UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 7 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland)
(Vice-Chairman)

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

CONTENTS

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/45/SR.24
13 November 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

90-56937 3001S (E)

In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1, A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/210 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP. 1)

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), commenting on various points that had been raised regarding major programmes of the proposed medium-term plan, said that, when the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had examined the proposed plan at the first part of its thirtieth session, the Secretariat had provided information about the resources of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and the corresponding resources in the proposed medium-term plan. If the Committee so wished, that information could be made available again as a conference room paper. A paper had also been submitted to CPC outlining the relationship between the structure of the proposed medium-term plan, and the existing plan, and that, too, could be made available to the Fifth Committee.

2. A somewhat more complex question had been raised by the Chairman of CPC at the previous meeting in connection with progrsmme 31, Regional co-operation for development in Asia and the Pacific. The question of priorities had not been decided by CPC when it had discussed that programme in May, because the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had been unable to meet to review the programme for itself and make its views on priorities known to CPC. The Secretary-General's proposal at that time had been that highest priority should be assigned to two subprogrammes. CPC had reverted to the matter at the second part of its session in September and had then been told that ESCAP suggested that there should be nine priority subprogrammes. As the Chairman of CPC had noted, CPC had decided to refer the matter to the Fifth Committee for a decision. The difficulties of the consultative process were well known) it was frequently difficult for subsidiary bodies to make proposals about priorities. For the consideration of the Fifth Committee, the Secretariat would like to propose a smaller number of priorities, six subprogrammes instead of the nine proposed by ESCAP. If the Committee agreed, he would provide another conference room paper containing information on the priorities suggested by the Secretary-General to CPC *in* May, those subsequently recommended by ESCAP, and the Secretary-General's current proposal. He hoped that the additional information would enable the Committee to reach a decision *in* that regard.

Major programme VII. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs (continued)

3. Mr. MERIFXELD (Canada), commenting on programme 35, commended the Secretariat for having established appropriate priorities among the subprogrammas. The document before the Committee (A/45/6 (Prog. 35)) explained the challenges to be

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

faced over the next six years in reaffirming faith in fundamental *human* rights. He urged dalegations to give meaning to that important programme by ensuring that the Secretariat had tha resources to carry it out from the beginning of the medium-term plan.

4. As the Secretariat pointed out (pare. 35.43), the question of standard-setting in human rights involved a number of interrelated and complex issues. It was most important for the betterment of the rights of individuals that all the elements of subprogramme 1 should be implemented over the term of the plan. The Secretariat had been given responsibility for encouraging Member States to participate in the treaties and instruments currently *in* force, to which the new Convention on the Rights of the Child was now added, and it should also be in a position to respond positively to petitions or appeals to the United Nations. If a "culture of human rights" was to be built, the United Nations must have the resources to ensure that individuals had the opportunity to be heard. The Secretariat bodies active in the field were particularly well placed to provide advisory service to Governments where there was a need to improve national laws and provide the training necessary to develop a universal culture of human rights.

5. At the first part of its thirtieth session, CPC had fully endorsed programme 35 as set out in the proposed medium-term plan. His delegation was, however,. disturbed by some of the discussion that had taken place *in* CPC. The Secretary-General had identified the protection of human rights as a primary *area* for action over the next few years, and the programme must be given the necessary resources. In the CPC analysis of priorities for the naxt biennium, it had not received the proper emphasis. Since delegates represented Governments, there seemed to be a tendency to give priority to programmes that benefited the public sector. Human rights were, however, a prime objective of the Charter; they belonged to individuals and the United Nations had a duty to protect them. It would be very short-sighted of the Genera.1 Assembly and of the Fifth Committee to postpone the implementation of that very important programme until the second biennium of the medium-term plan,

6. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that his country attached the utmost importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. As a member of the Council of Europe, it had undertaken to comply fully with European human rights standards. With regard to subprogramme 2 of programme 35, Elimination and prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups, he said that the activities under that subprogramme were defined in the Charter as one of the major purposes of the United Nations; they were therefore deserving of the highest priority. Hungary had made a proposal to that effect in CPC and *no* objection had been raised. Attributing priority to subprogramme 2 did not mean *giving* it more resources but rather giving it enhanced attention and making sure that no activities were left unimplemented.

