



FIFTH COMMITTEE
71st meeting
held on
Wednesday, 15 December 1982
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 71st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

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

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21 December 1982

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Special Political Committee in document A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 68 (A/C.5/37/95)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the statement of administrative and financial implications contained in document A/C.5/37/95. The total estimated costs of implementing the mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General under operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 amounted to \$49,700. Since the Secretary-General was in a position to absorb those costs, the adoption of the draft resolution would involve no additional appropriations under the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.
2. Mr. FREILICH (Israel) said that his delegation had voted against draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 and was opposed to the use of United Nations resources to implement it. The proposed canal linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea could be of benefit to the entire region and provide clean, low-cost energy on a regular basis to any country which co-operated in the project. His delegation hoped that Jordan and the other countries involved would decide to join in the project and share in its benefits.
3. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 in the Special Political Committee. Although the Secretary-General had not requested additional appropriations for the implementation of the draft resolution, the fact that the proposed costs were to be absorbed meant that it would be impossible to use available resources for more important activities. His delegation was not convinced that the study in question had to be made by outside experts rather than by existing United Nations staff.
4. Mr. SHAHANKARI (Jordan) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the draft resolution adopted by the Special Political Committee. The proposed canal would have extremely adverse effects on the economy and welfare of Jordan, which was a developing country with very limited resources. Furthermore, Israel had no legal right to build the proposed canal, for part of which would cross occupied Arab territory. His delegation therefore hoped that the Fifth Committee would approve the Secretary-General's recommendations in document A/C.5/37/95 by consensus.
5. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) drew attention to the fact that, in the Spanish version of document A/C.5/37/95, the word "no" should be inserted before the words "se necesitarían" in paragraph 5.
6. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it

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(The Chairman)

adopt draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1, no additional appropriations would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

7. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee in document A/C.2/37/L.91 concerning agenda item 71 (a)
(A/C.5/37/96)

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) observed that paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.91 proposed the establishment of a committee of universal membership to carry out the review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy in 1984. As indicated in paragraph 5 of the statement of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/37/96), conference-servicing requirements for the Committee's organizational session in 1983 would cost \$27,300, an amount which it would be possible to absorb. Conference-servicing requirements for the Committee's two regular sessions in 1984 would cost \$547,300, but those costs would be considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. Thus, no additional appropriations would be required for the time being to implement draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.91.

9. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said his delegation was gratified to hear that no additional appropriations would be required at the present time. It also expected that any arrangements with regard to the timing and venue of the Committee's regular sessions in 1984 would be determined, if necessary in consultation with the Committee on Conferences, in such a way as to make the most effective use possible of conference-servicing resources.

10. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.91, no additional appropriations would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. Conference-servicing requirements would arise in 1984 which were estimated, on a full-cost basis and at 1983 rates, at \$547,300. The actual appropriations that might be required in that respect would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for 1984-1985.

11. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee in document A/C.2/37/L.65/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 12
(A/C.5/37/97)

12. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to the fact that paragraph 4 of the draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to prepare and regularly update a consolidated list of products whose consumption and/or sale had been banned, withdrawn, severely restricted or, in the case of pharmaceuticals, non-approved by Governments, and to make that list available as early as possible, and in any case not later than

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(Mr. Mselle)

December 1983. Because the Secretary-General would be taking into account, when preparing the proposed list, work already being done by a number of specialized agencies, the Advisory Committee had initially questioned the need for him also to enlist the services of outside consultants. After hearing the views of the representatives of the Secretary-General and considering the requirements of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, however, the Advisory Committee had agreed that outside expertise would indeed be needed. The Advisory Committee had therefore agreed to the appropriation of \$90,000 under section 6 for 24 work-months at the General Service level and 12 work-months at the consultant level. It had, however, decided that the \$28,000 estimated under that section for external printing and binding should be absorbed, as should the \$10,000 estimated under section 28G for the rental and maintenance of computer equipment. The Advisory Committee was therefore recommending an additional appropriation of \$90,000 under section 6 and an additional appropriation of \$10,800 under section 31, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1.

13. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) recalled that his delegation had commented on both the substance and the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.65/Rev.1 in the Second Committee. It was primarily as a result of the financial implications that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution. While it appreciated the Advisory Committee's efforts to reduce the costs of implementing the draft resolution, an additional appropriation of nearly \$100,000 was still being recommended. He therefore requested a vote on the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

14. Mr. HADID (Algeria) drew attention to the third and four preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.65/Rev.1, which demonstrated the importance of the draft resolution in providing developing countries with the means to protect the health and safety of their populations. The Advisory Committee had, however, seen fit to reduce by approximately 30 per cent the Secretary-General's estimates of the cost of implementing the draft resolution. The sponsors' main concern was that there should be sufficient financial resources to permit the Secretary-General to fulfil the mandate entrusted to him by the draft resolution. He therefore requested that consideration of the Advisory Committee's recommendations should be deferred to the following meeting so that the representatives of the sponsoring States could consult with their counterparts in the Second Committee.

