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FIFTH COMMITTEE

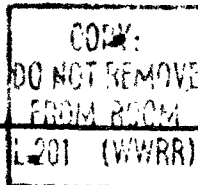
37th meeting

held on

Wednesday, 17 November 1982

at 10.30 a.m.

New York



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and Add.2; A/37/30, annex I, 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, A/C.5/37/24, A/C.5/37/26, A/C.5/37/34)

- (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. GRECU (Romania) said that there was no incompatibility between the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and the implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The only rational criteria were those laid down in the Charter and in General Assembly resolutions, the implementation of which would correct the unacceptable disparities in the geographical structure of the Secretariat. While the requirements of quality and efficiency must be taken into consideration, professional competence and dedication were not the exclusive attributes of nationals from a limited number of countries or of career staff members. Indeed, a great many examples could be cited which proved exactly the opposite. Personnel problems must be considered in the context of the grave crisis in the world economy, which inevitably had serious implications for the financial resources of the United Nations.

2. The reports of the Secretary-General, and in particular the report on the implementation of personnel policy reforms (A/C.5/37/5), revealed the progress that had been made in increasing the efficiency of the Secretariat and implementing the guidelines drawn up by the General Assembly, but it was clear that increased efforts were needed on the part of the Secretariat and of Member States to attain the objectives established. There were still major imbalances in the representation of States in the United Nations Secretariat in respect of the number and the level of posts held: it could be seen from table 9 in document A/37/143 that on 30 June 1982 there were over 40 unrepresented or under-represented States and 30 over-represented States and that over 60 countries had no post above the D-1 level, while 70 per cent of the senior posts were held by only 24 countries. Yet the practice of recruiting new staff members from countries which were already over-represented or near the upper limit had continued over the past year.

3. There was still a serious imbalance in the representation of States in different departments of the Secretariat. As could be seen from the table in paragraph 8 of the relevant report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/378), the Western countries had over 60 per cent and in some cases over 70 per cent of the

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(Mr. Grecu, Romania)

posts in a number of departments, while other countries were very poorly represented. His delegation shared the view expressed by JIU in paragraph 7 that there was little evidence to suggest a measurable improvement in the composition of staff or the elimination of the predominance of nationals from a certain group of developed countries. When recruiting new staff members, priority must be accorded to candidates from unrepresented or under-represented countries and candidates from over-represented countries should be recruited only in exceptional cases. Steps must be taken to increase the number of posts subject to geographical distribution in line with the trend in other organizations such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency. His delegation fully endorsed the view of JIU in paragraph 24 of the report (A/37/378) regarding career staff and permanent contracts. It disagreed with the practice of appointing permanent staff members which, as was pointed out in paragraph 26 of the same report, constituted a considerable obstacle to efforts aimed at the attainment of an equitable geographical distribution of staff and the elimination of the predominance of one group of countries in the Secretariat. It was very disturbing that, as the JIU pointed out, the posts filled on the basis of permanent contracts had become the "exclusive property" of the States whose nationals filled them and that some over-represented countries had more than 75 per cent of their nationals in the Secretariat on permanent appointments. Further efforts must be made to improve the representation of States in senior posts from D-1 upwards, and the possibility of setting national targets for each geographical region should be considered.

4. In connection with the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of consultants and experts in the United Nations (A/37/358), his delegation was concerned about the rapid growth in budgetary appropriations for experts and consultants at a time when States were striving for maximum economy in the utilization of their human and financial resources. The situation was all the more disquieting in that the funds allocated could be used by departments to increase their manpower beyond the level approved by the General Assembly, as illustrated by JIU in paragraph 22 of the report. His delegation was also concerned about the inadequate geographical distribution of consultants and experts, most of whom were recruited from a limited number of States, particularly developed States. It would be interesting to know what criteria were followed in recruiting consultants and experts. His delegation fully supported the recommendations in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/358).

