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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

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

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/39/L.3 concerning agenda item 20 (continued)

1. Mr. YACOUBOU (Togo) and Mr. SOUMANA (Niger) indicated that if their delegations had been present during the vote relating to draft resolution A/39/L.3, they would have voted in favour.

AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued) (A/39/30 and Corr.1)

2. Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that ICSC had decided unilaterally to raise the New York post adjustment by 9.6 per cent on the ground that the post adjustment had been "understated" for many years. The Soviet delegation wished to indicate that, in its view, ICSC's decision was completely unjustified because it was contrary to the Noblemaire principle. At each session since 1976, the General Assembly had concluded that the margin between the remuneration of the United States federal civil service and that of the United Nations system was adequate. When ICSC had taken its decision, that margin had been computed at more than 16 per cent by the Commission. However, the methodology used by ICSC did not take into account a number of essential factors and thus resulted in an artificial understatement of the remuneration of United Nations staff. If, instead, the method proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit was applied, a margin of nearly 26 per cent would be obtained, and when the calculations of United States civil service experts were used as the basis, the margin was more than 30 per cent; that was an unacceptable figure as far as the Noblemaire principle was concerned. The ICSC decision was therefore contrary to resolution 31/141 B. Moreover, since New York was the base city of the post adjustment system, the post adjustment increase for New York would result in a system-wide increase in remuneration. Obviously, such a decision was exclusively within the competence of the General Assembly.

3. Moreover, in accordance with article 11 of its statute, ICSC was authorized to take decisions concerning a change in post adjustment classifications only on the basis of the movement of the current local cost-of-living index. However, in the case under discussion, the increase decided by ICSC was in no way related to the movement of that index. Therefore, even from a technical viewpoint, the ICSC report had not proved that the New York post adjustment had been understated in the past. It was clear that in taking the decision to increase the New York post adjustment, ICSC had exceeded its terms of reference. Moreover, the ICSC decision was a ploy to avoid reducing the excessive post adjustments applied in a number of European duty stations and to circumvent the decision taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session not to grant a 5 per cent increase in base salaries for United Nations staff. The Soviet delegation therefore requested that the ICSC decision should be revoked and that the post adjustments applied to the other duty stations should be reduced.

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(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

4. His delegation deplored the fact that ICSC was making more and more concessions to the unjustified demands of United Nations staff to the detriment of the interests of Member States. The Soviet Union, which was the second largest contributor to the United Nations budget, was committed to providing the Organization with the means it needed to perform its role fully as an instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, increasing staff costs meant limiting the resources which the Organization could devote to pursuing its fundamental objectives. The Soviet Union could not, therefore, accept a situation in which ICSC, a non-governmental body whose members acted in an individual capacity, was being turned into a pump for siphoning resources into the pockets of international civil servants.
5. Mr. PIÑEIRO ARAMBURU (Argentina) congratulated the International Civil Service Commission on its concise, clear and thorough report, which called for comment on several particularly important points.
6. Concerning pensionable remuneration and pension entitlements for the Professional and higher categories, his delegation had no objection to ICSC's recommendation to the General Assembly for the application from 1 January 1985 of the scales of pensionable remuneration contained in annex VI in grades from P-1 to the USG level, on the understanding that the rate of contribution by the staff did not have direct implications for the amounts of remuneration.
7. With regard to interim adjustments, it would be useful for ICSC and the Joint Staff Pension Board to re-examine the adjustment procedure and undertake studies in that regard, and to report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session. His delegation believed that the adjustment mechanism should be examined again at the time of the next comprehensive review of pensionable remuneration amounts for staff in the Professional and higher categories. By that time, as ICSC had indicated, the dual adjustment mechanism would have been in effect for a sufficiently long period of time to permit drawing conclusions regarding its operation. The dual system currently used for adjusting pensionable remuneration amounts between comprehensive reviews should continue to be used with the modifications proposed by ICSC.
8. Concerning the adjustment to pensionable remuneration amounts in accordance with article 54 (b) of the Regulations of the Pension Fund, his delegation believed that the increase proposed by ICSC should be implemented. It was essential, however, for ICSC to monitor the evolution of the different factors which had been taken into consideration in elaborating the proposed scheme and to undertake a periodic review of pensionable remuneration amounts, clearly accounting for any divergence between the current scales of pensionable remuneration and those resulting from the analysis of all other relevant data applicable to international civil servants.
9. As to calculations of the margin between the remuneration of the United States federal civil service and that of the United Nations system, it was to be hoped that the present method would be improved.

