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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 63rd 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 7.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 (continued)

First reading (continued)

Revised estimates under section 2A.C, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea, section 31, (Staff assessment) and income section 1 (Income from staff assessment) (A/38/6, A/38/7 and Add.17, A/38/570 and Corr. 1 and A/38/570/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the question of setting up an Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea had been raised at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly but, for reasons stated in its report at that session, the Advisory Committee had recommended that consideration of the question should be deferred and the matter taken up in the context of a special report of the Secretary-General. That report (A/38/570 and Corr.1 and A/37/570/Add.1 and Corr.1) was now before the Committee. The revised estimates covered the requirements for the establishment of 30 permanent posts in New York and the retention of 25 temporary posts in Kingston, Jamaica. The total number of posts remained the same. The revised estimates also covered the conference-servicing requirements for two sessions of the Preparatory Commission in 1984-1985 and for sessions of working groups in summer 1984, which would be held at either New York or Geneva.

2. At its spring session, the Advisory Committee had considered the draft agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Jamaica relating to the use of the conference centre complex and the premises to be occupied by a United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea, in Kingston, Jamaica. It noted with satisfaction that the proposals and recommendations it had made on the subject had, to a large extent, been taken into account. He drew attention to paragraph 9 of document A/38/7/Add.17, which stated why the Committee had no objection to the draft agreement as contained in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General.

3. Paragraph 12 of the report of the Advisory Committee contained additional information on the \$331,400 requested to cover the travel and subsistence costs of a number of officials required to go to Kingston to service meetings of the Preparatory Commission. The details of the staff and amounts involved were given in the table at the end of that paragraph.

4. Paragraph 13 provided information on the requirements for the sessions of the Preparatory Commission in 1984 and 1985 and of the working groups which would meet in either New York or Geneva in 1984. The conference-servicing costs were estimated on a full-cost basis and would be incorporated in the consolidated statement which, he hoped, would be discussed before 20 December.

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(Mr. Mselle)

5. The total revised estimates under section 2A.C amounted to \$6,314,300, or \$887,000 more than the amount requested under that subsection in the initial proposed programme budget for 1984-1985. In paragraph 15 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve that amount, together with an additional appropriation of \$34,400 under section 31 (Staff assessment), offset by income in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).
6. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation's position on the inclusion of the costs of the Preparatory Commission in the regular budget was well known. It therefore requested a vote on the revised estimates for section 2A.C.
7. Mr. QUINLAN (Australia) said that, in view of the general agreement which had been reached in the Preparatory Commission following frank and delicate consultations among delegations, the Committee should proceed apace to approve the Secretary-General's requests. While understanding the concerns of the representative of the United States, his delegation would vote in favour of the revised estimates.
8. Mr. EMENYI (Nigeria) said that the Preparatory Commission had reached agreement on procedural matters and was now prepared to move on to substantive work. Funds were now necessary to enable the secretariat to provide the desired input, thus enhancing the work of the Preparatory Commission. He therefore urged the Committee to approve the appropriations required by the Secretary-General to discharge his task.
9. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that there appeared to be a trend towards making the staffing table permanent, although the work itself was temporary. As far as the conversion of posts was concerned, he did not believe that everything had been done to ensure more effective co-ordination with other departments. It would also be useful to send out questionnaires on particular issues to obviate the need for travel on the part of representatives of departments. Because of the over-expenditure on staff and travel in the revised estimates, his delegation would abstain in the vote.
10. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation would abstain in the vote. There was no need to establish the Office of the Special Representative on a permanent basis until the Convention entered into force. The work of the Office of the Special Representative was satisfactory and the staff resources requested by the Secretary-General should continue on a temporary basis. In addition, he felt that the cost to the United Nations of using the premises in Jamaica was still too high.
11. Mr. MERIEUX (France) said that his delegation attached great importance to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the work of the Preparatory Commission and regretted the late issue of the report of the Advisory Committee. He asked the Secretariat to clarify articles I and II of the draft agreement

