



FIFTH COMMITTEE
29th meeting
held on
16 November 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

DEC 7 1984

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

later: Mr. DITZ (Austria)

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

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A/C.5/39/SR.29
21 November 1984

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/39/453, A/39/483 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1; A/C.5/39/2, A/C.5/39/4 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.5/39/6 and Corr.1, A/C.5/39/9, 11, 17 and 23)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

1. Mr. CHUA (Singapore) said that in recent years the United Nations Secretariat had been increasingly criticized in various quarters, particularly by its major contributors and the media, for its rapid growth, rising staff costs and declining efficiency. The Organization's image had never been at a lower point at any time since its foundation. While his delegation did not associate itself with many of the charges levelled at the Secretariat, it did feel that there was room for further streamlining so as to convince all Member States that their contributions were being put to efficient use. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the various temporary measures taken by the Secretary-General with a view to improving the Secretariat's performance, namely, the suspension of recruitment for a period of six months and the reduction in allocations for travel and consultants. Indeed, he wondered whether it might not be advisable to extend the suspension of recruitment for an indefinite period.

2. The key to avoiding excessive organizational growth was individual productivity. Given the existence of the large pool of expertise available within the Organization, redeployment of existing personnel should be practised more widely, and effective ways should be sought to terminate the employment of inefficient staff. In suggesting such action he was certainly not calling for any curtailment of programmes but only for improved programme delivery.

3. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for a system of career development for all categories of staff (A/C.5/39/11) and fully agreed with the philosophy behind it. Higher productivity could be achieved only if the staff were sufficiently motivated.

4. He expressed disappointment over the lack of progress in the improvement of geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat, the employment of women, particularly in senior-level posts and from developing countries, and the representation of developing countries in senior posts in general. The fact that recruitment from underrepresented countries accounted for only 20.5 per cent of total recruitment was particularly unsatisfactory, and his delegation once again called on the Secretary-General to make every effort to implement the relevant General Assembly decisions in order to rectify that unhealthy trend. However,

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(Mr. Chua, Singapore)

while maintaining that developing countries should be adequately represented in senior posts, his delegation was also aware that the pool of qualified personnel in most developing countries, including his own, was limited and that in many cases highly skilled persons were urgently needed in their countries of origin. The United Nations should not aggravate the brain drain from the developing countries.

5. His delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit's report on competitive examinations in the United Nations (A/39/483), but was concerned to hear of the existence of bureaucratic resistance to the use of competitive examinations for recruitment purposes. It called on all department heads to abide strictly by the principle that competitive examination was an effective means of recruiting qualified personnel. His delegation had no strong objection to the proposal to extend competitive examinations to the P-3 level but would reserve its final judgement until a trial exercise had been carried out. On the question of privileges and immunities of United Nations officials, his delegation reiterated its appeal to all Member States to observe the relevant principles set forth in the Charter. In conclusion, he pledged full support for the Secretary-General's drive to make the Secretariat an efficient body of which the Member States could be justly proud.

6. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) regretted the lack of progress towards achieving an equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat, a principle which, in his delegation's view, applied not only to recruitment in general but also to the apportioning of senior and policy-formulating posts. The monopoly of senior-level posts enjoyed by a handful of countries was detrimental to the Organization's efficiency. His delegation was strongly in favour of increasing the recruitment of nationals of developing countries to senior posts within the Organization. It continued to regard competitive examinations as a useful means of selecting suitable staff, provided that care was taken to appoint nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented countries. He therefore had no objection to the system's extension to the P-3 level.

7. Co-ordination between the Office of Personnel Services (OPS) and other departments was essential. It was high time for bureaucratic resistance to the introduction of reforms and changes in the personnel system to be broken down. A comprehensive career development system for all categories of staff would greatly contribute towards overcoming administrative problems, maintaining and preserving personnel standards and increasing productivity at reasonable cost.

8. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that personnel policy and its application should be based on the strict and unconditional observance of two fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter, namely, the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, neither principle being arbitrarily given priority over the other.