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(Mr. Piñeiro Aramburu, Argentina)

10. ICSC had decided to recommend to the General Assembly the consolidation of 20 points of post adjustment into net base salary of the Professional and higher categories from 1 January 1985. His delegation accepted that recommendation and, like ICSC, believed that it was important to resolve the problem without affecting staff assessment and the Tax Equalization Fund; it again urged Member States to take appropriate action to exempt their nationals from income taxation, which would lead to the abolition of the Tax Equalization Fund. It was gratifying to note that ICSC had agreed that it was necessary to correct the anomaly in the New York post adjustment index and that it had decided to increase that index by 9.6 per cent to 170.86 as at October 1982, in accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions.

11. His delegation welcomed ICSC's recommendation to introduce an additional step into the salary scales for long service at the levels P-1 to P-5 and in the General Service and other locally-recruited categories.

12. With regard to conditions of service in the field, particularly at duty stations where hazardous conditions prevailed and where staff were essential for project execution and the realization of the goals of the United Nations Charter, Argentina supported ICSC's recommendations contained in paragraphs 200, 202, 203 and 204 of its report.

13. United Nations policy on personnel questions and, in particular, human resources planning were of great importance, and his delegation awaited with interest the views of the executive heads and staff representatives on the recommendations contained in the document produced by the ICSC secretariat.

14. As far as recruitment policy was concerned, any initiative to improve staff efficiency and geographical distribution, especially through the recruitment of candidates from unrepresented or under-represented countries, as well as the recruitment of more women, was welcome. It was desirable, therefore, for the Commission's recommendations on that subject, formulated under article 14 of its statute, to be applied by the various organizations. In that connection, the favourable reception given to the Commission's recommendations and decisions by a large number of organizations was encouraging. Such concerted action to improve the common system should be continued. In that connection, General Assembly decision 38/451 on the possible deletion of the last sentence of article 6, paragraph 2, of the Commission's statute should be applied in such a way as to avoid creating a deadlock in the common system. His delegation thought, therefore, that the best approach would be through prior consultations with the other organizations of the common system, as the Commission indicated in paragraph 233 of its report.

15. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) recalled that in its resolution 38/233, the General Assembly has asked the Commission to submit recommendations on pensionable remuneration to it at its thirty-ninth session. The Commission, deciding that some of the comparisons in the documents before the Fifth Committee in 1983 had been misleading, had drawn the General Assembly's attention to the various factors that should be taken into account in

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(Mr. Akwei)

such comparisons and had proceeded to make its own comparisons of total remuneration in application of the Noblemaire principle. On the basis of those comparisons, it had decided to recommend to the General Assembly a new method of calculating pensionable remuneration, set out in detail in paragraphs 38 to 46 of the Commission's report. The scale established on that basis, given in annex VI to the report, would involve a decrease in pensionable remuneration for staff at most levels and an increase in the amount for the lowest levels. If the General Assembly applied that scale from 1 January 1985, as the Commission recommended, it would result in gradually increasing savings up to 1989, when the new levels would catch up with the current levels.