5. Romania was represented in the Secretariat by only seven staff members, and when the contracts of two of those individuals expired at the end of the year it would become an under-represented country. Romania would like greater assistance from the Secretariat to remedy that situation. There was no lack of qualified candidates in Romania and the argument that there were no vacancies was obviously invalid in view of the relatively high level of recruitment in 1981 and 1982 and the General Assembly guidelines on the recruitment of nationals from under-represented countries.

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6. Mr. TOMASZEWSKI (Poland) said that the Fifth Committee had traditionally attached considerable priority to the item on personnel because the implementation of the decisions of United Nations organs depended on the competence of the staff of the Secretariat. Member States should submit their best candidates for employment in the Secretariat and only such candidates should be accepted. His country had done its utmost to propose candidates fully capable of making a productive contribution to the work of the Secretariat and then, on their return to Poland, of being able to utilize properly the skills and experience they had acquired.

7. There was within the Secretariat a large group of staff members whose dedication, competence, fairness, integrity and commitment to the principles of the Charter were deserving of the highest praise. At the same time, however, there were some staff members who failed to live up to such noble principles. There had been an unfortunate tendency in recent years for staff performance to decline while staff numbers increased. One of the causes of that situation was the inflexible policy of permanent contracts. Unless that policy was changed, the situation could only deteriorate in the years to come. His delegation fully agreed with the conclusions of JIU that a fundamental reform of current practices had become absolutely essential. The need in some cases for a core of career staff to ensure continuity and stability did not mean that a privileged group of staff should enjoy guaranteed tenure until retirement. Consideration might be given to limiting service in the Secretariat to between 10 and 15 years. A flexible policy of rotation could both maintain a core of career staff and infuse more imaginative thinking and a spirit of action into the Secretariat in contrast to the bureaucracy and routine which currently prevailed.

8. His delegation had serious doubts as to the wisdom of the Secretary-General's suggestion that the percentage of posts allocated for internal promotion through competitive methods should be increased to at least 50 per cent of vacancies at the P-1 and P-2 levels. Such a measure would lead to a further extension of the system of permanent contracts and place new obstacles in the path of improving geographical distribution.

9. While the United Nations had a good record in the geographical distribution of elective posts, there was still a long way to go in securing an equitable geographical composition of the Secretariat, despite numerous decisions of the General Assembly on the subject. He noted with satisfaction that the proportion of Member States which were within their desirable ranges had grown from around 33 per cent in 1978 to around 57 per cent in 1982. It was to be hoped that the proposed medium-term recruitment plan would succeed in bringing unrepresented and under-represented Member States within their desirable ranges by the end of 1985 and ending the over-representation of other States. However, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in document A/37/34 did not provide much grounds for optimism on that score. The Inspectors had noted the persistence of a serious situation concerning the geographical distribution of the staff in respect of the countries of Eastern Europe. His country was below the mid-point of its desirable range and was clearly under-represented at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

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(Mr. Tomaszewski, Poland)

10. The recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/36/407 concerning the geographical distribution of staff in the Secretariat could pave the way for a substantial improvement in the situation. His delegation welcomed the assurance given by the Chairman of JIU that there was no disagreement among the Inspectors on the principle of equitable geographical distribution, that they attached the highest importance to it and that they were convinced that the strictest standards of competence were not incompatible with the requirement of equitable geographical distribution.

11. With regard to the use of consultants and experts, he noted that, as indicated in the report of JIU (A/37/358), the principles and guidelines established by the General Assembly in 1974 had not been fully observed by the Secretariat. Expenditure on consultants and experts had increased significantly in most departments and offices during the preceding seven years and the rate of growth of appropriations for consultants had been much higher than the overall rate of budgetary growth. His delegation noted the contradiction between the arguments adduced in favour of a permanent staff in the Secretariat and the increased use of experts and consultants from outside the Secretariat. Immediate action should be taken to remedy that situation.

12. Lastly, his delegation urged once again that consideration should be given to the possibility of bringing more posts within the system of desirable ranges by making them subject to geographical distribution.

13. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the United Nations must be able to count on an efficient Secretariat characterized by impartiality, unity of action and full representation of all political, ideological, racial, religious, cultural and sociological trends. The objective of applying the principle of equitable geographical distribution to all posts in the Secretariat must be attained as soon as possible. The predominance of the contribution factor in allocating staff quotas to Member States only undermined the concept of equality inherent in the Charter. There must be an adequate balance in the composition of the various departments and offices of the United Nations so as to avoid certain posts being considered the exclusive property of certain countries or groups of countries and also an adequate balance in levels and categories so as to allow the nationals of the developing countries to fill senior posts in the numbers required by their representation within the Organization. His delegation noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of States which had come within their desirable ranges and hoped that there would soon be no unrepresented or under-represented States.

14. The argument that fixed-term contracts and attractive career prospects were mutually exclusive was unsubstantiated: the number of fixed-term contracts must be increased to avoid such problems as favouritism and the blocking of posts and also to correct the current imbalances in respect of equitable geographical distribution in the short and medium term.

15. Although it was encouraging that the proportion of women in the Secretariat had increased, the goal of 25 per cent had not been achieved and in any case that

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(Mr. Fontaine Ortiz, Cuba)

figure was a minimum objective. His delegation hoped to receive detailed information about the recruitment of young people in the Secretariat in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/210.

16. His delegation expected the medium-term recruitment plan to provide for an adequate balance between the promotion of existing Professional staff and the offer of vacancies to Member States. It believed that candidates should be able to take examinations and undergo other recruitment procedures in the official language of their choice.

17. It was inappropriate that the Committee should take up the question of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations, since that subject fell within the competence of the Sixth Committee.

18. The discourteous manner of the representative of the staff who had appeared before the Committee had irritated many representatives and had only served to weaken demands which could otherwise have been considered justified. If similar instances occurred which impinged on the sovereignty and honour of Member States, the Committee would have to reconsider the provision of General Assembly resolution 35/213 allowing access to the Committee by a representative of the staff.

19. The arguments in favour of the 5-per-cent salary increase for staff in the Professional and higher categories reflected the effects on the United Nations budget of the continual increase in cost of living caused by galloping inflation in the developed capitalist countries. His delegation was currently studying that request.

20. Mr. BENZEITUN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation attached great importance to the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/210 and followed with keen interest the steps taken by the Secretariat towards that end. He noted with satisfaction the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services to the effect that the recruitment procedures outlined in the annex to resolution 35/210 had been put into practice.

21. Despite numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the situation with regard to the equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat remained unsatisfactory. The reasons for that situation included the inadequacy of efforts to appoint candidates from unrepresented or under-represented States, the excessive use made of permanent contracts and the preference given to internal candidates. Despite the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly with regard to the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries, vacancies were still being filled with nationals of over-represented countries. In the reporting period, for example, nearly 15 per cent of appointments had gone to nationals of over-represented countries. A serious effort must be made to rectify the imbalance in the Secretariat between developed and developing countries. To that end, recruitment procedures should be streamlined, the Office of Personnel Services should draw up an annual recruitment plan, objective methods of selection must be developed and vacancy announcements must be given timely distribution. For

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(Mr. Benzeitun, Libyan
Arab Jamahiriya)

example, announcements of vacancies in Geneva often arrived too late in New York for permanent missions of Member States to identify and propose suitable candidates. That meant that, in many cases, candidates from developing countries were not even considered for vacancies at the senior and policy-making levels.

22. The General Assembly had declared that no post in the Secretariat should be regarded as the exclusive preserve of any country. The main obstacle to enforcing such a policy was not the lack of qualified candidates from developing countries but rather the reluctance on the part of some departments to accept nationals from certain unrepresented or under-represented States and their insistence on staff from certain over-represented countries. His delegation was also dissatisfied with the distribution of posts in various regional economic commissions and other organizations of the system and suggested that the Secretary-General should monitor the policies and practices of such offices and make them accountable for their actions.