9. The documents before the Committee showed that, as a result of measures taken in the past few years, the disparities existing in the representation of Member

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(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

States in the Secretariat were being attenuated, so that, on the whole, the General Assembly's decisions on personnel questions and the existing recruitment mechanism could be said to be operating in the right direction. Unfortunately, the documents also showed that success still remained more than modest from the point of view of the strict application of Article 101 of the Charter and of a large number of General Assembly resolutions and decisions concerning equitable geographical distribution. That was true, at any rate, of the countries of Eastern Europe, more than half which remained underrepresented or represented towards the lower limit of their desirable ranges. Not even the lower limit had been achieved for the region as a whole, throughout the Organization's whole period of existence, and during the period under review representation had actually diminished by six posts. Eastern Europe was the only regional group which did not include a single overrepresented State. The situation was equally unsatisfactory in terms of the level of posts in which Eastern European States were represented. The fact that the number of unrepresented and underrepresented States remained practically unchanged and still accounted for a quarter of the Organization's membership also gave grounds for concern. Yet the existing anomalies could be eliminated in a matter of two or, at most, three years if all Professional posts subject to geographical distribution were filled in accordance with the General Assembly's specific and insistent decisions and with the plans elaborated on the basis of those decisions. That, however, was not done, sometimes because department heads ignored those decisions and plans, sometimes because the imperfect recruitment mechanism inherited from the past continued to operate, and sometimes because new procedures failed to take due account of the principle of geographical distribution.

10. Convinced that the continuing unjustified and mistaken practice of appointing nationals of over-represented countries to posts subject to geographical distribution was the main reason for the non-implementation of many General Assembly decisions on personnel questions, his delegation fully endorsed the view that the recruitment of Professional staff from over-represented countries should be temporarily suspended.

11. The equally unjustified system of permanent contracts represented a serious obstacle to the achievement of equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat. That system had been established principally at the wish of the Secretariat itself with the support of certain countries, the formal justification given being the necessity of securing the highest possible standards of competence. In that connection, he remarked that no report on the standards of efficiency, competence and integrity of Secretariat staff had ever been placed before the General Assembly. The true reasons for maintaining the permanent contracts system, however, were no doubt simpler and, in many cases, less convincing. The fact that even the posts of Secretary-General of the United Nations and of the heads of specialized agencies were subject to periodic review hardly spoke in favour of permanent contracts. The practice of moving personnel about within Secretariat units and from one unit to another, sometimes to posts with completely different functions, the promotion of General Service staff to Professional posts, the provision of extensive staff training programmes and similar measures suggested that staff members on permanent contracts often proved

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(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

incapable of performing their duties and had to be fitted into some other slot. The predominance of permanent over fixed-term contracts did great harm to the Organization's efficiency and hindered replacement of inadequately qualified Professional staff. The continuing practice of granting permanent contracts to the nationals of already over-represented countries was particularly regrettable. For all those reasons, the practice of granting permanent contracts, especially to nationals of over-represented countries, should cease.

12. His delegation shared the view that all Secretariat departments and units should strictly observe the principle of geographical balance between regions and regarded the obstructionist attitude adopted by certain department heads in that connection as incompatible with the Organization's standards. The movement of staff from the General Service category to Professional posts subject to geographical distribution also impeded application of the principle of equitable representation and was used as a loophole for the appointment of still more nationals of over-represented countries. Transfers from the General Service category to the Professional category should be made only in exceptional cases, due account being taken of the degree of representation of the States of which the staff members concerned were nationals.

13. While noting the importance and usefulness of steps taken in recent years to increase the recruitment of women to Professional posts and to improve their working conditions, promotion opportunities and professional training, his delegation continued to maintain that in recruiting and promoting women in the Professional Category due account must be taken of the desirable range of each Member State, since otherwise the idea of offering greater opportunities to women, just and noble as it was, could become yet another means of impeding equitable geographical distribution. The principle of equitable representation should be observed not only within the Secretariat as a whole but also within its separate units and should be applied, wherever possible, in the recruitment of experts and consultants. As for the proposal to extend the system of competitive examinations to the P-3 level, his delegation feared that, there again, attempts might be made to discriminate in favour of nationals of certain over-represented countries, and therefore entertained serious reservations concerning the proposal.

14. Turning to document A/C.5/39/11, he remarked that although the report was entitled "A system of career development for all categories of staff", the manner in which staff members serving on fixed-contracts accounted for 40 per cent of the Secretariat, could benefit from the proposed system was not made clear. The report needed to be redrafted so as to take account of the interests of all categories of staff.

15. Lastly, he noted that although the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was not at present underrepresented, the fact that all its nationals serving in the Secretariat were on fixed-term contracts meant that the slightest slackening of attention might lead to the loss of two or three posts, with the result that it would once more become underrepresented. The question of the representation of countries whose nationals were recruited on fixed-term contracts should be carefully borne in mind by OPS.