15. Mr. HORST (Venezuela) observed that the figures given in document A/C.5/37/97 already represented a downward revision of the original estimate of the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.65/Rev.1. The Second Committee had adopted the draft resolution by 132 votes to 1, with no abstentions. The only explanation of vote had been given by the United States delegation which had cast the negative vote. On behalf of the sponsors, he wished to point out that the amount which the Secretary-General had calculated as being necessary to begin work on the proposed list of products was really very small. The sponsors would therefore vote for the recommended sum of \$127,000.

16. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) noted that, according to paragraphs 12 and 13 of document A/C.5/37/97, the proposed list was to be prepared and distributed in English, French and Spanish only. Since the United Nations had six official

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(Mr. El Safty, Egypt)

languages, he wished to know why it had been assumed that the list would be distributed in only three of those languages.

17. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) pointed out that, if the difference between the Secretary-General's recommendation of \$127,000 and the Advisory Committee's recommendation of \$90,000 was to be absorbed, the Advisory Committee had not in fact reduced the Secretary-General's estimates but had simply decided that only \$90,000 of the \$127,000 would need to be financed from additional appropriations. Her delegation was very much aware of the importance of the draft resolution, but she wished to reassure concerned delegations that the Advisory Committee's recommendations in no way threatened its implementation.

18. Mr. NDOM MOUNGUEN (United Republic of Cameroon) emphasized the importance of the draft resolution, especially for the developing countries. As far as he could see, however, the Advisory Committee was not recommending a reduction in the financial implications submitted by the Secretary-General. He therefore urged the representative of Algeria to withdraw his proposal that consideration of the question should be deferred.

19. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said he considered the proposals under consideration to be important for all developing countries, and it was easy to appreciate the reasons for the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee. However, the point at issue was not the importance of the project but the question of cost. The Committee was required to decide how much should be appropriated for the project. The Advisory Committee had initially doubted the need to provide funds for consultants but had been convinced by the representative of the Secretary-General that expert advice would be required. It had therefore recommended that the funding required for consultant services should be approved in full.

20. As for external printing and binding, that was all done centrally and the resources approved were controlled by the Publications Board. Even if the amount of \$28,000 was disallowed, the consolidated computerized list of products would still be printed because the resources already available for printing and publication in the regular budget for the biennium 1982-1983 would be used to cover the publication of all documents.

21. With reference to the appropriation under section 28 G, he pointed out that the project data would be processed by the NYC (New York) and the ICC (Geneva). The reduction recommended by ACABQ would not in any way adversely affect the project, since it would still be possible to rent computer equipment, using funds already available to section 28G. Should there be need for additional funds, that could be reported in the context of the second performance report for 1982-1983.

22. The CHAIRMAN said there seemed to be no reason to postpone taking a decision, since no one could provide further information on printing and the Committee was the best forum to decide on the financial implications of external printing and computing requirements.

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23. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that after the clarification given by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, he had little to add. His delegation recognized the exceptional importance of the subject for developing countries and therefore considered that the programme set out in the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee should be implemented in full. The question whether to appropriate \$127,000 or \$90,000 seemed to be of little consequence, since the programme would be implemented in any case, sufficient funds being available to the Secretary-General from one source or another. He therefore urged any representatives who favoured postponing a decision not to insist but to accept the Advisory Committee's recommendations, on the understanding that the programme would be implemented in full as set out in the draft resolution.

24. Mr. BEGIN (Director, the Budget Division), replying to the point raised by the representative of Venezuela, said that the difference between the two sets of figures was due to the fact that estimates for other Main Committees had to be prepared with greater speed and were therefore not so precise as those submitted to the Fifth Committee. The difference was in fact very small, and the two figures represented the same reality.

25. As for the question raised by the representative of Egypt, a distinction must be made between documents which were required to be disseminated in all official languages and others, such as those issued by the Department of Public Information, to which the same rule did not apply; in the latter case, the languages of publication were chosen according to circumstances. The document in question belonged to the second category, and in such cases it was usual to restrict the number of languages in order to limit costs. It had been decided to publish in English, French and Spanish because it had seemed possible that those three languages would meet all needs. However, the Budget Division could find the means to cover the cost of publishing in other languages if necessary.

26. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that, in his view, it was wrong to assume that the three languages would suffice; 23 Member States used Arabic, and he believed that they would need to have the document published in that language. Since the need seemed clear, he assumed that the document would be published in Arabic and welcomed the assurance that the cost could be met by the Budget Division.

27. Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden) said his delegation believed that the expenditure levels recommended by the Advisory Committee would prove adequate to meet all needs.

