



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUYAMA (Japan)

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 109: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 AND AGENDA ITEM 110: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/38/3, A/38/6, A/38/7, A/38/38)

First reading (continued)

Section 3 - Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization

1. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to a question asked at the 21st meeting by the representative of Canada, explained that the amount included under section 3 for the SWAPO office in New York could be revised by the General Assembly in the light of the programme of work of the United Nations Council for Namibia. The annual allocation was considered by the Council and corresponding statements of expenditure were submitted by the SWAPO office to the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia. The allocations for the current budget amounted to \$598,000 - \$289,000 for 1982 and \$309,000 for 1983. The expenses incurred in 1982 were broken down into: staff costs, \$109,000; travel costs, \$89,000; rent, \$18,000; miscellaneous equipment costs, \$10,000; external printing, \$16,000; other operational overheads, \$47,000.

Section 4 - Policy-making organs (economic and social activities)

2. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraphs 68 and 69 of its report (A/38/38 (part II)), on which it had omitted to take action.

3. It was so decided.

Section 5B - Centre for Science and Technology for Development

4. Mr. MERIEUX (France) emphasized that the Centre was called on to play a vital role in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, its main task being to provide substantive support to the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development. It was important, however, for its powers to be clearly defined so as to avoid duplication. His delegation had already indicated during the discussion in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that it was not convinced, in view of the vagueness of the Centre's mandate, of the advisability of developing the activities included in subprogramme 3, particularly programme element 3.2. With regard to the financing of science and technology, a better distribution of tasks between the Centre and the system already operating within the context of UNDP would be desirable.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraphs 98 and 99 of its report (A/38/38 (part II)).

6. It was so decided.

7. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$3,892,100 under section 5B for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 8 - Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of \$13,700 in the estimate for overtime, in view of the creation of a new General Service post, which it had recommended for approval. Apart from that slight reduction, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the entire estimate for section 8.

9. Mr. MARRON (Spain) said that the reduction of \$13,700 recommended by the Advisory Committee seemed justified. In addition, he wished to make some suggestions of a more general nature, designed to facilitate the preparation of the programme budget and to simplify the task of the members of the Fifth Committee. In the first place, he stressed the need for the figures given in the summary tables to correspond exactly to those given in the explanatory text, particularly in order to facilitate comparison with allocations for previous biennia. He mentioned as an example paragraph 8.11, where the estimates for the three subprogrammes of the Office's programme of activity were presented in a fragmentary manner, and there was no overall figure enabling one to verify the total cost of the programme. He also noted that the analysis of the growth in expenditure by item contained in paragraphs 8.17 to 8.19 did not take into account the effect of inflation, although it had been taken into consideration for the calculation of the figures given in table 8.8. Lastly, he suggested that the possibility should be considered of changing the presentation of certain tables so as to make them easier to read, for example by adopting a horizontal instead of a vertical presentation.

10. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that his delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations and asked whether the procedure advocated in paragraph 8.3 of the ACABQ report, whereby transfers of credits would be reflected in the resource growth columns of the tables for the sections concerned, would be followed in the future.

11. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that, if cases similar to the one mentioned in paragraph 8.3 of the Advisory Committee's report arose in the future, that would indeed be the procedure that would be adopted.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the recommendation made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraph 163 of its report (A/38/38 (part II)).

13. It was so decided.

14. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$3,778,500 under section 8 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 10 - Economic Commission for Europe

15. Mr. MARRON (Spain) had doubts as to whether the distinction made in table 10.6 between travel of staff to meetings and other official travel of staff was really justified at the current stage; it would perhaps be possible to combine those two items of expenditure. In addition, his delegation noted that the inflation rate varied considerably in the different programmes, ranging from 5.39 per cent in certain cases to 8.26 per cent for administrative and common services. The same was true of the rate of inflation applied to staff costs, which varied from 5.47 per cent to 8.21 per cent. His delegation would welcome clarification on that subject. It would also like to know what was the reason for the sizeable differences found in the average remuneration per consultant work-month, which ranged from \$1,910 to \$4,730.

16. He also noted that the estimates for external printing had been considerably reduced in certain programmes but that, for the first time, there was a large estimate for that purpose for the programme relating to international trade and development financing and the programme relating to transport, communications and tourism. In that connection, he wondered whether it would not be possible to make greater use of the printing facilities available in the United Nations.