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AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued) (A/39/30 and Corr.1, A/39/522 and Corr.1 and Add.1; A/C.5/39/13, 18, 26 and 27; A/C.5/39/L.8)

16. Mr. BUSHEV (Bulgaria) recalled that in introducing the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/39/30), the Commission's Chairman had described post adjustment as possibly the most difficult subject with which the Commission had had to deal during the past year. The report itself hardly appeared to bear out that assessment. A reading of paragraphs 145 to 150 suggested that the decision to raise the post adjustment index for New York by 9.6 per cent had been reached easily, with only one member of the Commission dissenting.

17. Under its statute, ICSC was required to establish the classification of duty stations for the purpose of applying post adjustments and to submit to the General Assembly annual reports including information on the implementation of the Commission's decisions and recommendations. There was no mention of the need for the General Assembly's approval of the Commission's decisions. On the basis of those provisions, the Commission had undertaken a revision of the post adjustment index of New York which had been established more than 20 years earlier.

18. The question arose in that connection whether "re-establishment" of the post adjustment index was within the purview of article 11 (c) of the ICSC statute. He also wondered what the Commission would recommend if former staff members now separated from the service claimed compensation for their "loss" because the index had been understated since 1956, and whether, supposing the index had been overstated for the same period, ICSC would automatically have established a decrease.

19. It was unclear from the ICSC report how differences and adjustments in the index for New York and Geneva since 1956 had come about. He had questions about how the Commission had arrived at the figures given in paragraphs 157 and 160, in particular.

20. The Fifth Committee needed to be given clear information about the methodology used by the Commission in reaching its conclusions. A report of 78 pages, more than twice the recommended length, created confusion and even cast doubt on the expert body. Reports were meant to be self-contained and their authors should carry sole responsibility for the text. Document A/39/30, however, incorporated summaries and synopses reflecting the views of other interested bodies, such as FICSA and the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System, which were reflected quite extensively in other documents. The JIU report (A/39/522) had been described by some as unhelpful, confusing, and premature. The opposite was true: JIU appeared to have been the only expert body to criticize the ICSC report, and much of its criticism was timely and appropriate.

21. Bearing in mind the controversial nature of ICSC's decision, his delegation wished to associate itself with the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/39/L.8, which would revoke the decision to increase the New York post adjustment by 9.6 per cent.

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22. Mr. ENEH (Nigeria) noted that questions had been raised concerning ICSC's competence, and perhaps no issue had generated so much controversy as the post adjustment increase for New York. If the index had, indeed, been understated for the past 25 years, there was something seriously wrong with a system that had taken so long to discover that error. It was also debatable whether ICSC's price comparisons were representative enough and consistent with United States national statistics. As to its competence, the Commission had stated that it had acted properly in accordance with article 11 (c) of its statute. His delegation believed that ICSC should have read that article in the light of article 10. Those two articles authorized the Commission to work out the post adjustment methodology and make recommendations, but the General Assembly alone should take the ultimate decision. His delegation was not calling for the revocation of the adjustment already implemented, but felt that ICSC's statute might be reviewed to ensure that the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly had a say in final decisions.

23. Scales of pensionable remuneration should not include an expatriation factor, since including that factor might be at variance with the Noblemaire principle. The methodology for comparing total compensation should not include pension benefits. The proposed pensionable remuneration for the Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General levels was certainly too high and should be reduced.

24. The current margin between the remuneration of the United Nations system and that of the comparator country was reasonable, but implementation of the 9.6 per cent increase in post adjustment would make it excessive. No artificial ceiling or range should be set for the margin, however, and the Commission should be given flexibility in its determination.

25. The recommendation for a single long-service step for staff in P-1 to P-5 posts was welcome. The positive effect on staff morale far outweighed the recommendation's financial implications.

26. His delegation supported the review of conditions of service in the field and the decisions contained in paragraphs 201 and 202 of the ICSC report regarding levels of financial incentives. In addition, it was quite proper to take exceptional measures with respect to staff working under hazardous conditions, but such measures should be applied only as long as the situation warranted.

