



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 65th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUYAMA (Japan)

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

CONTENTS

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

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27
concerning agenda item 91 (b)

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.22
concerning agenda item 91 (d)

AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL
SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)

UN LIBRARY

UNISA COLLECTION

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/38/SR.65
19 December 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 7.25 p.m.

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

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27 concerning agenda item 91 (b) (A/38/7/Add.19; A/C.5/38/77)

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.22 concerning agenda item 91 (d) (A/38/7/Add.19; A/C.5/38/80)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27 would have the General Assembly decide to accept, with appreciation, the offer of the Government of the Republic of Kenya to host, at Nairobi in 1985, the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Secretary-General had estimated total requirements at \$2,294,400, of which \$889,400 related to conference-servicing costs. The remaining \$1,405,000 related to the cost of regional activities, an interregional seminar, Secretariat support and public information activities. The Secretary-General indicated that four regional intergovernmental meetings would be convened in 1984, and a regional intergovernmental seminar in the ECE region, pursuant to a decision of the Commission.

2. In addition to the staff resources available in the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Secretary-General had requested \$524,200 for temporary posts for preparatory activities. The Secretary-General was also requesting \$445,900 to finance information activities other than those already carried out from the resources available in DPI. That estimate included provision for two temporary staff members (one P-3 and one General Service) for 24 work-months each, to help in public information activities for the Conference. The Advisory Committee had not been convinced, given that the Conference would be held in September 1985, that those posts would be required for all of 1985, and had accordingly recommended a slight reduction. The net effect of the Advisory Committee's recommendations was tabulated in paragraph 21 of its report. The total amount recommended was \$1,040,600. There would also be a need for \$93,400 under section 31, to be offset by a similar amount under income section 1.

3. With regard to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, no additional appropriations would be required if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.22.

4. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.22 urged the Secretary-General in consultation with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions to take urgently appropriate measures "to ensure that all temporary and permanent senior women's programme officers posts should be continued at the regional commissions within regular budget resources available to them." Yet paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/38/80 indicated that it would be extremely difficult for them to do so. In fact, paragraph 5 also made it clear that some redeployment

/...

(Mr. El Safty, Egypt)

of resources would be necessary if those posts were to be continued. His delegation trusted that no difficulties would arise, but wished to ask the Chairman of the Advisory Committee what he suggested that the Secretary-General should do if they did.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in such an eventuality the Secretary-General would report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

6. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that the thirty-ninth session would not begin until September 1984, so that the question arose of what would happen to the temporary posts until that time. Would the incumbents be dismissed and then rehired?

7. Miss DEREGIBUS (Argentina) said that her delegation was concerned by the question raised by the representative of Egypt. The posts in question were due to expire within a few days, at the end of December 1983. It seemed that the resources available would not be sufficient to finance the posts, so that if any redistribution took place it might affect other programmes being carried out by the regional commissions. In view of the obvious difficulties, her delegation wondered whether that part of the resolution could be left in abeyance until the thirty-ninth session began.

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, should the draft resolution be adopted, the Executive Secretaries would be consulted again in the hope that developments in 1984 would permit adjustments to be made with a view to continuing the posts through a redeployment of resources. Should the resources available prove insufficient, the Secretary-General would report to the General Assembly at the thirty-ninth session. The funding of the posts was an example of expenditure being met from within available resources, and the matter rested there.

9. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that the situation was unsatisfactory. The Fifth Committee was being asked to allocate funds for the Secretary-General to do with them as he wished. His delegation could accept that situation only on the understanding that the Secretary-General would not dismiss the incumbents and that, when there was mention in a draft resolution of activities being funded from within available resources, he would report to the Fifth Committee in the usual manner through a statement of administrative and financial implications. Then the Committee could decide whether activities were to be financed from available resources or not. His delegation would not press the matter in the case now before the Committee, but it wished its position to be clearly understood.

10. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the comments made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/38/80 were ambiguous and unsatisfactory. The Fifth Committee was not being told what would happen, simply that efforts would be made to redeploy funds and that, if resources were inadequate, the Secretary-General would report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. His delegation therefore endorsed the remarks of the representative of Egypt.

/...

(Mr. Fontaine Ortiz, Cuba)

11. The proposed programme budget already reflected maximum restraint, and was being adopted without difficulty precisely because it was so modest. Yet the Committee was now being asked to finance new activities from existing resources. The way in which the financial implications had been presented was ambiguous. The Committee should know for certain whether new activities could be financed from within existing resources; if not, it could take an appropriate decision.