16. On the matter of interim adjustments, the Commission did not feel a change was necessary in the WAPA/CPI mechanism currently applied; on the other hand, it thought that adjustments to pensionable remuneration amounts should be made only once a year instead of twice a year as was current practice. On the question of adjustments to pensionable remuneration amounts in accordance with article 54 (b) of the Pension Fund Regulations, he noted that the last adjustment had been on 1 October 1982. Between 1 July 1982 and 1 July 1984, the United States CPI had risen by 5.4 per cent, thus exceeding the 5 per cent threshold requirement. Consequently, for the reasons set out in its report, the Commission recommended to the General Assembly the application of an adjustment of 5.4 per cent in the amount of pensionable remuneration as from 1 October 1984.

17. The Commission considered that comprehensive reviews of pensionable remuneration should not take place more than once every five years. Nevertheless, the Commission must continue to monitor the various factors which could affect the calculation of pensionable remuneration and report to the General Assembly if necessary.

18. Regarding the imposition of a ceiling on the highest level of pensions, the Commission considered that a ceiling on pensionable remuneration could have an undesirable effect on pensions payable to all staff. It thought, therefore, that if a ceiling was to be introduced, it should be considered in relation to the level of pension benefits. It had therefore decided to refer the matter back to the Pension Board.

AGENDA ITEM 118: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (A/39/9 and 608; A/C.5/39/15 and 29)

19. Mr. ALI (Chairman of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board), introducing the Board's report (A/39/9), said that the Board had carried out to the full the mandate given to it by the General Assembly in resolution 38/233. In accordance with part III of that resolution, the International Civil Service Commission had been instructed to examine pensionable remuneration in co-operation with the Pension Board. Although pensionable remuneration was the responsibility of the Commission, it was closely linked to pension benefits, which were within the province of the Pension Board. In that connection, the Pension Board concurred in the implementation on 1 January 1985 of the proposed scale of pensionable

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(Mr. Ali)

remuneration for the Professional and higher categories set out in the ICSC report (A/39/30, annex VI) and in the transitional arrangements outlined (*ibid.*, para. 47), noting that the scale would reduce the actuarial imbalance by 0.17 per cent of total pensionable remuneration.

20. Although the Pension Board would have liked to have had more time to study the implications of the new method used to establish the scale as well as the scale itself, it had given its opinion without delay in response to the Fifth Committee's wishes. It was, of course, fully ready to co-operate with ICSC in reviewing and monitoring the factors underlying the proposed scale. It also endorsed the Commission's conclusion that the 5.4 per cent adjustment due on 1 October 1984 should be implemented.

21. Turning to the question of exclusion from participation under article 21 of the Fund's Regulations, he said that the Pension Board recommended that the exclusion provision should be limited to the cases referred to in its report to the thirty-eighth session. In its opinion, considerations such as the desire to cut costs could not be regarded as valid grounds for exclusion and it was undesirable to exclude groups of staff to whom participation had been extended in the past. It should be remembered, in that connection, that years of service during such exclusion could not subsequently be taken into account for pension purposes.

22. He recalled that in part II of resolution 38/233 the General Assembly had requested the Pension Board to examine six measures to reduce or eliminate the actuarial imbalance revealed by the valuation as at 31 December 1982. In pursuance of that resolution, the Pension Board was recommending to the General Assembly the adoption of seven measures, set out on pages 12 and 13 of its report, the implementation of which would yield savings equal to 1.33 per cent of total pensionable remuneration.

23. Among the Pension Board's recommendations, all of which had been approved by ACABQ, two deserved the Fifth Committee's special attention. The first was the new rate of interest of 6.5 per cent which the Board, acting by virtue of its powers under article 11 of the Regulations of the Fund, proposed should be used for lump-sum commutation. In order to retain the acquired rights of participants and to take into account the fact that previous increases in the interest rates had been applied only prospectively, the Board had decided that the new interest rate should apply to service after 1 January 1985. It should be explained that from the actuarial point of view the impact of applying the new rate retroactively would be marginal. Moreover, the Pension Board had decided, also in exercise of the power vested in it by article 11 of the Regulations, to adopt a new unisex mortality table to calculate the actuarial equivalent of periodic benefits in respect of periods of service after 31 December 1984.