AGENDA ITEM 118: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (continued) (A/39/9 and Corr.1 and A/39/608; A/C.5/39/15 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/39/29)

27. Mr. WITHEFORD (Australia) said that adequate pension arrangements were an important factor for staff morale and Member States must be prepared to contribute on a reasonable scale if they wished to ensure the continued efficiency of the Organization. The actuarial imbalance of the Pension Fund was a matter of concern, although his delegation was pleased to note the efforts made by the Pension Board and ICSC to solve that problem.

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(Mr. Witheford, Australia)

28. Some delegations had expressed doubts about the acceptability of the proposals contained in the Pension Board's report. He would have preferred the Board to submit one or two alternative options to the Fifth Committee. However, given the complexity of the subject-matter and the lack of time available, he was persuaded by the Secretary-General's argument that the proposals constituted a carefully considered package which should be accepted as such. He did not, however, consider acceptance of the new arrangements as being the end of the matter for all time.

29. His delegation dissociated itself from any implication of lack of integrity or in competence on the part of ICSC or the Pension Board, although it did share the view that current and proposed pension scales were over-generous and placed an undue burden on Member States. No one seriously denied that United Nations pension benefits were much higher than those of the comparator country. That violation of the Noblemaire principle was even more apparent in the "expatriate loading" of pension arrangements. Moreover, United Nations retirees had the advantage of the two-track option, which had enabled some to benefit handsomely from the recent strength of the United States dollar. His delegation was not opposed to the capping of the United States dollar track at 120 per cent of the local track, but suggested that the General Assembly at its next session might consider abolishing the two-track option altogether.

30. His delegation noted that it was proposed to discount pensioners' next cost-of-living adjustment by 1.5 per cent, but could not help thinking that, given the generous level of pensions and the need to bring them closer to those of the comparator service, cost-of-living adjustments should perhaps have been shelved temporarily. He reminded the Committee that taxpayers in Member States did not generally enjoy automatic cost-of-living increases.

31. He urged the Fifth Committee to focus on the need for further reductions in the cost of pensions, ideally by adopting an unequivocal resolution aimed at guaranteeing that greater progress would be made on that issue at the next session.

32. Mr. Ditz (Austria) took the Chair.

33. Mr. SAKUMA (Japan) said that his delegation was concerned over the methodology used by ICSC to determine the new scale of pensionable remuneration, which appeared to have been based on the hypothesis that the margin between United Nations salaries and those of the United States federal civil service should be reflected proportionately in the level of pension benefits. His delegation believed that pension entitlements should be free from any considerations of expatriate factors, which applied only to staff members during their years of service. In addition, the ICSC calculation of pensionable remuneration was based on the 9.6 per cent post adjustment increase for the base city, thus representing an excessively high net remuneration margin.

34. His delegation had no objection to calculating the level of pension entitlements as part of total compensation comparisons and agreed that the United Nations pension system should not directly copy the pension plan of the comparator

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(Mr. Sakuma, Japan)

civil service. The level of pension entitlements should be within a reasonably comparable range of margins. Such an approach would have yielded a level of pensionable remuneration lower than that proposed for most grades. Moreover, the recommended 5.4 per cent increase for the Professional and higher categories would perpetuate the current excessive levels. Despite those reservations, his delegation felt that the new scale was at least an improvement over the existing one and had no objection to applying it prospectively from 1 January 1985 without any exceptions. In that way all staff would be treated equally.

35. His delegation welcomed the economy measures proposed by the Pension Board in its report (A/39/9) to reduce the current actuarial imbalance. Immediate action to raise the rate of contributions was not necessary: that matter should be considered when the results of the actuarial valuation due at the end of 1984 had been received.

36. His delegation believed that the question of raising the mandatory age of separation to 62 must be discussed in the context of overall personnel policy and not simply as a pension issue. At the present time, such a step might adversely affect balanced geographical distribution and career development.

37. It had been argued that imposing a "cap" on the highest level of pensions would have little impact on the actuarial imbalance because it affected only a handful of participants. However, it was not the number of participants affected or the impact on the actuarial imbalance that mattered, but rather the fact that some participants continued to receive unreasonably high benefits. Corrective action must be taken in order not to alienate Member States' support for the pension scheme.

38. His delegation was also concerned at instances of extremely high lump-sum commutation of pensions. While it was aware that commutation was advantageous from an actuarial point of view, such large amounts simply reflected an overly generous system. Although the one-third limit on commutation should be retained, the level of such payments should be examined with a view to making them more reasonable.