7. In connection with the Secretariat's proposed course of action he noted that paragraph 35.24 dealt with two basically different questions; the rights of migrant workers and tho rights of minorities. In his dolegation's view, there

(Mr. Karbucaky, Hungary)

should have been two separate paragraphs. It also had difficulties with the wording of that paragraph. First, the reference to a search for "peaceful" solutions to minority problems implied that minority problems always resulted in violence, and his delegation would therefore prefer to say simply "the search for solutions to minority problems". Second, the last sentence of the paragraph also caused difficulties with its reference to "religion or belief". Problems could arise out of ethnic differences, patterns of living and so on, and he did not feel it was appropriate to stress problems of religion or belief as though they were separate from other minority issues,

8. In conclusion, he supported the view expressed by Canada that human rights should be given high priority during the first two years of the medium-term plan.

9. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that the numerous proviaions in the United Nations Charter regarding respect for human rights should serve as guidelines for the discussion of programme 35. His delegation wished to emphasize that, owing to the diversity of political, economic and social systems, ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, concepts and perceptions of human rights differed and it was important, therefore, that the programme should reflect all points of view and not take a particular concept of human rights as the internationally recognized norm to the exclusion of others,

10. In the final analysis, the question of human rights was a social one and was linked to social development. During the discussion of the proposed medium-term plan in CPC in May 1990, his delegation had proposed that major programmes VII and V should be combined, and it wished to reiterate that proposal.

11. In the study and discussion of matters relating to human rights, emphasis should be placed on universal questions that demanded urgent solutions, in other words, on the practical problems faced by many of the people of the developing countries with respect to their right to economic and social development, self-determination and independence. Those were questions of vital interest to the people of the developing countries and should be given due priority in the medium-term plan.

12. It had been agreed that, in the discussion of the proposed medium-term plan, the Committee should take steps to consult other Main Committees. His delegation believed that that procedure was desirable and hoped that, when the programme in question was finalized, the views and suggestions of other bodies concerned would be taken into account.

13. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that major programme VII, and in particular programme 35, dealt with programmes that were already sufficiently mandated but must still be financed. It was clear that the authority of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to manage the programme came from the Charter, The role of the Fifth Committee was to ensure that mandate3 programmes were properly financed and that sufficient resources were allocated to ensure their implementation.

Major programme IX. Conference services

Major programme X. Administrative services

14. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that major programmes IX and X presented plans and programmes for support services. Between them, the two major programmes comprised six programmes, which, in the regular budget, corresponded largely to sections 28 and 29.

15. The structure of the programmes was more or less similar to that of substantive programmes; they contained sections relating to general orientation, overall strategy and an outline of subprogramme structure and priorities. Not all subprogrammes in the two major programmes had been accorded priority, and, where priority was identified, the rationale and criteria were not explained. For example, in programme 40 it was not clear why priority was given to staff-management relations over internal audit services.

16. Over the years, the Advisory Committee had had considerable difficulties with major programmes IX and X. In the first place, it was questionable whether those two programmes should be presented in the same format as that used for substantive activities. The Advisory Committee had often found the narratives in the sections on orientation and overall strategy useless, since, in many instances, they duplicated the subprogramme narratives. There were also many instances of similar narratives appearing under different programmes, so that it was very difficult to know under which programme an objective was being planned and programmed.

17. The quality of the two major programmes needed to be improved considerably, particularly as they covered a sector which used the bulk of the programme budget's resources. In its report (A/45/617), the Advisory Committee called for a thorough re-examination of the presentation of the medium-term plan and of major programmes IX and X in particular. It also drew attention to an apparent contradiction in one of the regulations governing planning and programming; whereas regulation 3.6 stated that the plan should be presented by programme and objective, rule 103.6 stated that the plan for servicing activities should be presented by organizational unit. As the Advisory Committee pointed out, that led to repetitiveness and duplication in narratives, verbosity and the tendency to produce long texts, all of which reduced the plan's usefulness. Another result had been that, wherever organiaational units had been reshuffled, there had been a rush to produce revisions of the medium-term plan even when the reshuffle did not affect the programmes being implemented.

18. The Advisory Committee recognized that considerable progress had been achieved in streamlining the plan and intensifying consultations with Member States. Much needed to be done, however, and the Committee had indicated those areas in which further progress might be sought. In addition, the Committee was of the view that top management should take more interest in providing the necessary leadership in the planning and programming process. Subject to his comments and those in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/45/617, paras. 2-13) the General Assembly was requested to approve major programmes IX and X.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would revert to the review of the proposed medium-term plan after receiving the comments of the other Main Committees on the various major programmes.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/45/541 and A/45/5481 A/C.5/45/3, A/C.5/45/10 and Corr.1, A/C.5/45/11, A/C.5/45/12, A/C.5/45/18 and A/C. 5/45/19)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT (continued)

(b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

(c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

20. Mr. KRYZHANIVSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that positive changes designed to enhance the role and authority of the United Nations in contemporary international relations deserved every support. The increasing practice of adopting decisions by consensus showed that it had become easier for Member States to find common language when devising strategies for action within the framework of the Organization. However, consensus on personnel questions required the agreement of the Administration and the Secretariat as a whole in order to ensure that intergovernmental decisions were implemented in the most effective manner. The improved administrative and financial functioning of the Organization depended on the development of a coherent and purposeful staff policy, based on the principles set forth in Article 101 of the Charter. In that context, the reductions in the numbers of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States constituted a step in the right direction.