23. The fact that some countries remained unrepresented or under-represented could be interpreted as reflecting the Secretariat's belief that there were no candidates in those countries who possessed the requisite degree of efficiency and integrity. Such a view was totally unjustified and could be described as discriminatory. The Charter established a close link between high standards of efficiency and integrity, on the one hand, and equitable geographical distribution, on the other, and the two requirements were not incompatible. There was no evidence that the requirement of equitable geographical distribution had had an adverse effect on the work of the Organization. On the contrary, the failure of some entities to observe that principle had led to their inability faithfully to implement decisions taken by intergovernmental bodies.

24. Owing to the system of permanent contracts, some countries enjoyed a monopoly of senior posts in the Secretariat, some of which they had come to regard virtually as their private property. Effective action was needed to remedy that situation. His country continued to be under-represented both quantitatively and qualitatively, and none of its nationals occupied senior or policy-making posts. His Government had proposed many qualified candidates for such senior posts in the Secretariat and yet none had been recruited. At the same time, nationals of over-represented countries had received appointments. He urged the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to ensure an appropriate balance in the Secretariat.

25. He noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of women employed in the Secretariat. Although the target of 25 per cent of Professional posts had not been met, the progress so far gave grounds for optimism. His delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts to promote equality between the sexes.

26. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was unfortunate that the report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and specialized agencies and related organizations (A/C.5/37/34) was tendentious, politically one-sided, and lacking in objectivity. An example was the

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

inclusion in the report, for reasons that were incomprehensible, of information from the secretariat of UNESCO presenting in a distorted light, as in the previous year, the so-called Stulz affair. As was well known, Mr. Stulz had been released by the authorities of the German Democratic Republic, in accordance with the laws of that country, and he had been treated in a compassionate and humanitarian manner. As the report recognized, Mr. Stulz's former wife and their daughter had returned from Paris to the German Democratic Republic in August 1982. Yet, without any justification, more than one third of the report was devoted to that incident.

27. At the same time, there were some scandalous cases of violation of the immunities of United Nations staff members. Specifically, during Israel's recent aggression against Lebanon, 166 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been arrested by the Israeli military. As was noted in paragraph 6 of the report, by the end of September 1982 only 37 of those individuals had been released. On 9 November 1982, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, speaking in the Special Political Committee had indicated that in October 125 staff members of UNRWA were still under Israeli detention. It appeared that the representations that had been made to the Israeli authorities by UNRWA and by the International Committee of the Red Cross had been of no avail and that the international civil servants were still in concentration camps established by the Israeli army in Lebanon. Israel's blatant violation of the immunities of United Nations staff members could hardly be ignored. Yet in the report five pages were devoted to the case of the arrest on legitimate grounds of one staff member of UNESCO, who had subsequently been released, while the case of the arrest of 166 United Nations staff members, most of whom were still in Israeli concentration camps and about whose fate practically nothing was known, had been allotted only five lines, written in a rather apologetic tone. The reason for that very different approach was obviously attributable to the political sympathies of the writers of the report.

28. The report did not indicate whether any action had been taken by the Secretary-General or the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to send specially authorized representatives to visit the arrested staff members and investigate their conditions. He asked whether the Secretariat possessed any information about the charges against those staff members and requested the Secretary-General to inform the Committee about the conditions and whereabouts of the staff members concerned and what was being done to secure their release.

29. The report referred only in passing to the cases of arrest and detention of staff in the occupied West Bank and the occupied Gaza Strip. Because of some unaccountable delicacy the writers of the report had carefully avoided naming the State which was occupying those territories, clearly wishing to gloss over the illegal actions of the Israeli authorities, which were in violation of the norms of international law and ignored the decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council calling for the release of the territories seized from Arab States.