24. The second measure to which he wished draw the Committee's attention was the "capping" of the United States dollar track at 120 per cent of the local track in order to limit excessive differences between the two. The Board believed that the 20 per cent limit provided a fair balance between the entitlement to a full United States dollar-denominated benefit and the need to avoid unjustified increases in that amount.

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(Mr. Ali)

25. The Board had reiterated two recommendations which it had made in 1982 and 1983. The first concerned the raising of the mandatory age of separation to 62. The General Assembly had rejected that recommendation earlier because of the impact it might have on the geographical composition of the staff, but the argument seemed less valid at the present time. It should be noted, in that connection, that two organizations of the United Nations system had already introduced that measure. The second concerned the raising of the contribution rate from 21 to 24 per cent in four phases. At its thirty-eighth session the Assembly had accepted the first phase - raising of the contribution rate by 0.75 per cent - and it was currently going to consider the other three. The second phase was due for implementation in January 1986. The Advisory Committee was in favour of the increase and the Secretary-General, speaking as Chairman of ACC, had stressed the importance of that measure.

26. Recalling that General Assembly resolution 38/233 called for a co-operative effort by member organizations, participants and beneficiaries in order to reduce the Fund's actuarial imbalance, he said that the burden of the new measures being proposed fell almost entirely on participants, as had been the case with all the recommendations proposed since 1982. Indeed, the measures adopted in 1982 had cast the burden almost unfairly on future participants whereas those recommended in 1983 and 1984 had sought to distribute it more equitably between present and future participants. At least three member organizations had decided that the actuarial imbalance should not be met solely or mainly through reductions in benefits, in other words at the expense of participants. It must be remembered that the measures were part of a negotiated package; accordingly, the Committee must not separate them but must adopt them as a whole.

27. It was clear that the Board had endeavoured to remedy the Fund's actuarial imbalance in accordance with the mandate it had been given by the General Assembly. The Fund's financial difficulties had been caused to a large extent by the following factors: demographic factors, relating to the fact that people tended to live longer; personnel policies of organizations within the common system that limited the average career to less than 20 years; and world economic instability to which the Pension Fund was particularly sensitive because of the geographical dispersion of participants and beneficiaries. It should also be remembered that all pension schemes were facing financial difficulties and that the contribution rate of the United Nations pension scheme was currently one of the lowest.

28. The pension issue, more than any other, concerned all the organizations within the common system; the decision-making power rested primarily with the General Assembly and thus with the Fifth Committee. The issue thus concerned ACC and ACABQ as well as the Board. Those three bodies considered that pensions were the cornerstone of the common system and that any measure relating to pensions would have profound repercussions on personnel policies, the staff morale and relations between the staff and the administration. The Committee should bear that in mind when it considered the Board's recommendations in relation to the entire system.

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29. Mr. FORAN (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on investments of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/C.5/39/15), said that it was clear from section I that the year under review had on the whole been a good one for the Fund's investments and that it had been marked by moderating inflation, somewhat lower interest rates and a strong US dollar.

30. Recalling that the Fund could not achieve rates of return that were significantly higher than the market indexes in the markets in which it had invested, he said that the good market conditions of the year under review had been reflected in the Fund's fairly high returns. As indicated in paragraph 4, the total return on investments for the year ended 31 March 1984 was 13.01 per cent which, although lower than the outstanding rate of 27.05 per cent achieved the previous year, was nonetheless very good. The lowering of inflation had continued to have a positive effect on the real - in other words the inflation-adjusted - rate of return. While interest rates had been somewhat lower than in the previous year, they remained high and fixed-income investments continued to be attractive.