21. His delegation favoured a further strengthening of the role of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), which should refine methods and elaborate clear criteria for tho recruitment and promotion of competent high-quality staff. It looked forward to further fruitful co-operation with the corresponding services of the Secretariat in addressing problems relating to his country's representation, including its still inadequate qualitative level. For its part, his country was continuing to train staff suitable for employment in the international civil service both on a long-term and, where necessary, on a permanent basis. Aware that the major criteria for recruitmeat on permanent contracts must be the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, his delegation continued to believe that maximum flexibility in staff policies would be ensured by a reasonable mixture of fixed-term and permanent contracts. On the question of secondment, his delegation basically shared the views of the Secretary-General, as expressed in document A/C.5/45/12. Regulation of the system of secondment would help to strengthen guarantees of the legal status of staff recruited in that manner, thus fulfilling the real intentions of the procedure.

22. The practice of recruiting staff at the P-l and P-2 levels through national competitive examinations should be expanded, particularly with respect to unrepresented and underrepresented States. Such examinations were an effective

(Mr. Kryzhanivsky, Ukrainian SSR)

means of injecting new blood, in the shape of talented young people, into the Organization. His delegation was prepared to discuss the question of organizing such examinations in the Ukrainian SSR and to offer qualified candidates for recruitment at the P-3 level, with a view to fulfilling the provisions of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 41/206 A.

23. The Secretary-General's report on improvement of the status of *women in* the Secretariat (A/45/548) showed that measures designed to fulfil the 30 per cent target for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 31 December 1990 had yielded positive results. Nevertheless, protracted *and* persistent efforts were still required to ensure the equitable representation of women, including their representation in high-level posts. While bearing *in mind* the aomgliaations arising from the traditional role of women in the family and society, his country would continue to support the efforts of qualified women to secure employment in international organizations. It therefore supported in principle the proposal whereby the percentage of woman *in* posts subject to geographical distribution would increase by 1 per cent each year after the achievement of the 30 per cent target, *on* the understanding that measures in that *connection* would not conflict with the principle of equitable geographical distribution,

24. While affirming the prerogatives of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer, his delegation believed that there was a need further to increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat, The work of staff members, including nationals of his country, in Namibia had demonstrated the existing potential and high professionalism of the intarnatfanal civil service. The tasks before the Organization must be complemented by a modern flexible staff policy based on the principles embodied in the Charter, with due regard for the legitimate interests of Member States, In that connection, attention should be given to the proposals to enhance the system of career dovolopment made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Managomont, including his suggestion concerning personal promotion.

25, Ms. RODSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf also of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, said that the Nordic countries thought that many of the proposals and ideas contained ir the statement made at a previous meeting on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand deserved thorough consideration by the Committee.

26. Where the composition of the Secretariat was concerned, great importance should be attached to the objective selection of the best-qualified candidates; the decision by the Secretariat to introduce national competitive examinations at the P-3 level, as requested by the General Assembly, was therefore welcome. *In* contrast, the number of exceptions to the principle of recruitment by examination at the P-2 level was worrying) there should be no exceptions with regard either to external recruitment or to internal promotion.

27, AR for the proportion of women in the Secretariat, it was regrettable that the target of 30 per *cent* for women in posts subject to geographical distribution would not be met by the end of 1990. Despite the improvoments indicated in the

(Ms. Rodsmoen, Norway)

Secretary-General's report (A/45/548), the pace of progress was too slow and the tradition of recruiting women at the lower levels persisted, while the number of women at the D-1 and P-5 levels had in fact decreased. It was of paramount *concern* to the Nordic countries that tho *next* agreed target of 35 per cent for the representation of women by 1995 should be achieved.

28, The Secretariat's initiative regarding the establishment of focal points for women in the permanent missions was welcome, and those missions which had not yet responded to the *invitation* should do so. It was important to nominate senior officers to that assignment, both in the Secretariat and *in* the missions.

29. Increased efforts must be made, both by Member States and by the Secretariat, to *end* the underrepresentation of women from Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Member States must encourage women to *seek* employment at all levels in the Secretariat, and the Secretary-General should continue his efforts to secure the *necessary* changes *in* that area, for the United Nations should serve as an example in providing equal opportunities for both sexes.