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(Mr. Merieux, France)

between the United Nations and the Government of Jamaica A/38/570/Add.1, annex II), since they were vague and could be interpreted in many ways. In his opinion, the proper interpretation was that the use of the Centre would be provided free of charge. He wondered whether the costs involved were the same as those for similar facilities elsewhere. He would also like to know the breakdown of the operating costs of the Centre referred to in article II, paragraph 2, of the draft agreement. He wondered whether the Advisory Committee had studied the annexes to the draft agreement. It would also be useful to have further information on such questions as the rate of exchange and the long-term development of rental costs.

12. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation supported the general thrust of the Secretary-General's proposals under section 2A.C. It did, however, hope that the maximum budgetary restraint would be exercised. The Fifth Committee must ensure that the revised estimates were in line with the medium-term plan. While he was prepared to approve the conversion of posts relating to subprogrammes 1 to 3 of programme 1, he stressed the need for care with regard to those for the servicing of the Preparatory Commission and would like to know the justification for the establishment of permanent posts for a transitional activity. He agreed with the need for flexibility in the distribution of staff between New York and Kingston, but he would like to have some assurance from the representative of the Secretary-General that any assignment of additional staff to Kingston would be examined in the light of the need to ensure the most effective management of available staff.

13. Mr. PINHEIRO-GUIMARAES (Brazil), noting the importance of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, said that his delegation supported the revised estimates of the Secretary-General, which had been thoroughly scrutinized by the Advisory Committee, and his delegation would vote in favour of them.

14. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that it was normal practice for the costs of a multilateral treaty to be borne by the parties to it. It was highly debatable whether the fourteenth preambular paragraph of A/38/L.18/Rev.1 was an acceptable basis on which to authorize financing for 1984. Since the Convention had not yet entered into force, it was premature to convert temporary posts to permanent ones. While welcoming the substantial reduction in the costs of using the Centre, his delegation would also like further clarification on the breakdown of the United Nations contribution towards the operating costs of the Centre. Agreeing with the concerns expressed by the representative of the USSR regarding the travel of staff, he sought clarification on the large sum of \$57,000 referred to in paragraph 13 of A/38/570/Add.1. The provision of \$40,000 for local transportation in Kingston (ibid., para. 32) was also unusually high.

15. Mr. OYARCE (Chile) said that Chile attached importance to activities designed to achieve universal adherence to the Convention; those activities should include advisory and other appropriate services. His delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/38/L.18/Rev.1, on the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, and would vote in favour of the revised estimates.

16. Mr. FORAN (Controller), replying to the question of the representative of France concerning article II, paragraph 2, of the draft agreement said that the United Nations contribution towards the operating costs of the Centre, expressed in United States dollars and calculated at the exchange rate of 1.78 Jamaican dollars to \$US 1, would be approximately \$42,500 (building maintenance services - approximately \$15,100, water - \$250, electricity - \$19,700, cooking gas - \$108, basic telephone rental - \$4,100, electrical equipment - \$1,200, elevator - \$200, fire protection system - \$100, air conditioning - \$900, and miscellaneous, primarily insurance - \$800). If, however, the July 1983 exchange rate of \$J 2.60 to \$US 1, was applied, the United Nations contribution would be \$29,300; and if the December 1983 exchange rate of 2.91 Jamaican dollars to \$US 1 was used, the contribution would be \$26,000.

17. Assuming an exchange rate of \$J 1.78 to \$US 1, the United Nations contribution in respect of the operating costs for the office space to be provided by the Jamaican Government would be \$21,500 (electricity - \$7,500, basic telephone rental - \$1,800, maintenance - \$900, and direct staff costs - \$11,300). If an exchange rate of \$J 2.60 to \$US 1 was applied, the contribution would be \$14,700, while an exchange rate of \$J 2.91 to \$US 1 would mean a contribution of \$13,100.