31. The increase in the strength of the dollar which had continued since 31 March 1984 had tended, in the short term, to lower in dollar terms the value of investments in non-dollar securities, which represented approximately 42 per cent of total investments. However, as currencies had fluctuated dramatically over the past decade it would be imprudent to draw any conclusions regarding the future and the Secretary-General remained convinced that diversification of investments was in the long-term interest of the Fund.

32. Section II indicated how, in accordance with the General Assembly's wishes the Fund had invested in development-related securities, with particular emphasis on States members of the Organization of African Unity. There had been a 15 per cent increase in development-related investments over the past year and, as indicated in table 3, the book value of such investments had doubled in the past four years. In order to increase the volume of such investments, continued assistance would be required from the Permanent Missions of developing countries to the United Nations. It was through them that on-the-spot contacts could be arranged between United Nations investment staff and investment officials in the countries concerned. The Secretary-General had been grateful for the assistance given to the mission which had recently been sent to a number of African countries and hoped that future missions to other developing regions would be similarly assisted.

33. It was clear from section III that the investments of the Fund were doing well when compared against the standards of the market indexes or the performance of comparable funds. In discharging his fiduciary responsibilities the Secretary-General would continue, with the advice of the Investments Committee, to strive for even better results, while adhering to the principles of sound investment management and the criteria embodied in the resolutions of the General Assembly. To that end, he would steer a middle course between the extremes of risk and undue conservatism. The investment returns of the Fund should not be measured against unrealistic targets for any attempt to increase returns dramatically carried with it the risk of worsening the situation.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/39/30 and Corr.1; A/C.5/39/13, 18, 26 and 27)

34. Mr. SAKUMA (Japan) said that he was disappointed, as the representative of the most under-represented State, at the slow progress made concerning the composition of the Secretariat. It was hard to understand why, of the 225 appointments made during the reporting year, only 46, or 20 per cent, had gone to nationals of unrepresented or under-represented Member States. On the other hand, 40 appointments, or 17.8 per cent of the total, had gone to nationals of over-represented Member States. The Office of Personnel Services had planned to limit the number of vacancies filled by nationals of over-represented countries to 10 per cent of the total. It was true that the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/39/453) indicated that the statistics did not include the results of the 1983 competitive examination. Nevertheless, even if the 44 successful candidates who according to the Secretary-General's report on personnel policy (A/C.5/39/9) were in the process of being recruited had been included in the total of 269 appointments, only 90, or 33.5 per cent, would have gone to nationals of unrepresented or under-represented countries. The figure was far below the 40 per cent target. In that connection, according to the Secretary-General's definition, candidates from the competitive examinations for promotion to the Professional category were counted as promotions and not as new appointments. The proportion of nationals of over-represented countries would have increased rapidly had those candidates been included in the total number of appointments, since the majority of them came from over-represented countries. Under the medium-term recruitment plan for 1983-1985, at least 40 per cent of vacant posts had been reserved for the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States, the Secretary-General having decided that those countries would attain their desirable ranges by 1985 at the latest. His delegation therefore wished to know what steps the Secretary-General intended to take to achieve that goal.

35. In that connection, the impact of the Secretary-General's decision to suspend new appointments for six months was disquieting. His delegation hoped that the six months' period would be used to develop ways of attaining the goals established by the General Assembly, and that the Office of Personnel Services would carry out the necessary preparatory work of evaluation and selection so that nationals of under-represented countries could be recruited as soon as the period ended.

36. Further, the Office of Personnel Services should organize competitive examinations every year for recruitment from heavily under-represented countries. Such examinations, which could effectively serve to rectify the imbalance in the composition of the Secretariat, nevertheless called for a number of comments.