12. Mr. FLESHER (United States of America) said that certain posts in the regional commissions had so far been financed from voluntary contributions, on the understanding that they would not be transferred to the regular budget. The United States expected the Secretary-General to fully comply with that understanding. The Committee should merely take note of the Secretary-General's report, since no resources seemed to be available.

13. His delegation had consistently supported the United Nations Decade for Women, which had done much to promote women's rights. The proposed Conference could provide a valuable opportunity to assess the progress made and to formulate future goals. Many non-governmental organizations within the United States were already planning activities in connection with the Conference. It was therefore unfortunate that a divisive element had been introduced in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27, which had caused his delegation to vote against it. The reduction of \$364,400 recommended by the Advisory Committee was encouraging, but the cost of the Conference still seemed too high in view of the staff and resources available in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The requests made for temporary staff were excessive, since the Centre already had 65 Professional and 47 General Service posts for the biennium 1984-1985. His delegation wished a vote to be taken on the proposed additional appropriation, and would vote against it.

14. Mrs. REBONG (Philippines) said that she could not see how the reduction of \$47,800 recommended by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 7 of its report had been calculated. Her delegation wished to know what the additional information referred to in that paragraph was.

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had looked into the information given to the General Assembly in document A/C.5/38/77. Paragraphs 10 and 11 provided details of consultancy services, from which it was clear that work-months had not been costed on a consistent basis. For example, 10 work-months of consultancy for ECE had been costed at \$50,000, or \$5,000 a month, while four work-months of consultancy for ECA had been costed at a rate of \$7,500 a month. The latter figure seemed rather high, and the Advisory Committee had concluded that the amount could be reduced slightly without jeopardizing regional activities. With regard to the additional information referred to, ACABQ normally obtained such information in writing or orally from representatives of the Secretary-General.

16. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27, additional appropriations of \$505,200 under section 4, \$5,400 under section 6, \$41,800 under section 10, \$36,600 under section 11, \$47,000 under section 12, \$23,900 under section 13, \$18,400 under section 14 and \$362,300 under section 27 of the programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985, totalling \$1,040,600, would be required. An additional appropriation of \$93,400 would also be required under section 31, to be offset by an increase of income in the same amount under income section 1. Conference servicing requirements, estimated at \$889,400 on a full-cost basis, 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.

17. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 81 votes to 2, with 14 abstentions.

18. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote, said that, despite the efforts of the Advisory Committee, the appropriations requested were still too high. The new programme did not take account of the resources currently available to the United Nations departments and regional commissions concerned. Large sums were being requested for consultancy services, although the resources of the departments and commissions were not fully utilized. Therefore, his delegation could not support the appropriations requested and had abstained in the vote.

19. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had abstained because, while some additional funds were necessary to finance the Conference, the appropriations requested were too high, particularly with respect to information activities, even after the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee. It also noted the understanding of the Secretary-General that the terms of General Assembly resolution 31/140 would apply to the holding of the Conference.

20. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that his delegation attached great importance to the World Conference and would have liked to have been able to support draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.27. However, it had been unable to do so because of paragraph 4, which gave legitimacy to parties who would misuse the Conference to pursue cynically their own narrow objectives. Any repeat of the scandalous proceedings that had occurred at the Conferences at Mexico and Copenhagen could only damage a cause that was worthy of the support of all countries. It had therefore voted against the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

21. Miss ARCHINI (Italy) regretted that her delegation had been unable to support the additional appropriations requested. It was unfortunate that the Committee did not have before it a statement of the programme implications of the activities, since some of the preparations for the Conference, particularly the proposed seminars, studies and consultancy services, seemed to represent a duplication of effort. In addition, the public information activities could have been absorbed to a greater extent in the budget of the department itself.

22. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) said that, had his delegation been present when the vote had been taken, it would have voted in favour of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

/...

23. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that, before taking a decision on the Voluntary Fund, the Committee should be told whether the Secretariat planned to adjust programme activities and redeploy resources in order to maintain the posts listed in paragraph 3 of A/C.5/38/80. His delegation would also like an assurance from the Secretary-General that the posts concerned would not be discontinued in 1984. If that assurance was given, his delegation could support the conclusions of the Advisory Committee.

24. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that the statement in paragraph 24 of A/38/7/Add.19 that it would be extremely difficult to extend the six posts appeared to be contradicted by paragraph 25, which suggested that the means could be found to finance them. He would like further clarification on the matter, since, as things stood, the status of the posts concerned was uncertain.

25. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that consultations would continue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions. The situation would, of course, vary from commission to commission. As the Secretary-General had indicated, difficulties were anticipated in the financing of the posts throughout 1984 and for a good part of 1985. However, given the normal turnover of staff at the regional commissions, it should be possible to redeploy existing resources allocated to posts which were vacant in order to keep the staff members through most, if not all, of 1984. He could not, however, give any ironclad guarantees. The Executive Secretaries would be informed of the concerns of the Fifth Committee and, with their help, he was sure that something could be achieved. The matter could be referred again to the Advisory Committee if additional financing was necessary to deliver the required programme elements.

26. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that he was satisfied with the reply given by the Controller. It was unfortunate that the last element of the Controller's statement was not reflected in paragraph 5 of A/C.5/38/80.

27. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, according to paragraph 4 of A/C.5/38/80, the resources earmarked for the P-5 post in ECLA had been used to finance two posts at a lower level in order to enable ECLA to assign some resources for the integration of women in development to each of its three major offices - Santiago, Mexico City and Port-of-Spain. It was her belief that there was no longer a staff member in Port-of-Spain dealing with the integration of women in development, since the post had been transferred to Santiago. Perhaps the text of paragraph 4 should be amended to reflect that fact and make it clear that the staff member concerned functioned out of the office at Santiago.

28. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the report of the Secretary-General showed how the posts could be maintained through adjustments in programme activities. The Fifth Committee should confine itself to taking note of the Secretary-General's statement of financial implications.

29. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that, had the Third Committee simply requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to retain the posts concerned, the Secretary-General might have either suggested adjustments in

/...

(Mr. Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

existing programmes or requested additional appropriations. However, since paragraph 3 of the draft resolution concerned urged that measures should be taken "within regular budgetary resources", the Secretary-General could only suggest that funds should be redeployed from other programmes, something which he was not authorized to do. Instead of simply taking note of the report of the Secretary-General, the Fifth Committee should refer to the statement of the Controller that, if necessary, the Secretary-General would request additional resources through the Advisory Committee and inform the General Assembly accordingly at the thirty-ninth session. His delegation reserved its position on budgetary decisions taken by political committees, since such decisions put the Secretary-General in a very difficult position.

30. Miss DEREGIBUS (Argentina) said that her delegation supported the statement of financial implications contained in document A/C.5/38/80 on the understanding that paragraph 5 of that document would be amended in line with the statement of the Controller and that, if necessary, the Secretary-General would submit a request to the Advisory Committee for additional resources in order to maintain the posts. She hoped that those posts would be maintained without the redeployment of resources for programmes established in accordance with legitimate mandates.

31. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and in the light of the statement made by the Controller, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.22, no additional appropriations would be required at the current stage.

32. It was so decided.

33. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt), speaking in explanation of position, said that, had there been a vote on the Chairman's proposal, his delegation would not have participated. The Fifth Committee had been prevented from advising the General Assembly in accordance with its mandate of the effects of the draft resolution on the programme budget, since there had been no clear statement of the financial implications. It was his delegation's understanding that the Secretary-General would take no decision that would affect the delivery of programmes established in accordance with General Assembly resolutions and that neither the posts referred to in the draft resolution nor the services of their incumbents would be affected or terminated because of lack of funds.

34. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that, if a vote had been taken, his delegation would not have participated. The explanation given by the Controller had not dispelled its doubts concerning the suggestions of the Secretary-General. His delegation also believed that the question of the allocation of resources fell within the exclusive competence of the Fifth Committee.

35. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that his delegation supported the Voluntary Fund and noted that the statement submitted by the Secretary-General did not call for any additional appropriations at the current stage. Its acquiescence in the decision did not affect its reservations regarding the transfer of posts to the regular budget.

/...

48. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Commission had delayed unduly in fulfilling its mandate concerning the post adjustment system and his delegation therefore supported the first amendment. The Commission's recommendations concerning the education grant distorted its real purpose, and his delegation therefore endorsed the second amendment. With regard to the third amendment, his delegation supported the Commission's position that any change in the normal age of retirement would prejudice the implementation of the principle of equitable geographic distribution and it would therefore oppose that amendment.