17. Mr. EL-SAFTY (Egypt) noted that the estimates for the services of experts and consultants were, to say the least, capricious. That was shown by the following examples taken from the proposed programme budget: \$43,200 for 19 work-months, i.e. about \$2,300 per work-month (para. 10.18); \$64,400 for 15.5 work-months, i.e. over \$4,000 per work-month (para. 10.26); \$26,500 for 9 work-months, i.e. almost \$3,000 per work-month (para. 10.37); \$13,100 for 5 work-months, i.e. about \$2,600 per work-month (para. 10.43). He asked on what basis the fees of consultants were calculated.

18. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to the representatives of Spain and Egypt, provided the following clarification: first, the distinction made between "travel of staff to meetings" and "other official travel of staff" was based on the fact that those two items of expenditure covered very different concepts: the former referred to the travel of staff members proceeding to meetings, either because they dealt with the matters considered at those meetings or because they rendered secretariat services; and the latter referred to travel by a staff member in the exercise of his duties which might require him to travel to other places where United Nations offices were situated for reasons which might be

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very diverse. Secondly, the inflation rates applied in the proposed programme budget varied according to the place and the item of expenditure involved. In the case of services at Geneva, an inflation rate of 5.5 per cent per annum had been applied consistently to all items of expenditure other than salaries. In the case of salaries, the adjustment system applied was such that inflation had a delayed effect on salaries and did not cover all elements of remuneration. The inflation rates for salaries were calculated according to anticipated increases in the consumer price index, account being taken of that time-lag.

19. The average inflation rate per programme therefore depended on the distribution of allocations for salaries and other items of expenditure, respectively.

20. Thirdly, printing was done so far as possible by the relevant Secretariat services. Although the equipment available to the Organization did not yet enable certain operations to be carried out, there was a substantial reduction in the estimates for printing as the capacity of the Organization's printing services increased.

21. Fourthly, two methods were used for evaluating the resources required for the services of experts and consultants. The first, called "standard costs" (encompassing fees and travel), consisted in establishing an average in the light of experience. In the interest of sound management, efforts were nevertheless made to quantify more accurately the estimates for each of the programmes concerned on the basis of the known scale of fees for consultants which varied considerably from one discipline to another.

22. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) asked why the inflation rate of 5.5 per cent had been used for Switzerland, since OECD used a rate of 2.5 per cent.

23. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) explained that the establishment of the proposed budget had been started several months before. At that time inflation rates had been very high and, even though they had shown a tendency to level off, there was nothing to indicate whether that trend would continue or whether, on the contrary, it only reflected a temporary situation. In any event, adjustments would be made subsequently to take into account the course of inflationary trends in 1983.

24. Mr. EL-SAFETY (Egypt) said that he was not fully convinced by those arguments. He hoped that the Economic Commission for Europe really needed the resources it requested in order to carry out the activities assigned to it, in particular in respect of development. Furthermore, consultants working for that Commission should be recruited from the world at large according to their skills.

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25. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination set forth in paragraphs 229 and 230 of its report (A/38/38 (part I)).

26. It was so decided.

27. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$25,089,000 under section 10 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 11. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General under section 11 was \$36,093,700 and the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee totalled \$1,191,900. Those reductions might seem substantial at first sight but, as the Committee explained in the relevant paragraphs of its report, some of them would be reconsidered in the course of the current session.

29. The reduction of \$613,200 which would result from the adoption of the recommendation to increase the turnover deduction from the standard rate of 5 per cent to 8 per cent was explained in paragraph 11.4 of the Advisory Committee's report. It should be emphasized again that the increase in the turnover deduction did not mean that the vacant posts would be abolished. The question which should really preoccupy the Fifth Committee, in relation not only to ESCAP but also to the other regional economic commissions, was that of ascertaining why so many posts remained vacant.

30. The Advisory Committee recommended a small reduction in the amount for printing in paragraph 7.8 and a provisional reduction in the amount for policy-making organs in paragraph 11.11. With regard to the latter recommendation, it should be noted that the Advisory Committee intended to consider shortly the question of the additional cost of holding the Commission's fortieth session at Tokyo.

31. In paragraph 11.15, the Advisory Committee recommended a provisional reduction in the amount requested for the establishment, under the programme "Population", of three new posts which would replace UNFPA extrabudgetary posts. The results of the consideration of that request would be reflected in a report that would shortly be submitted to the Fifth Committee.