30. The report failed to mention that, as a result of the recent events in Lebanon caused by Israeli aggression, several members of the United Nations Interim Force

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(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had perished and the lives of most of the members of UNIFIL had been endangered. In order to remedy that omission, he wished to quote an extract from one of the United Nations documents issued during the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. Paragraph 15 of document S/15194/Add.1 described how obstacles placed by Dutch soldiers in the path of an Israeli tank column had been pushed aside, as had a Dutch guardhouse, and how Israeli tank barrels had been pointed at UNIFIL soldiers during the entire encounter. In the other battalion areas, obstacles had been forcibly removed and bulldozed. A small Nepalese position which, despite threats, had stood its ground for two days had been partially destroyed. He could provide extracts from other documents submitted to the Security Council during the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. He wished to draw that serious incident to the attention of delegations, particularly the delegation of the Netherlands, which had taken an active part in raising the question of the immunities and privileges of international civil servants. It was a case not simply of arrest and detainment but of the use of force which could have resulted in death for the Dutch and Nepalese soldiers of UNIFIL. The situation was equally dangerous for soldiers and officers of other nationalities serving in UNIFIL.

31. Mr. LADOR (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the unwarranted statement which had been made by the representative of the Soviet Union hardly called for a reply since that country's record with respect to human rights and the massive detention of dissidents had been deplored by the entire international community. The Soviet Union should refrain from talking about concentration camps, although it seemed to know a great deal about them. It should also refrain from speaking on behalf of others, who might not appreciate its concern.

32. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, since the Committee had a great many important matters to deal with, he did not wish to enter into polemics with the representative of a country which had so recently committed naked aggression against Lebanon and continued to occupy Arab territories in violation of a long series of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

33. Mr. LADOR (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he would be grateful to the Soviet representative if, bearing in mind the pressure which the Committee was under, he would refrain from distracting it from the important matters of substance on its agenda.

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AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/37/3 (Part II), chap. VI, sect. C, A/37/6, A/37/7, A/37/38, A/37/154 and Corr.1 and 2, A/37/206 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/37/207, A/37/460; A/C.5/37/25; E/1982/INF/12, decision 1982/173)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION
- (b) MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1984-1989
- (c) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

34. Mr. HANSEN (Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination) said that item 104 covered a range of complex issues. The medium-term plan was the only document reflecting the aspirations of Member States with respect to future United Nations activities in a comprehensive and authoritative manner. The range of activities which it covered was extraordinary, and many of the complex interrelationships between activities were apparent only in the context of the medium-term plan. For example, the fact that the plan was prepared along programme lines made it possible to appreciate the relationship between the global and regional aspects of each sector.

35. Over the past seven years there had been extensive debate in the Fifth Committee on medium-term planning, and how it related to policy-making, programming, budgeting, evaluation and co-ordination in the United Nations system as a whole. The debate, which had centred on how to involve specialized and regional intergovernmental bodies in the formulation of the plan, and on technical considerations, such as the duration of the plan and what Member States could expect to receive from the plan in terms of services, had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 34/224 and 36/228. As desired by the Assembly, the drafts of each chapter of the medium-term plan had been reviewed by specialized and regional intergovernmental bodies and revised by the Secretariat. That process had taken 18 months, but had resulted in a document which was suitable for adoption by the Assembly as the principal policy directive of the United Nations.

36. The intensive debate on priority-setting in the Fifth Committee at the thirty-sixth session had resulted in the adoption of procedures which differed significantly from the former system of establishing relative real growth rates and which had been established with the assistance of specialized and regional intergovernmental bodies, as requested by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the General Assembly. The medium-term plan was the programme framework for the budgets prepared during the period it covered. After approval by the General Assembly, it provided the Secretary-General with a legislative basis for submitting budgetary requests for the activities needed to implement the strategies it contained. The Secretary-General had stated his intention to redeploy available resources from low-priority to high-priority areas before requesting additional resources under the 1984-1985 programme budget. He also intended to redeploy resources away from obsolete, ineffective or marginally useful activities. The assumption that resources would be so redeployed underlay the