39. While his delegation agreed with the idea of capping the United States dollar track in relation to the local track, it was not sure that the proposed 120 per cent level was appropriate. The "double-track" system should not be allowed to yield undue profits for pensioners in times of sharp currency fluctuation, and the "cap" should therefore be reduced to a reasonable level.

40. In the interests of sound management of the pension system, his delegation believed that further ways should be studied of avoiding an unnecessary drain on the Fund's resources. For instance, why should staff members become eligible for a pension after only five years of service? Furthermore, there were no clear regulations regarding retired United Nations staff who received salaries or pensions from other sources. Finally, a detailed study of the actuarial impact of transfer agreements should be made.

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(Mr. Sakuma, Japan)

41. Once again, the Fifth Committee had come up against the argument of "acquired rights" in attempting to modify and improve the pension system. While his delegation did not believe that the entitlements and benefits guaranteed to staff members should be revised constantly by the General Assembly, it maintained that acquired rights were not "acquired expectations" but simply rights to benefits acquired through contributory service prior to the introduction of a revision in the pension arrangements. In the current difficult financial climate, many Member States were being forced to modify their pension systems and to suggest that the United Nations alone need not take such measures was to imply, erroneously, that it was not affected by that climate.

42. He therefore wished to propose that, in co-operation with ICSC, the Pension Board should make a comparative study of the practice of several Member States, including Headquarters countries, with respect to the acquired rights of their civil servants in the area of pension entitlements, and report thereon to the General Assembly at its fortieth session. Such a study would greatly help all those delegations which were concerned about the sound administration not only of the pension system but also of salary and personnel policy.

AGENDA ITEM 110: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/37/6/Add.2 (Part I) and (Part II) and Corr.1, A/39/6 and Corr.1, A/39/38, A/39/173 and Corr.1 and Add.1; A/C.5/39/1 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/39/21 and Corr.1)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION (continued)

(b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

43. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that, in the view of the Nordic delegations, programme planning was designed to enhance the implementation of political decisions taken by the General Assembly; provide a framework for decisions by giving a clear picture of the managerial alternatives available within the limits of the legislative mandate given by the General Assembly; ensure a realistic allocation of resources based on more rational and efficient management; and, as a cycle comprising instruments of integrated management, facilitate deliberations on future policies.

44. Since the application of the programme planning methodology had been linked to the level of budgetary resources, she wished to reiterate the position of the Nordic countries on budget on policy. Those countries believed that the United Nations budget must give the Organization the capacity to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly, and that an arbitrarily restrictive budgetary framework should not be imposed on General Assembly decisions. They had not, therefore, supported the concept of zero growth and believed that the new methodology based on assessments of costs linked to clearly identified activities offered a more rational and realistic basis for evaluating requests for budgetary resources. Programme planning did not, in their view, include any mechanism for automatic cuts in budgetary resources. To sum up, programme planning was a pragmatic and necessary tool for improving the management of the Organization and for improving the assessment of the need for, and the use of, its resources.

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(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

45. Programme planning was currently an integral part of the overall policy-making and management process in the United Nations. Certain elements required further development, however, including programme performance reporting and evaluation, medium-term planning and programme budgeting.

46. General Assembly resolution 38/227 had established general guidelines for integrated statements on the programme, financial and administrative implications of draft resolutions. The Nordic countries viewed those statements as a necessary and pragmatic tool for the allocation of resources, especially since more experience was gained in their use. The most difficult task in implementing the resolution would probably be to analyse alternative solutions for the funding of proposed new activities through existing appropriations. The Nordic delegations believed that the Fifth Committee should have information on the extent to which the cost of new activities could be met from resources released as a result of the curtailment, delayed implementation or termination of existing programme elements. That procedure could also be applied to the outputs of mandated activities, provided that it was closely linked to better monitoring of programme performance. Redeployment possibilities should also be clarified with regard to discretionary outputs. Statements of the programme budget implications of draft resolutions were also supposed to indicate the implications with regard to existing programmes within the relevant section, not sections, of the programme budget. However, the Nordic delegations hoped that it would eventually be possible to extend that procedure to other sections of the programme budget as well. At the same time, substantive Main Committees must have the necessary information to enable them to comment on all aspects of programmes, including their budgetary implications, if the Fifth Committee was to take decisions on the allocation of resources.

