detention of United Nations staff members in different countries around the world, his delegation deplored the fact that the situation had grown worse and that, in a number of cases, representatives of the Secretary-General had not been able to visit and speak to those staff members. The Secretary-General was undoubtedly grieved that some Governments did not comply with agreements entered into with the United Nations concerning the treatment of United Nations staff.

36. With respect to the question of the number of women in the Professional category, he noted that some progress had been achieved; however, although the General Assembly had set a target of 25 per cent to be reached by the end of 1982, the proportion of women filling posts subject to geographical distribution averaged only 22.2 per cent (31 per cent at Headquarters and 17 per cent in the field offices). Steps should therefore be taken to correct that situation. With regard to opportunities for promotion and career development, the problem remained: the proportion of women staff members fell dramatically at the P-4 level and above. His Government was committed to the idea of full participation of women both in the formulation of policy and in the implementation of programmes at all levels, for both the United Nations and Member States. In that connection, it would be useful if the Secretary-General provided in his annual reports statistics on the percentage of women promoted and appointed within each grade. He could, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, request each agency to submit an updated report on the percentage of women staff members, as a way of ensuring that women were not disadvantaged in promotions and appointments and could serve in key posts.

37. The United States believed that more appointments should be made at the P-1 and P-2 levels, but did not believe that recruitment at that level should be carried out solely in under-represented countries. Currently, less than 10 per cent of the Professional posts were at the P-1 and P-2 levels. The Joint Inspection Unit had made recommendations in that regard within the framework of its report on career development. By the same token, too many posts were established at the D-1 level and above. The United Nations currently had more than 350 employees at those senior levels, representing more than one eighth of its professional staff. His delegation noted with dismay that implementation of the new master standards for job classification had not corrected that situation. Consequently, it urged the Secretary-General to study the feasibility of establishing ceilings on the percentage of posts established at the D-1 level and above.

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38. Mr. LADOR (Israel) expressed appreciation of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143); he was particularly pleased by the increase in the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, from 17.8 per cent in 1978 to 22.2 per cent in 1982, and hoped that the trend would continue. On the other hand, on the question of geographical distribution the report indicated that those Member States which had been over-represented continued to be so, whereas the unrepresented and under-represented countries continued to suffer from that grossly unjust situation: from 1981 to 1982, the number of countries unrepresented in the Secretariat had fallen only from 19 to 17 and that of the underrepresented countries from 26 to 24. He noted that the situation of his country, which was one of those under-represented, had deteriorated still further. As the report indicated, Israelis held only four permanent posts in the Secretariat, all in middle or low classifications, as compared with the desirable range of 7 to 18 posts. Even when posts became vacant on retirement, they were not filled by Israeli nationals.

39. The situation bordered almost on discrimination towards a Member State whose staff members had fulfilled their duties scrupulously, with efficiency and integrity, and not without wisdom. Each time that Israel had presented candidates, the reply had been the same: that the position had been filled or that the candidate did not meet the required qualifications. It had been the custom for the Secretariat to send missions to under- and unrepresented countries to recruit new staff members, but the Israeli delegation could not recall any of those missions having visited Israel. The Israeli Government had asked the Secretariat for an explanation and had received the reply that its candidates' nationality or religion were not very popular in certain circles. It was true that Israel differed on a number of issues with the automatic majority that had been established some years before within the United Nations system, but that should not be a reason for discriminating against a Member State in an Organization that was supposed to be based on an objective international civil service. Having heard the reassuring remarks of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services, the Israeli delegation earnestly hoped, on behalf of the 24 countries under-represented in the Secretariat, that the situation would be corrected very soon.

AGENDA ITEM 107: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT  
(continued) (A/37/34, A/37/103 and A/C.5/37/28)

40. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to the General Assembly and the 13 reports issued by JIU from July 1981 to June 1982 demonstrated once more the quality of the Unit's work, which should serve as an example to many other bodies. During the past year, JIU had again studied problems the solution of which would lead to higher productivity and efficiency on the part of the staff of the Organization, to the elimination of duplication of work, to a better utilization of existing financial funds or even to savings. The recommendations in the JIU reports merited the special attention of the Secretary-General and the executive heads of all the specialized agencies.41.

(Mr. Richter, German Democratic Republic)

41. The most important of those recommendations should be incorporated in the pertinent resolutions or decisions taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. In particular, account should be taken of the JIU recommendations regarding application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the United Nations Secretariat staff in any future General Assembly resolution on personnel questions. Similarly, the JIU recommendations on the organization and methods for official travel should also be followed up. It was in the interest of all Member States to reduce the cost of such travel, currently amounting to nearly \$150 million a year.

42. With regard to the use of consultants and experts in the United Nations, his delegation believed that the situation had become a matter of serious concern. The JIU report (A/37/358) confirmed what it had always thought, namely, that in many cases consultants had been hired to do work which could have been done by regular staff. According to Administrative Instruction ST/AI/232, authority for using outside expertise was practically in the hands of programme managers and it was extremely difficult for the Office of Personnel Services to control the use of consultants. The arguments put forward to justify the use of outside expertise were often very flimsy. Stricter rules should therefore be adopted in the matter.

43. It was also important to end the practice of using former staff members as "consultants" to do the same jobs as they had done before retirement. There was in fact nothing that authorized programme managers to hire them.

44. JIU also noted that consultants were not hired on as wide a geographical basis as possible. In 1980, 52.8 per cent of all consultants had been hired from the developed countries of Western Europe and North America, as against 37.2 per cent from developing countries. Moreover, a large number of developing countries were not represented at all among the consultants used by the Organization. Lastly, the number of consultants hired from the Eastern European countries was very low; they had received only 6.6 per cent of all consultancy contracts in 1980, which was even less than in 1970. His delegation objected strongly to such discrimination against the socialist countries. It was convinced that the Organization would gain from making wider use of the vast scientific potential available in the German Democratic Republic by contracting scientists or scholars from that country as consultants. Furthermore, it could not approve of the 16.4-fold increase over the past 20 years in budget appropriations for consultants and experts; on the contrary, appropriations for that purpose should be drastically reduced. Lastly, it was in full agreement with the seven recommendations submitted by JIU in its report.

45. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's willingness to co-operate constructively in the preparation of decisions to give effect to the JIU recommendations and conclusions.

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46. Mr. TUNSALA (Zaire) said that he was gratified that the World Intellectual Property Organization had accepted the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit. That was indisputable proof of the confidence placed by the organizations of the United Nations system in JIU. That confidence obligated the Inspectors to subject the operation and management of the component bodies of the United Nations to rigorous scrutiny in order to help the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the executive heads of the other organizations to make those bodies more effective.

47. He regretted that the 18 unrepresented Member States and 11 under-represented developing countries had not been identified in paragraph 35 of the JIU report (A/37/34). It was, of course, possible to refer to the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143) in order to find out what countries were involved, but it would have been useful for the information to appear directly in the JIU report. As far as the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat was concerned, the position did not appear to have improved to any extent. In particular, the proportion of fixed-term staff in relation to permanent staff remained low, which prevented the problem of the under-representation or non-representation of certain States in the Secretariat from being solved. In that connection, Zaire associated itself with the recommendations of JIU in paragraph 37 of its report (A/37/34) and hoped that they would be put into effect. It regretted to note that in the past the JIU recommendations had not always been followed up, which was undoubtedly one of the main causes of the Organization's shortcomings.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.