37. Firstly, the reduction in the number of P-1 and P-2 posts, pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, was disturbing. It seemed that various departments and offices were trying to upgrade posts, particularly from the P-2 to the P-3 level, so that they would not be earmarked for recruitment by competitive examination. It was imperative to halt that practice, which would weaken the organizations engaging in it. Secondly, his delegation supported the proposal to

(Mr. Sakuma, Japan)

extend the system of competitive examinations to posts at the P-3 level. Such a measure would have to be implemented within the framework of rectifying the current imbalance. Thirdly, his delegation endorsed the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report regarding the languages in which examinations were conducted. The translation of examination papers, for example, raised doubts concerning the fairness and impartiality of the examinations. Since some papers could be taken in the working languages of the regional commissions, they had to be translated, so that, as the Secretary-General had pointed out, "all candidates cannot be guaranteed equal treatment if their papers are translated by different persons, since the answers of some of the candidates can inadvertently be modified in the translation process". Since staff members in the Professional category needed to have a working knowledge of English or French, only those two languages should be used in the competitive examinations.

38. There was no doubt that there were real difficulties in meeting the goals relating to equitable geographical distribution. However, the explanations offered by the Secretary-General in his report were not very convincing. His delegation agreed with many others that undue delays in recruitment procedures were one of the main reasons why equitable geographical distribution had not been achieved. It would be desirable if, in each case, the recruitment procedure was completed within four months of the appearance of the vacancy notice. Furthermore, the Office of Personnel Services should inform every applicant of its final decision, whether favourable or unfavourable, and should abandon its current practice of not notifying applicants who were dropped from consideration before the final stage of the recruitment process, a practice which frustrated applicants and also made it more difficult to attract an adequate number of eligible candidates.

39. With regard to the roster of candidates, which contained thousands of names, the Office of Personnel Services should state how many candidates from the roster had been recruited in the course of the reporting year. It would be of interest to know whether the roster was being used only to supply collateral candidates at the final stage of selection, which would make them candidates in name only.

40. The Secretary-General's report indicated that there had been nine recruitment missions in 1983 and 1984, with the sole result that six candidates were under consideration for appointment to specific posts. While his delegation supported such missions in general, the Office of Personnel Services should monitor their effectiveness more carefully.

41. With regard to movement from the General Service to the Professional category, it did not seem that it helped to improve geographical distribution. As Inspector Bertrand had pointed out in his report on competitive examinations in the United Nations (A/39/483), it did not appear that serious efforts had been made to adhere to the target of 30 per cent for internal examinations and 70 per cent for external examinations. The statistics showed that the percentage of candidates promoted to the Professional category from internal examinations had exceeded 30 per cent of the vacant posts at the P-1 and P-2 levels in any given year. The Inspector had noted that "the internal examination has always been served first, and this means

(Mr. Sakuma, Japan)

blocking some 30 posts out of a total of usually about 60. On occasion, (...) more posts have been blocked than were needed for the internal competition". It was certainly very important that staff members in the General Service and related categories should have a clear idea of their career prospects, and that career paths should be established to that end. Yet the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category should not be the only means available to such staff members for advancing their careers. In that connection, his delegation supported the idea of establishing two additional levels - G-6 and G-7 - in New York, which would contribute greatly to solving the personnel policy problems the United Nations was currently facing.

42. Lastly, as the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had pointed out, it was important to develop an integrated and consolidated plan of action for personnel management, taking into consideration the need for decentralization. However, decentralization would not work without a central co-ordinating body. In that connection, the General Assembly had advocated strengthening the Office of Personnel Services. It seemed to his delegation that it was rather for the Secretary-General himself, as the chief administrative officer of the Secretariat, to take the necessary steps to achieve that objective.

43. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) welcomed the joint efforts made by the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services, the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission to bring the personnel policy more into line with the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter. However, a great deal remained to be done in order to ensure the equitable distribution of all States in the Secretariat and the adequate representation of women. The figures were eloquent in that respect: 25 per cent of States were relegated to the category of unrepresented or under-represented countries, while 20 per cent continued to be over-represented; as to women staff members, the proportion of women holding posts subject to geographical distribution (22.6 per cent) fell short of the target of 25 per cent set by the General Assembly.