28. Mr. HORST (Venezuela) said his delegation was satisfied by the assurances that the programme envisaged could be implemented in full with the resources already available and the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee.

29. Mr. de SILVA (Sri Lanka) suggested that, since there was no doubt that the programme would be implemented in full, the problem of the apparent discrepancy between the quoted cost of \$127,000 and the recommended appropriation of \$90,000 could perhaps be disposed of by a note to the effect that the difference would be met from regular budget funds.

30. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.65/Rev.1, an additional appropriation totalling \$90,000 would be required under section 6 (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. A further appropriation of \$10,800 would be required under section 31 (Staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase of the same amount in the estimates of income under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). As requested by the representative of the United States, the proposal would be put to the vote.

31. The proposal was adopted by 97 votes to 1.

32. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) and Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt), speaking in explanation of vote, said that their delegations had supported the proposal in view of the assurances given and on the understanding that the document would be published in Arabic in addition to English, French and Spanish.

33. Mr. HORST (Venezuela) said it was a matter of great concern that, despite the prohibition of their sale and use in the producer country, a large number of harmful products continued to be manufactured and exported, especially to developing countries, many of which lacked the ability to protect themselves effectively against such products. The financial implications of the draft resolution were minimal in comparison with the benefits it would produce for developing countries, and his delegation had therefore supported it.

34. Mr. NDOM MOUNGUEN (United Republic of Cameroon) said his delegation had voted in favour of the proposal on the understanding that the programme would be fully implemented and that additional resources could be made available if that proved necessary.

35. Mr. HADID (Algeria) said his delegation had approved the proposal on the basis of the assurances that it would be possible to meet all necessary costs.

36. Miss CASTILLO (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation fully endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Venezuela and had voted for the proposals in the draft resolution because they were of great importance for developing countries in particular.

37. Mr. KBAIER (Tunisia) said his delegation had agreed to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the understanding that the programme envisaged would be implemented in full and that the document would be published in Arabic as well as in English, French and Spanish.

Education grant for certain full-time officials other than members of the Secretariat (A/C.5/37/L.50)

38. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan), introducing draft decision A/C.5/37/L.50 on behalf of the sponsors, said that it attempted to correct an anomaly in the compensation of

(Mr. Kemal, Pakistan)

certain full-time expatriate non-Secretariat officials, namely, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

39. Although those officials received honoraria from the United Nations, they were not part of the regular United Nations salary structure. That was proper in view of their functions, since otherwise a conflict of interest might arise. Their honoraria were intended to correspond to the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels, but the General Assembly had not made any provision for an education grant, because it had not wished to place them on the same footing as members of the Secretariat. However, that had led to certain difficulties. The officials in question were engaged full-time in New York and were obliged to reside there, thus incurring additional education costs. Indeed, it had been estimated that such costs would reduce their effective pay to that of an official at the D-1 level. It should be noted, moreover, that members of the Joint Inspection Unit based in Geneva were entitled to an education grant.

40. The maximum proposed was modest, and was less than that to which members of the Secretariat were entitled. While some delegations might consider that the provision of such a grant infringed the independence of the officials in question and blurred the distinction between them and Secretariat officials, such arguments were ill-founded. In fact, the provision of an education grant would give the officials concerned greater financial security and thus enhance their effectiveness. It should also be borne in mind that they were elected, by virtue of the confidence which Member States placed in them, and it was that process which was the ultimate safeguard of their independence. There was no need to fear that the provision of additional financial inducements might tempt people to present themselves as candidates, since the main consideration in occupying those posts was the honour of serving the United Nations. Adoption of the proposal, would be an act of equity.

41. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that, if the draft decision was adopted, a maximum of \$25,000 would be involved for 1983 for the education grant, plus \$20,000 for related travel costs, if it was the intention to provide such an entitlement. Of that amount, \$20,000 would be under section 1 and \$25,000 under section 28L of the budget, the latter amount being offset by \$15,000 under the income section, since the costs of ICSC were borne by the United Nations system as a whole. The costs for 1983 could be absorbed within existing appropriations.

42. Mr. MERIEUX (France) said that, while his delegation shared the general desire for equity, the draft decision caused it some concern. The Fifth Committee had been taking case-by-case decisions, first with regard to the Pension Fund and now concerning ICSC and the Advisory Committee, and perhaps other allowances would subsequently be requested. His delegation had reservations concerning the procedure which the Committee had followed. In the specific case before it, it would be more appropriate to follow established practice and request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the financial implications of the draft decision, which the Committee could then consider before taking any action. There

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(Mr. Merieux, France)

was no assurance that the Governments of the countries of which the incumbents were nationals might not, in the future, pay them some salary in addition to their United Nations emoluments. His delegation would vote against the draft decision.

