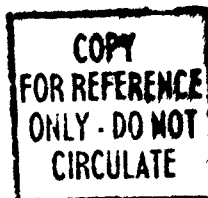


United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
THIRTY-NINTH SESSION
Official Records*



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FIFTH COMMITTEE
31st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 20 November 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DITZ (Austria)

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

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AGENDA ITEM 113: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued) (A/39/34 and 87)

Co-operation between and management of libraries of the United Nations system
(continued) (A/39/299)

Publications policy and practice in the United Nations system (continued) (A/39/239)

1. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) stressed the importance of JIU recommendations which were generally designed to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations system and rationalize its work. With regard to recruitment policy in the ILO (JIU/REP/84/3), the Inspectors were proposing a number of measures to correct the disequilibrium in the geographical composition of the International Labour Office, inter alia the introduction of a quota system based on the three well-known criteria of membership, population and contribution and, to that end, the development of a five-year plan similar to that currently being implemented in the United Nations. His delegation considered those recommendations to be timely and logical.
2. With regard to publications policy and practice in the United Nations system, the Inspectors had rightly noted that the quality of the some 4,000 publications produced each year often left something to be desired. His delegation therefore endorsed the JIU recommendation that the quantity of published material should be reduced. Future publications should also pay more attention to the main areas of activity of the United Nations as defined by the Charter, and meet speedily demands for publications arising from General Assembly resolutions. The Inspectors' proposal that more use should be made of United Nations Information Centres for distributing publications might also be followed.
3. With regard to common services at the Vienna International Centre, his delegation supported all the JIU recommendations aimed at ensuring better use of those services and the adoption of communal arrangements in other areas such as general services, recruitment, finance and conference services.
4. On the other hand, it regretted that the JIU report on the medium-term recruitment plan for the United Nations Secretariat, which was announced in document A/39/87, had not been submitted before the opening of the current session of the General Assembly, especially since the period of the current medium-term plan would end in 1985. Finally, since the JIU had held informal consultations with representatives of the group of Western European and other States and the Latin American group at Geneva, his delegation believed that it would be useful if, in future, JIU sought the views of representatives of all the regional groups.
5. Mr. SAVCHUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation reserved the right to return later to some of the matters dealt with in the different JIU reports. In his delegation's view, the JIU's comments contained a

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(Mr. Savchuk, Ukrainian SSR)

number of elements which might help to enhance the functioning of the United Nations system. In that connection, while he welcomed the fact that consultations had taken place between the Inspectors and the representatives of certain groups of States, he hoped that those consultations would be extended to other groups, so that JIU might hear the views of all States.

6. Despite the positive aspects of its work, he was forced to note that JIU wasted some of its efforts on considering issues which were of only limited interest or came essentially within the sphere of competence of executive heads. In a number of cases, JIU studies duplicated the work of the heads of the different organizations. His delegation had already drawn attention at the thirty-eighth session to the fact that JIU studies, which were aimed at rationalizing the work of the United Nations system and reducing its costs might in fact have the opposite effect. Now, the recommendations made at the current session in the report on the management of the libraries of the United Nations system entailed additional appropriations. His delegation therefore shared the view of ACABQ that further consideration should be given to the idea of setting up an inter-library panel.

7. The information given in the JIU work programme for 1984 (A/39/87) did not explain why JIU had chosen to consider certain topics nor indicate the order and the period of time in which the planned studies would be made. The work programme should therefore mention decisions of policy-making organs or other factors which justified the importance and necessity of such studies.

8. Mr. RUSTICO (Benin) drew attention to the disequilibrium in the geographical composition of the International Labour Office and called on the executive heads of all the organizations of the United Nations system to take note of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and to try to implement the principle of equitable geographical distribution as soon as possible. A comprehensive study should also be made of the libraries of the United Nations system with a view to improving their structures and the services they offered to users. That would require, inter alia, closer co-operation among all the libraries of the system.

9. Given the importance of the publications of the United Nations system for providing information to the developing countries, it was essential that such publications should continue to be distributed free to the relevant ministerial departments and universities, training centres and national libraries of those countries. Improving the quality of those publications would also require that each organization select the content of its publications very carefully and that the Secretary-General take the necessary steps to ensure the co-ordination of publishing activities. Closer consideration should also be given to the idea of creating a post of Director of Publications and to what his powers should be with regard to quality control and co-ordination. Finally, all the organizations of the system should set up an accounting system which would make it easier to analyse the costs of producing their publications.

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10. Mr. IBRAHIM (Vice-Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit), responding to the comments made by the representative of the German Democratic Republic, said that JIU had contacted all the regional groups in January 1984 with a view to holding informal consultations but that the representatives of the group of Western European and other States and the Latin American group alone had responded to that request. The Inspectors hoped to be able to meet with the representatives of the other regional groups in the near future. Responding to the comment by the representative of the Ukrainian SSR that JIU recommendations could be regarded as interference in the work of the different organizations, he explained that, in accordance with its mandate and its Statute, JIU could consider any question at the request of the General Assembly or the policy-making organs of the other organizations, as well as any issue relating to the work of those organizations. It then made recommendations which the Fifth Committee endorsed or of which it took note. Once adopted by the General Assembly, those recommendations became enforceable

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.