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medium-term plan, as did the assumption that the real resources available to the United Nations would increase moderately over the period covered by the plan. The projections of resources given in the plan did not constitute budgetary proposals; they were merely mechanical projections, as suggested by ACABQ. They showed the results of an across-the-board projection of the 1982-1983 net appropriation, assuming an average rate of inflation of 5 per cent per annum over the period covered by the plan, for four levels of real growth: minus 2 per cent, 0 per cent, 2 per cent and 4 per cent. While the figures were merely indicative, it was quite likely that Member States would add new activities to those already contained in the plan. In that case, some increase in real resources would be essential, unless a significant volume of activities carried over from earlier mandates could be discontinued. It should be borne in mind that almost half of the funds needed to carry out the proposals in the plan were expected to come from extrabudgetary sources, and that that had presented problems for the authors of the plan because of the uncertainties inherent in that type of funding.

37. Turning to the draft rules and regulations on programme planning, he said that they represented the culmination of seven years of effort by the Fifth Committee, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPL) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). The regulations drafted by the Secretariat had been based on the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, since all of those resolutions had originated in the Fifth Committee, their wording would be familiar. Where CPC had considered that that wording had not been close enough to the wording of the resolutions or had departed from the intent expressed therein, it had redrafted the regulations accordingly. In addition, CPC had made known its interpretation of certain of the rules to be promulgated by the Secretary-General. As a result of that extensive drafting process, the wording of the regulations had been carefully refined. The adoption of the programme planning regulations by the General Assembly at its current session would greatly facilitate the work of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination and the Office of Financial Services at Headquarters, the work of the programme planning units in the regional commission and, in particular, the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985.

38. The report of JIU on the elaboration of regulations for the planning, programming and evaluation cycle of the United Nations (A/37/460) was critical of the preparation of the plan and its review by CPC and the Economic and Social Council. In paragraph 29, JIU stated that the opportunity of opening up a constructive dialogue between the Secretariat and Member States offered by the preparation of the medium-term plan and its introduction had not been taken up. The Secretariat had a rather more positive view. JIU also believed that the planning system of the United Nations must permit periodic reflection on the work of the Organization and the rationalization of that work. Yet those were not the only objectives. The plan, in common with the programme budget, had been conceived as a instrument whereby the Secretariat might make formal proposals to Member States on the future work of the Organization. The nature of the plan had been

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(Mr. Hansen)

determined by the requirement that it should be suitable for adoption by intergovernmental bodies. The review in the specialized intergovernmental bodies, CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly was not an academic debate, but an opportunity for reconciling diverse views and reaching a consensus. Many substantive changes had been made to the plan as a result of its review by CPC and the Council. That was precisely the outcome envisaged by the Committee and the General Assembly when it had adopted resolution 36/228. The experience of formulating and reviewing the plan had thus been very positive, in that Member States had had an unprecedented opportunity to comment on the content and nature of the future work of the Organization, and the priorities to be adopted. The JIU report also provided an alternative approach to the programme planning regulations before the Committee. The Secretariat had not had sufficient time to prepare a written response to those proposals.

39. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the first report of the Advisory Committee (A/37/7) contained preliminary remarks on the draft regulations governing programme planning and the programme aspects of the budget.

40. The Advisory Committee had requested the Secretary-General to submit to it his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, comments which it had been awaiting before submitting its own remarks. It had yet to be determined whether the remarks made by the Assistant Secretary-General constituted an adequate response to the request made by the Advisory Committee in its report. If the Secretary-General's comments were not submitted, the Advisory Committee would need to decide how to proceed.

41. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) inquired when the draft regulations would go before the General Assembly in their final form.

42. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Assembly had requested the Chairmen of the Main Committees to submit their comments on the relevant portions of the medium-term plan. Those comments would be made available in due course. The delegations concerned should conclude their consultations on the draft resolution on the item.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.