47. Programme performance reporting was crucial to the efficient allocation of resources. The report on programme performance for the years 1982-1983 (A/39/173 and Add.1) showed that the number of departures from programme commitments had been surprisingly high. While some of those departures could be explained by shortfalls in extrabudgetary resources or the reformulation of outputs, they might also be the result of rationalization of work or of technical reasons. In such cases, it should be possible to use the resources thus released for redeployment during the current biennium. The Nordic delegations therefore welcomed the new procedures for periodic reporting, as well as other measures described in paragraphs 52 and 53 of the report. They wished to stress that, in preparing future performance reports, every effort should be made to measure output in qualitative terms.

48. The Nordic delegations also concurred with the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) in document A/C.5/39/1, including the recommendation that the current system of priority-setting should be fully implemented by some institutions and authorities, and that efforts to ensure more systematic implementation should be redoubled. They also welcomed the conclusions and recommendations concerning progress made in evaluating the UNDP-financed technical co-operation activities of UNIDO in the field of manufactures and found the results of the cross-organizational programme analysis of the human settlements activities of the United Nations system to be informative and thought-provoking.

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(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

The Nordic delegations reiterated their firm support for CPC as the main intergovernmental body responsible for planning, programming, co-ordination and evaluation. They believed that CPC's primary role was to monitor and support the Secretariat in its efforts to discharge those functions, and they would therefore support strongly efforts to enhance CPC's ability to play its proper role.

49. The programme-planning methodology was the result of more than a decade of deliberations in different intergovernmental and expert bodies and in the Secretariat. Its development over the years had been the normal and logical consequence of the increase in United Nations activities and of the recognition that resources were limited. In such a situation, improved planning of activities and resources had obviously been the correct choice, and the Nordic delegations hoped that that choice would be pursued in the future. The new programming procedures had greatly facilitated the development of resource planning and had helped to strengthen the Organization. In turning from the planning to the implementation stage, the Nordic delegations appealed to members of the Fifth Committee to pursue pragmatic solutions to the problems confronting the United Nations with respect to programme planning, which was the only practical tool for improved management of the Organization and better assessment of the need for and use of its resources.

50. Mr. Maycock (Barbados) resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES
(continued) (A/39/32; A/C.5/39/L.9/Rev.1; A/C.5/39/CRP.1/Rev.1)

51. Mr. BUSHEV (Bulgaria), speaking in his capacity as co-ordinator of the informal consultations on agenda item 114, explained that the oral amendments made to documents A/C.5/39/L.9 and A/C.5/39/CRP.1 at the 27th meeting had been incorporated into revised texts of those documents: paragraph 3 (b) of draft resolution D had been redrafted, and draft resolution E had been withdrawn. The only outstanding issue was that of paragraph 4 of draft resolution A. That paragraph reaffirmed the principle which governed the Secretariat's efforts to promote the most efficient and cost-effective servicing of the calendar of conferences and meetings approved by the General Assembly. As such, it represented a practical internal working arrangement of the Secretariat. The consensus view in both the Committee on Conferences and the informal consultations on the draft resolutions had been that the working arrangement described in paragraph 4 was a valid Secretariat practice. It was in that light that it had been approved by the General Assembly when it had appeared in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985, and there had been no criticism of the arrangement in the Fifth Committee at the thirty-eighth session. However, since some delegations were now saying that it was unnecessary to embody that arrangement in a resolution, he was prepared to delete paragraph 4 if those delegations so insisted, although other delegations had voiced doubts about its deletion. He hoped that, if the paragraph was deleted, the Committee would be able to adopt the draft resolutions as they appeared in document A/C.5/39/CRP.1/Rev.1 by consensus.

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52. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) suggested that the word "action" in paragraph 3 of draft resolution A should be replaced by "actions".

53. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the various draft resolutions recommended by the Committee on Conferences in paragraph 1 of its report (A/39/32), as amended by document A/C.5/39/L.9/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A

54. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to delete paragraph 4 of draft resolution A.

55. It was so decided.

56. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to adopt draft resolution A, as amended by document A/C.5/39/L.9/Rev.1 and as orally amended.

57. Draft resolution A, as amended, was adopted.

Draft resolution B

58. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution B as amended by document A/C.5/39/L.9/Rev.1.

59. Draft resolution B, as amended, was adopted.

Draft resolution C

60. Draft resolution C was adopted.

Draft resolution D

61. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to adopt resolution D as amended by document A/C.5/39/L.9/Rev.1.

62. Draft resolution D, as amended, was adopted.

63. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of item 114.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.