32. Paragraphs 11.16 and 11.19 described differences of opinion between the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat with respect to two post reclassifications. He endorsed unreservedly the observations which the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had made the previous day concerning the thorny nature of the reclassification question, which the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee must unfortunately continue to deal with.

33. In conclusion, he said that the reasons for the reductions recommended in paragraphs 11.18 and 11.20 were clearly set forth in the Advisory Committee's report, and he would therefore not repeat them.

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34. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, read out paragraph 222, subparagraph (b), of the Committee's report (A/38/38 (part II)) concerning the Regional Commissions Liaison Office, adding that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to take a decision, at a later date, on the conclusion that the allocations for the Liaison Office should not be included in the section of the programme budget pertaining to a regional commission.

35. It was so decided.

36. Mr. RALLIS (Greece), referring to paragraph 11.59 of the proposed programme budget and paragraph 28 of the Advisory Committee's report concerning the establishment of new posts for the population activities of the regional commissions, asked when the special report which that Committee had asked the Secretary-General to prepare on the subject would be distributed.

37. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) complimented the Advisory Committee and the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination on the sections of their reports dealing with ESCAP and said that his delegation was gratified that it had been decided to consider at a later date the question of establishing posts for the population programmes and the question of holding the fortieth session of that Commission in Tokyo. Nevertheless he hoped that the members of the Fifth Committee would bear in mind that the expenditures to be incurred thereby, while moderate, would be added to the total expenditures under section 11.

38. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning post reclassifications and hoped that care would henceforth be exercised to ensure that the part of the activities to be implemented from extrabudgetary funds was not excessive. Moreover, it regretted the proposal to service intergovernmental meetings that were not open to all Governments, as that was in violation of the principle of universality enunciated in the Charter. In conclusion, he said that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

39. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation strongly supported ESCAP's activities. One of the characteristics distinguishing that commission from the other regional commissions was its heavy dependence on extrabudgetary funds; that was not a sign of weakness but rather a reflection of the active support of Member States. None the less the Executive Secretary found the Commission's activities difficult to manage because extrabudgetary funds were such an important factor in their financing, and hence it was extremely important to determine accurately the amount of the resources he would have available in the next biennium. Japan was grateful to the Secretary-General for having kept in close touch with Member States in that matter and took note with satisfaction of the new order of priorities established for the Commission's activities.

40. His delegation also supported the recommendations of CPC that the Secretary-General should review ESCAP's administrative structure in order to streamline its structure and activities still further. It also wished a report on

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the subject to be submitted in due course to the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee's decision to postpone consideration of the supplementary expenditures for holding the fortieth session of ESCAP in Tokyo and consideration of the request for establishing three new posts for the population programme seemed to be a wise one.

41. As to the vacancies to which the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had referred in introducing section 11, he felt that that was an extremely important question which might be approached as part of the restructuring exercise and one on which the Secretary-General should report to the General Assembly. His delegation was in general concerned about the tendency to make much use of consultants and it noted that ESCAP was no exception in that respect, but in view of the Executive Secretary's undertaking to be vigilant in the matter, it was prepared to support the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

42. Mr. FORAN (Controller) indicated in reply to the question asked by the representative of Greece that the drafting of the report requested by the Advisory Committee concerning the establishment of posts for the population programmes was practically completed and that the document should be available for distribution by the end of the following week.

43. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination set out in paragraphs 222 and 223 of its report (A/38/38 (part II)).

44. It was so decided.

45. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on section 11 as a whole.

46. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$34,901,800 under section 11 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 12. Economic Commission for Latin America

47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$313,400 in the Secretary-General's estimate under section 12 (\$54,092,900). In view of the number of General Service posts allocated to the Mexico City office, it recommended the approval of only one of the two Local-level posts requested for the programme "Administration and common services" (A/38/7, para. 12.5). As in the case of other regional commissions, the posts requested under the programme "Population" were attributable to a reduction in UNFPA financing. The Advisory Committee therefore believed that that request, even though it was not explicitly linked to the provisions of resolution 37/136, should be considered in the context of the special

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report which the Secretary-General was to submit on the subject (A/38/7, para. 12.6). The amount proposed to cover the additional expenses which would be incurred if the Commission's regular session was held at Lima had been deleted for the time being and would be considered in the context of a report on the question which was before the Advisory Committee.

48. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) wished to know whether the proposal in paragraph 230 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (A/38/38 (part II)) had any financial implications.

49. The CHAIRMAN explained that paragraph 230 dealt with a proposal mentioned in the course of the discussion, on which there was no need for the Committee to decide. The conclusions and recommendations of CPC were contained in paragraphs 243 to 250 of its report exclusively.

50. Mr. FORAN (Controller) remarked that the missions and reports mentioned in paragraph 230 of the CPC report were financed from extrabudgetary funds and consequently had no implications for the appropriation requested under section 12.

51. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination set out in paragraphs 243-250 of its report (A/38/38 (part II)).

52. It was so decided.

53. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on section 12 as a whole.

54. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$53,779,500 under section 12 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa

55. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended an appropriation of \$45,240,700 under section 13, which represented a reduction of \$485,500 in the amount requested by the Secretary-General (\$45,726,200). Of that reduction, \$150,700 was attributable to the deletion of the amount requested to meet the additional cost of holding the Commission's regular session at Maputo (A/38/7, para. 13.4). In that connection, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the spring session would be held not at Maputo but at Conakry. The provision in question, which would be considered in the context of a report which was before the Advisory Committee, would reflect that change. The Advisory Committee did not recommend approval of the proposed reclassification of a post from P-3 to P-4 (A/38/7, para. 13.7). Lastly, it recommended the provisional deletion of the seven new posts requested for the programme "Population in Africa" pending consideration of a special report of the Secretary-General (A/38/7, para. 13.9).

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56. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) pointed out with reference to paragraph 251 of the report of CPC (A/38/38 (part I)) that a medium-term plan in marine affairs had just been approved and it included a subprogramme for Africa.

57. With regard to paragraph 234 of the same document, he said that the rate of resource growth proposed for ECA and other regional commissions would not enable them to cope with their new responsibilities. CPC had nevertheless been assured that the programmes would be basically maintained.

58. Referring to the ECA language posts which, as decided in 1982, were to be reclassified in two stages, he asked how many of those posts had been reclassified in the proposed programme budget for 1984-1985.

59. The CHAIRMAN assumed that Mr. Tommo Monthe had made his remarks concerning paragraph 251 of the CPC report as Vice-Chairman of that body and that they had been duly noted by the delegations.

60. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) pointed out that while his delegation supported the activities of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), it remained opposed to their financing from the regular budget. It would like to be assured by the Secretariat that the amounts requested for the MULPOCs (Tables 13.2 and 13.3 of the proposed budget) related solely to revaluation of the resource base and not to any financing of new programmes. It would also like to have information clarifying the requests for staff and explaining the figures in the proposed programme budget.

61. Mr. EL-SAFY (Egypt) hoped that the prevailing policy of budgetary austerity would not deprive programme directors of the funds needed for their activities in Africa.

62. Mr. FORAN (Controller), replying to the question of the representative of Cameroon, explained that the matter of reclassification of language posts was being studied in the Office of Personnel Services at Headquarters and he would look into the situation. Similarly, he would have to obtain some clarifications before he could reply to the questions of the representative of the United States of America concerning Tables 13.2 and 13.3.

63. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) expressed surprise that the question of reclassification of language posts was still being studied after the General Assembly had, in 1981 on a proposal by his delegation, accepted it in principle with effect from 1982-1983 for half of the posts while the remaining half was to be reclassified in 1984-1985.

64. In reply to the question of the representative of the United States, he said with reference to paragraph 236 of the report of CPC (A/38/38 (part I)) that in his opinion the requests for the MULPOCs were in keeping with General Assembly resolution 37/138, adopted in 1982.

65. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) wished to make it clear that he was not questioning the financing of the Centres. He quite understood that the resource base had to be revalued but he would like to be assured that there had not been any new transfer to the regular budget.

66. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination set out in paragraphs 248-252 of its report (A/38/38 (part I)), taking into account the explanations given concerning paragraph 251.

67. It was so decided.

68. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on section 13 as a whole.

69. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$45,240,700 under section 13 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

70. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) stated that if it had been determined that the amounts appearing in Tables 13.2 and 13.3 entailed a resource growth for the MULPOCs over the amounts approved in 1982, his delegation would have asked for a vote on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and would have voted against.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.