44. Moreover, little progress had been made towards the general use of competitive examinations for recruitment to P-1 and P-2 posts. To overcome the bureaucratic resistance discussed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on competitive examinations in the United Nations (A/39/483), the first step should be to limit the exceptions to that procedure, as the Joint Inspection Unit proposed (recommendation No. 1), then to broaden the competitive examination recruitment procedure to P-3 posts (recommendation No. 5) and, lastly, to provide for a substantial proportion of P-1/P-2 posts in the personnel pyramid (recommendation No. 4).

45. As to staff efficiency, his delegation favoured the establishment of a rational career development system, as envisaged in document A/C.5/39/11. The improvement of working conditions, particularly in terms of the prospects for promotion and opportunities for staff training and development, would not only help to improve the productivity of staff members but would also increase their motivation. However, his delegation did not think it would be useful, at the

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(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

current stage, to send missions to explain career development questions at duty stations outside the Headquarters area or to establish a career counselling service, even though it supported the strengthening of personnel services with a view to better human resources management within the Organization.

46. The controversies between the Administration and the staff and the violations of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations also impeded the proper functioning of the Organization. Procedures for the settlement of disputes should be simplified, and the functioning of existing machinery should be improved. Lastly, the rights of staff members whose functional privileges and immunities had been violated must be restored.

47. Mr. GOGUIKIAN (Lebanon) stressed that, to ensure the sound management of the Secretariat, recruitment must be free of political intervention. The implementation of a medium-term recruitment plan, the introduction of a career development system guaranteeing the progressive promotion of staff members and the holding of periodic dialogue between the Secretariat and staff representatives should help to attain the common objectives.

48. Two of the unfulfilled objectives deserved special attention, namely, geographical distribution and the representation of women. A more intensive publicity campaign in the unrepresented and under-represented countries and the sending of recruitment missions to visit the Governments concerned so as to encourage them actively to help to identify qualified candidates with a view to their possible recruitment for vacant high-level posts in the Secretariat were measures which should be considered with a view to improving geographical distribution and rectifying the situation of women.

49. The quality of candidates should, in any case, continue to be the main criterion for recruitment. Accordingly, the competitive examination procedures made compulsory by General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 must be duly applied. In that context, priority should be given to intensifying the national competitive examination programme in under-represented and unrepresented countries in order to restore the balance of the Secretariat's composition. Internal competitive examinations were a good way of rewarding individual merit and, in all fairness, the seniority of staff members should also be taken into account.

50. In the field of career development, his delegation welcomed with great satisfaction the positive initiative which consisted of the establishment of an integrated planning system for the Secretariat's human resources. His delegation therefore supported the cost estimates submitted in document A/C.5/39/11 and hoped that the other members of the Committee would do the same.

51. Good career development required a genuine programme for the promotion of linguistic skills. Staff members should be encouraged to learn at least one additional official language. To that end, there should be no hesitation in adopting modern teaching methods and language teachers should be given permanent status, as the General Assembly had recommended at its thirty-eighth session.

(Mr. Goguikian, Lebanon)

However, his delegation was opposed to the financial incentives envisaged in document A/C.5/39/6, primarily because of the financial implications they would entail for the Organization, and he believed it would be better from every standpoint to reward especially competent staff by accelerating their promotion.

52. Lastly, United Nations officials should never forget that they had been accorded functional privileges and immunities to help them better to perform their tasks. It was therefore essential for them to comply with the laws in force in the countries to which they were assigned. In that connection, it would be a good idea to clarify for all officials the precise nature and limited scope of their functional privileges and immunities, as was indicated in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/39/17. As far as Lebanon was concerned, it should be noted that all the detained persons had been released. Investigations were continuing with a view to determining the cause of the disappearance of two persons. He drew attention to the fact that his country had always been in the vanguard of Member States in terms of respect for privileges and immunities. Lebanon hoped that, in exchange, a more understanding and more conciliatory attitude would be adopted in its regard.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.