18. As to the future, he referred to article IV of the draft agreement, which stated that the United Nations had the option to renew the agreement for an additional term of two years upon the same terms and conditions as were set out in the agreement, subject to such adjustments of the operating costs as might become necessary due to increase in the cost of services.

19. Mr. NANDAN (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea), replying to the questions raised by the representative of Japan, referred to document A/38/570, paragraph 41, which stated that the majority of the Secretary-General's functions would continue after the Convention entered into force and, while the servicing of the Preparatory Commission would cease at that time, major new functions would commence. That explained how the Secretary-General proposed to deploy the permanent posts concerned, when subprogramme 4 of programme 1 came to an end.

20. With regard to the question on the precise distribution of staff between New York and Kingston, he said that that was covered in document A/38/570/Add.1, table 9, which should however be read in conjunction with document A/38/570, paragraph 58, where it was stated that the Secretary-General intended to strengthen the staffing of the second duty station, as necessary, at his discretion and that resources allocated to the Professional posts under the different subprogrammes would be mutually reinforcing.

21. Turning to the questions raised by the representative of the United Kingdom, he said that the figure of \$57,000 cited in document A/38/570/Add.1, paragraph 13, for travel of staff reflected the cost not only of consultations with Governments but also of attendance at intergovernmental conferences and inter-agency meetings. Various bodies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

(Mr. Nandan)

Organization, turned to the Office of the Special Representative for advice on the implications of the Convention and for assistance in preparing for conferences. Regarding the estimate of \$40,000 for local transportation (A/38/570/Add.1, para. 32), he said that because of deficiencies in the public transport system, and for security reasons, the staff required a van to travel from the Centre to hotels; the costing of that item had been based on past experience.

22. Mr. MERIEUX (France) said that in the light of the comments made by the Controller, he would appreciate the views of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning the operating costs of a centre in New York as compared with those of the Centre in Kingston. He asked the Controller why estimates had been made at different exchange rates, which merely complicated the situation. He wondered why the annexes to the draft agreement had not been made available to Committee members and what policy was being followed for the recruitment of staff to fill the 25 temporary posts which would become permanent after 1984.

23. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he, too, had been puzzled by the Secretary-General's failure to provide the annexes, and understood why delegations felt that they should have had access to them. The Advisory Committee had concluded, however, that the omission was not serious enough to warrant rejection of the draft agreement. Article II, paragraph 3 clearly stated that the parties agreed that the payments to be made by the United Nations towards the operating costs of the Centre should be the sole contribution by the United Nations. The amount of \$J 75,691.75 per week provided for in article II, paragraph 2 (a), was thus fixed for two years and the Advisory Committee saw no need to press the matter further.

24. With regard to the question raised by the representative of France, he said that the contribution of \$J 38,344.82 per month towards the operating costs of the premises should not be viewed as rental or analysed in terms of square footage: it was not rent, but a contribution. The Advisory Committee had, however, noted that although the estimated area had been decreased from 15,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet, the cost per square foot had been increased.

25. Mr. FORAN (Controller), replying to the question raised by the representative of France concerning plans for filling the temporary posts, said that table 9 of document A/38/570/Add.1 showed the staffing requirements to be 23 established and 25 temporary posts. The 23 established posts had already been filled, and of the 25 temporary posts, four, in the General Service category, had been filled. In the case of the remaining 21 temporary posts, the normal United Nations recruiting procedures would be applied. With regard to the content of the annexes, he said that four were purely technical, providing the plans of the buildings and the distribution of office space. The remaining two annexes gave the breakdown of United Nations contributions towards the Centre's operating costs and for office space in Kingston.

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26. Mr. KOCATÜRK (Turkey) said that his Government had signed neither the Convention nor the Final Act and reserved the right not to contribute to the expenses of any institution that might be set up pursuant to them. Turkey had also voted against the General Assembly resolution on payment of such expenses out of the regular United Nations budget.

27. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that the programme on law of the sea affairs would be revised in 1984, at which time the needs of the regional commissions should be duly taken into account. In document A/38/570, the Secretary-General had stated that the resources allocated for law of the sea affairs in 1984 would be used flexibly. In that connection, his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would be guided by the agreement reached on the subject in the Fifth Committee in 1982.

28. Mr. QUINLAN (Australia) said that his delegation's constant concern had been to ensure that the costs of the Office of the Special Representative, and especially those of the Preparatory Commission, would be kept to a minimum. All elements of the secretariat must correspond to clearly demonstrated functional needs, which in turn had to be based on the experience of the Preparatory Commission, the expansion of the work programme and the practical evolution of the Convention. With regard to the distribution of secretariat staff between the New York and Kingston duty stations, his delegation had noted the Secretary-General's assurance (A/38/570, para. 58) that staff would be assigned in the light of the functions to be performed and the programme of work. His delegation would vote in favour of the revised estimates on the firm understanding that that would be done.

29. An appropriation in the amount of \$6,314,300 under section 2A.C (comprising an amount of \$5,427,300 requested in the initial estimates and an additional amount of \$887,000 requested in the revised estimates) and an additional appropriation of \$34,400 under section 31 (Staff assessment), to be offset by an increase of income in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment), for the biennium 1984-1985 were approved in first reading by 75 votes to 2, with 18 abstentions.

30. Mr. MERIEUX (France) said that his delegation had not wished to oppose the inclusion in the regular United Nations budget of the expenses of the Preparatory Commission or the conversion of temporary posts to an established basis. It believed, however, that the estimates were too high, especially for the Kingston Centre, and had not been entirely convinced by the explanations that had been provided. France had therefore abstained during the vote.

31. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the revised estimates but still had doubts about the justification for converting temporary posts to established ones, since subprogramme 4 was obviously transitional.

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/38/L.35 concerning agenda item 35 (A/C.5/38/78 and Corr.1; A/38/7/Add.18)

32. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that developments with regard to the convening of the United

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(Mr. Mselle)

Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy had advanced sufficiently for delegations to propose draft resolution A/38/L.35 and for the Secretary-General to propose requirements for preparing the Conference. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution provided that the precise dates of the Conference and the question of its agenda and other related issues would be subject to further consultation.

33. In paragraphs 2 to 4 of its report (A/38/7/Add.18), the Advisory Committee gave some background information on the request of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/38/78. In order to implement operative paragraphs 1 to 5 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General estimated that \$3,531,000 would be required, the bulk of which would be for 1984 and 1985; the estimate for 1986 was \$761,200. The 1984-1985 estimate for conference-servicing costs was \$962,900 and that for non-conference costs was \$1,806,900. Paragraph 4 of the report gave the breakdown of non-conference costs. In paragraphs 5 to 8, the Advisory Committee examined the request for the conference secretariat and related requirements. Paragraph 9 dealt with the regional expert group meetings, paragraph 10 with the fifth session of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference to be held at Vienna in June 1984, and paragraphs 11 to 13 examined the Secretary-General's proposals concerning public information activities under section 27.

34. Paragraph 14 summarized the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which had accepted the Secretary-General's estimates with minor modifications. The Advisory Committee considered that the request for public information activities, for the reasons given in paragraphs 12 and 13, should be \$300,000; of that amount, \$200,000 relating to requirements in the biennium 1984-1985 should be appropriated at the current session of the General Assembly and the balance of \$100,000 for activities in 1986 should be reflected by the Secretary-General in his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987. The recommendations for the individual sections were given in paragraph 15. The total additional amount was \$1,722,500, plus an amount of \$285,500 under section 31, to be offset by an increase in the same amount under income section 1.

35. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the information in the Secretary-General's report was not in line with paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/38/L.35, which stated that expenses incurred in connection with the preparations for the Conference would be covered from existing budgetary resources. Moreover, there was no basis in the draft resolution for some of the activities described in the Secretary-General's report. In particular, there was an extremely broad programme for information activities which did not flow from the content of the resolution. His delegation also had doubts regarding many of the staffing requests, and it took a negative view of the Secretary-General's intention to make extensive use of consultants and journalists. His delegation would not therefore support the estimates if they were put to a vote.

36. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) said that his delegation felt that the estimated expenditures for consultants, travel and public information were excessive in relation to the actual needs of the Preparatory Committee for the

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(Mr. Gidley, United States)

Conference. Staff requirements were also far above what was necessary. For example, the Department of Public Information had requested additional staff members for Vienna, even though the Secretary-General had recently outlined plans to establish an information service in Vienna (A/C.5/38/87). The additional information posts were therefore not necessary. He requested that the estimates should be put a vote, and stated that his delegation would oppose them solely on financial grounds.

37. Mrs. KNEŽEVIĆ (Yugoslavia) and Mr. ORTEGA (Mexico) said that their delegations supported the estimates and attached a great deal of importance to the information programme because it would help mobilize broad participation and stimulate public awareness.

38. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/38/L.35, additional appropriations totalling \$1,722,500 would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985. An additional amount of \$285,500 would also be required under section 31 (Staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase of income in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). Conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$962,900 would arise; the actual additional appropriations that might be required in that respect would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing requirements to be submitted at a later stage during the current session.

39. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 75 votes to 7, with 13 abstentions.

40. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany), Ms. BIRD (Australia) and Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that their delegations had voted against the estimates on financial grounds; in particular, they regarded as excessive the costs for information activities.

41. Mr. STEENBERGER (Denmark) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the estimates but considered the costing to be somewhat lavish.

Revised estimates under section 5B, Centre for Science and Technology for Development, arising from the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development in its resolution 4 (V) (continued)
(A/C.5/38/64)

42. The Chairman invited the Committee to resume its consideration of the revised estimates in document A/C.5/38/64. The Commission of the Advisory Committee had presented that Committee's oral report at the 62nd meeting.

43. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that in paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/38/64 it was stated that the Secretary-General would endeavour to carry out the activities prescribed in resolution 4 (V) of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development from within the resources available under section 5B of

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(Mr. Foran)

the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985 and that, to the extent that that would not be possible, the related programmatic adjustments and subsequent redeployment of resources would be reported in the context of the budget and programme performance reports on the biennium 1984-1985. The activities to be strengthened, as described in paragraph 4 of A/C.5/38/64, were to be carried out under programme elements 4.1 to 4.5 of section 5B. The amount involved was \$87,400, consisting of \$52,400 for 24 work-months of temporary assistance at the G-4 level, \$8,000 for 2 work-months of consultants' services, \$17,000 for additional participants in ad hoc expert group meetings and \$10,000 for staff travel.

44. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt), referring to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, noted that under rules 153 and 154 the Fifth Committee was the only Committee with the authority to advise the General Assembly concerning the effect of draft resolutions on the budget. Yet, according to paragraph 1 (d) of document A/C.5/38/64, the Intergovernmental Committee had requested the Executive Director of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development to pursue and expand, within existing resources, his interaction and co-operation with Governments and with appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Technology for development paragraph 1 (e) also referred to a request by the Intergovernmental Committee that activities should be carried out within existing resources. Moreover, paragraph 5 of the same document said that the Secretary-General would endeavour to carry out those additional activities initially within the resources available under section 5B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985, and that, to the extent that that should not be possible, the related programmatic adjustments and subsequent redeployment of resources would be reported in the context of the budget and programme performance reports on the biennium 1984-1985.

45. It was clear from the resolution adopted on programme planning that authority for the redeployment of resources lay with the General Assembly, not the Secretary-General. A statement of financial implications should therefore have been submitted to the Fifth Committee in the normal manner. Furthermore, the approval of new activities by the Assembly should not affect activities approved earlier. What would happen if the Secretary-General was unable to redeploy resources to the extent necessary?

46. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that, if it proved impossible to absorb the cost of all the activities to be undertaken by the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, it would be necessary to ask the Advisory Committee to approve additional amounts.

47. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) asked whether the Controller considered that the existing resources would suffice.

48. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that there was some doubt about the level of resources available, as was implied in document A/C.5/38/64. What was needed was a clear mandate from the Fifth Committee to pursue the activities indicated, so that if enough funds were available programme activities would not be held back.

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49. Mr. PINHEIRO-GUIMARÃES (Brazil) said that the Committee had approved section 5B of the programme budget on the assumption that the activities contained therein would be implemented. The Committee was now faced with a request for additional activities. It was not clear why the Secretariat had not prepared a normal statement of administrative and financial implications. His delegation agreed with the remarks made by the representative of Egypt concerning the competence of other committees in financial matters. If draft resolutions with financial implications were approved in other bodies the situation would become impossible.

50. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the proposals submitted in document A/C.5/38/64 were rather vague, which led one to wonder what control there was over the Secretariat and its work. With regard to the resources available, all resources were matched to programmes. If there was a surplus, that meant that the initial estimate had been too high. Normally, however, assuming that the Secretariat's proposals and the Advisory Committee's recommendations were well founded and that the minimum amount of resources necessary had been requested and approved, there would be no surplus. Resources were always made available to discharge a particular mandate. The suggestion that there were, somewhere in the budget, "surplus" resources meant that it was essential for the Fifth Committee to consider whether the Secretariat was requesting too much, and whether efforts were being made to eliminate the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee from the budgetary process. It was clear that the work of the Fifth Committee, and therefore that of the General Assembly, would be compromised if such a situation were to develop.

51. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that a problem had arisen since the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development had adopted resolution 4 (V) which called for certain activities to be implemented within existing resources, which had led the Secretary-General to phrase paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/38/64 as he had. One issue which had arisen was whether the Intergovernmental Committee had the right to use wording which, in effect, amounted to taking a budgetary decision. It was quite clear from the rules of procedure that it had no such right. The Fifth Committee was the appropriate forum.

52. It was also clear from financial regulation 4.1 that the appropriations approved under individual sections of the budget should be used for the purposes for which they had been made. Further, General Assembly resolution 37/234, part II, paragraph 4 stated that, when appropriating resources for the implementation of the programme budget, the General Assembly also decided that the programme elements and output citations in the proposed programme budget should constitute the commitments against which programme performance was to be assessed. It followed that activities which had been approved under the programme budget were commitments. Yet the wording of paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/38/64 ran counter to that logic.

53. The Fifth Committee had to resolve the issue, and make it quite clear that other committees could not become involved in the budgetary process. It should also be made clear that appropriations, once approved, represented commitments.

54. Mrs. KNEŽEVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that she agreed that paragraph 5 raised important questions of principle. It was essential to identify clearly the resources which would be used to finance each activity. The picture presented in paragraph 5 was confused.

55. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said it seemed that there was some doubt whether the appropriation for section 5B would suffice to finance all the activities proposed thereunder. That was hardly surprising, since the budget for the biennium 1984-1985 reflected maximum restraint, or zero growth.

56. When activities were proposed in a resolution, it was normally intended that they would be implemented forthwith. It would certainly be inappropriate for the Secretary-General to wait until the resource situation had become clear. The resolution in question had been adopted in June 1983, when three quarters of the biennium 1982-1983 had elapsed and all the resources for that biennium had already been used or committed.

57. The Fifth Committee could not discharge its functions if it was prevented from considering the financial implications of activities. Therefore, in accordance with established practice, the Secretariat should prepare a statement of the administrative and financial implication of resolution 4 (V) of the Intergovernmental Committee and should submit it to the Advisory Committee, which would then advise the Fifth Committee concerning the recommendation to be made to the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.05 p.m.