43. Mr. HADID (Algeria) said that his delegation agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Pakistan. He was glad that the representative of France appreciated the need for equity, which justified the proposals contained in the draft decision. There was no reason to be concerned about the independence of the officials concerned or, since it would be an ad hoc measure, about their relationship to the Secretariat. His delegation would support the draft decision.

44. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation shared the views of the French delegation. It would be difficult to justify the provision of an education grant at the present time, since it would represent an increase in the net pay of certain high officials while the Fifth Committee had recently refused, and rightly so, to increase the pay of the staff.

45. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) said that there had been no time to discuss the draft decision with its sponsors. The question raised was important and sensitive, and the Committee could scarcely be expected to take a decision without adequate time for deliberation.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/C.5/37/L.49)

46. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/37/L.49, said that Mozambique should be deleted from the list of sponsors and Finland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago should be added to it. In the sixth preambular paragraph, the words "and at the thirty-seventh session" should be inserted after the words "thirty-sixth session".

47. The draft resolution was the result of arduous negotiations in the Working Group on the item. The operative paragraphs were divided into sections in accordance with the three different aspects of the basic problem. Those aspects were the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, the programme aspects of the budget, and the other conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twenty-second session. He proposed to indicate the way in which the provisions of the operative paragraphs related to the preamble.

48. Section I dealt with the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, which had been before the General Assembly for consideration on the proposal of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council. The various parts of that plan had been referred to other Main Committees in order to obtain their views and thus enable the Fifth Committee to make a final proposal on the plan. That process had resulted in the note by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee referred to in the fifth preambular paragraph (A/C.5/37/53). As could be seen from the Chairman's note, the other Main Committees had not adopted all the points of the medium-term plan as they stood, and that was the reason for the specific wording of section I, paragraph 1, of the draft resolution.

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(Mr. Tommo Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

49. Previous General Assembly resolutions had stated that the medium-term plan, as adopted, constituted the principal policy directive of the Organization; the Working Group had therefore retained that wording in section I, paragraph 2. In view of the length of the document, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had recommended that the medium-term plan should be produced in one volume instead of in a fascicle, as had previously been the case. That was the reason for the request to the Secretary-General in paragraph 3 to issue the plan for the period 1984-1989, as adopted, as a single-volume printed document. Finally, there had been criticism of the presentation of the medium-term plan throughout the discussion on the document in the Fifth Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. It had therefore been thought that the Secretary-General should take advantage of the periodic revisions of the medium-term plan to improve its presentation, and a request to that effect was addressed to him in paragraph 4.

50. Section II of the draft resolution related to methods evolved as a result of the desire to improve the programme aspects of the budget, which had been evident in the Fifth Committee for some years. Under paragraph 1, the General Assembly would adopt the regulations recommended by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, as revised. The revisions made by the Working Group were minor ones designed to take into account General Assembly resolutions 31/93, 34/224 and 36/228, on all of which a consensus had been achieved in the Fifth Committee, and the draft regulations annexed to the draft resolution had likewise been approved by consensus in the Working Group. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit draft rules expanding the regulations, which he had done in document A/37/206/Add.1. The Working Group had considered those rules, but had found that they did not meet the demands made by CPC and the Economic and Social Council. Section II, paragraphs 2 and 3, noted that fact and requested the Secretary-General to issue new rules in conformity with the regulations, taking into consideration comments made in the Fifth Committee, and to submit them to CPC at its twenty-third session and to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

51. The point made in section II, paragraph 4, was important, since the adoption of the budget and the allocation of resources without reference to programmes would mean that the budget would no longer be a programme budget, in which case it would become more difficult to evaluate programmes and outputs. Once the draft regulations had been adopted certain financial rules would have to be revised, as noted in paragraph 5. Paragraph 6 requested the Secretary-General to further strengthen the programme monitoring machinery as a follow-up to his establishment of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board and the Central Monitoring Unit.

52. Section II, paragraph 7, reflected the concern of Member States over the programme implications of draft resolutions, and requested the Secretary-General to take action to provide appropriate information. Paragraph 8 requested him to provide an evaluation programme and a time-table for evaluation, which would allow States to appreciate evaluation exercises more fully. Paragraph 9 reflected the fact that adoption of the draft regulations would not mean that a perfect system

(Mr. Tommo Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

had been established in the United Nations, and that further improvements would be possible.

53. Section III of the draft resolution referred to the other conclusions and recommendations of CPC at its twenty-second session, and requested the Secretary-General to comment on those recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit which had not yet been reflected in the regulations for consideration by CPC at its twenty-third session. The General Assembly would thereafter keep the question under review, which would enable modifications to be made as necessary.

54. If the draft resolution was adopted, it would provide the United Nations with a valuable planning, programming and budgeting instrument which would allow the Organization to tailor its activities more closely to the wishes of Member States, while using resources more economically.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.