49. Miss ARCHINI (Italy) said that her delegation was in favour of retaining paragraphs 1 and 2 under section III of draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17 because a better knowledge of language was important for greater efficiency and from a moral point of view, especially for those whose mother tongue was not one of the official languages of the Organization.

50. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas) asked the Chairman of ICSC to clarify, with respect to paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17, how soon the ICSC usually acted upon the reports of its secretariat and, with respect to paragraph 3 of that draft resolution, what the current retirement practice of executive heads in other United Nations bodies was.

51. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) said that he was not convinced by the arguments put forward by the United States to justify the first amendment contained in document A/C.5/38/L.20; it was not a question of the time needed to take a decision but rather of receiving the necessary technical recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) before taking a decision. With regard to the age of retirement in other organizations of the common system, he said that in FAO it was 62 but that in all the others it was 60.

52. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) asked how long it would take for ACPAQ to receive the technical information required to take a decision.

53. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) said that a definite time-frame had been set. The additional technical data should be completed by 31 January 1984 in time for the May meeting of ACPAQ, and a decision would be taken in July 1984.

54. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that a speedier procedure should be devised.

55. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) said that his delegation associated itself with France and Italy with regard to section III, paragraphs 1 and 2, of draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17. His delegation supported the first and second amendments contained in document A/C.5/38/L.20 but had reservations about the third amendment for the reasons stated by the Chairman of ICSC.

56. Mr. KUTTNER (United States of America) said that, in view of the negative reactions of many delegations, his delegation had decided to withdraw its third amendment.

57. The CHAIRMAN said that a vote had been requested on the first two amendments in document A/C.5/38/L.20.

58. The first United States amendment was adopted by 32 votes to 21, with 32 abstentions.

59. The second United States was adopted by 63 votes to 13, with 15 abstentions.

60. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of both amendments because it felt that they were justified. He endorsed the comments of the Belgian delegation on the first amendment and, with regard to the second, he said that justice must be done regardless of whether a staff member was an expatriate or a non-expatriate.

61. Mr. ORTEGA (Mexico) said that his delegation, after listening to the debate, had voted against the amendments.

62. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegation of Morocco to introduce document A/C.5/38/L.23.

63. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that his delegation's intention in proposing an amendment to article 6, paragraph 2, of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission was to give broader options to the organizations of the system with respect to the choice of experts.

64. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that document A/C.5/38/L.23 appeared to be a separate draft decision and that a vote should first have been taken on draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17, as amended.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that document A/C.5/38/L.23 was described as a draft decision owing to a technical error; it was to be considered an amendment to draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17 and, if adopted, would become section IX of that draft resolution.

66. Mr. RALLIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the members of the European Economic Community, said that any proposed change in the statute of the ICSC should thoroughly be considered by all Member States. If the amendment was put to the vote, the EEC countries would vote against it.

67. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation agreed with the interpretation of article 6, paragraph 2, of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission given by the Chairman of the Commission at the 62nd meeting. The amendment would jeopardize the independent status of the members of ICSC, and his delegation would therefore vote against it.

68. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that he had spoken with the representative of Morocco but had not succeeded in persuading him to withdraw the proposed amendment. He found himself in a very difficult position and would not speak further on the matter.

69. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago), supported by Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas), said that a hasty vote on the amendment should not be taken and that her delegation was therefore unable to give the kind of support it usually gave to the delegation of Morocco.

70. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada), supported by Mr. LEILKI (Sweden), Mr. van HELLENBERG HUBAR (Netherlands) and Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba), asked whether the Moroccan delegation would agree to the postponement of a decision on the matter, in order to give the Fifth Committee more time to study it.

71. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that he had done everything possible to meet the wishes of the sponsors of the draft resolution by modifying the text of the amendment but had not been successful.

72. Mr. KUTTNER (United States of America) said that the statute of the International Civil Service Commission should not be changed without careful deliberation because such a change might threaten the independence and integrity of the members of the Commission. If the amendment was not withdrawn, his delegation would vote against it.

73. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) agreed with the representative of the United States concerning the need for careful deliberation and asked for a postponement of the decision.

The meeting rose at 10.35 p.m.