30. The Legal Counsel's description of the situation *in* many States with regard to the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system was alarming and unacceptable to the Nordic countries. They were particularly concerned about the continuing arrests, detentions and abductions *in* the Middle East, where the *number* of detained and arrested staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remained at the same high level as in previous years. UNRWA had also continued to encounter difficulties in the movement of staff into and out of the West Bank and the Gaze Strip. The Nordic countries fully supported the efforts made *in* that connection by the Secretary-General, the executive heads of the organizations concerned and other officials, and they commended the United Nations Security Co-ordinator and his staff. Violations of the privileges and immunities in question could lead to a situation in which it was impossible for the United Nations to operate. The Nordic countries therefore appealed most strongly to the Governments concerned to live up to their international obligations,

31. Mr. MGBO WERE (Nigeria) said that the Organiaation's capacity to respond to the new challenges of years to come would increasingly depend on its ability to secure and retain the services of staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, making the consideration of personnel questions ever more crucial. Noting the reductions in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States over the past year, his delegation urged that efforts be made to reduce those numbers still further and welcomed the assurances that an active and systematic recruitment policy would be conducted with a view to identifying high-quality candidates, particularly from those countries. In that connection, special attention should be paid to the developing countries. The continuing decline in the representation of developing countries in higher-level and upper-echelon posts highlighted the need for the Secretariat to bear in mind that *no* post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States.

/...

(Mr. Mgbokwere, Nigeria)

32. His delegation appreciated the considerable efforts made by the Secretariat to reach the 30 per cent target for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 31 December 1990 and welcomed the special emergency measures taken in that connection, It regretted, however, that the peraentage of women from African countries was still far below that target. Additional steps should be taken to increase their representation, including action pursuant to the proposal by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resouraes Management that Member States should work with the Secretariat to fill most of the posts subject to geographical distribution which would fall vacant during 1991 with qualified women,

33. His delegation welcomed the renewed attention to career development, particularly for staff in the General Service category, in such areas as office automation, language skills and the training and retraining of staff in their substantial areas of specialization. It also welcomed the new programme allowing staff at certain offices away from Headquarters to attend universities and hoped that the programme would be continued and expanded. As for career prospects, there was great merit in the Assistant Secretary-General's proposal whereby promotion between certain levels might be based on merit and seniority in grade even when a post at a higher level was not immediately available. While supporting the main thrust of the proposal, his delegation wished to know the number of staff involved, as well as the financial implications. Examinations for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category should continue.

34. The concerns expressed by staff members with respect to their welfare, career prospects and privileges and immunities, as reflected in document A/C. 5/45/19, were valid, It was imperative that Member States give due attention to ways and means by which the Organiaation could maintain a highly efficient staff that was both properly motivated and well managed, His delegation therefore strongly supported effective measures to enhance their remuneration and career prospects, and to protect their privileges and immunities. The staff representatives' proposal that effective measures should be taken to ensure proper control and management of work contracted to outside firms also deserved serious attention.

35. Mr. DINU (Romania) said that his delegation took a special interest in staff administration, The need to preserve and strengthen the international character of the Organiaation as a whole underscored the importance of recruitment policies. The reduction in the number of underreprssented and unrepresented Member States was a particularly commendable achievement at a time when the Organization's resources had been under strain.

36. Although Romania remained among the countries which were underrepresented in the Secretariat, there was hope that that situation would be remedied with the success of several young Romanians in a recent competitive examination, and he requested the Secretariat to expedite their recruitment. He hoped that more Romanians would be invited to join the staff oven after his country cane within the desirable range, since it wished to be represented at all levels, the level of posts being as important as their number in ensuring proper representation.

(Mr. Dinu, Romania)

37. Referring to the report of the Secretary-General on secondment from government service (A/C 5/45/12), he said that Romania had revised its previous secondment policy and would be honoured if some of its nationals were invited to serve in a permanent aapaaity. Every case should, however, be reviewed on its individual merits, in consultation with all the parties concerned, namely the Member State, the Searetariat and the staff member, There was much to be gained from a judicious use of secondment, particularly when it was combined with aareer appointments. Secondment was neither good nor bad in itself; it all depended on how it was used and, in the case of the staff concerned, on whether a true choice was open to them.

38. He stressed the important role of competitive examinations in ensuring a better geographical balance among the staff. The extension of national examinations to posts at the P-3 level was a promising possibility, and his delcgation looked forward to concrete proposals in that regard, While information was sought on the additional cost of holding such examinations, his delegation was convinced that the benefits would outweigh the costs. Competitive examinations in general played an important part in identifying the best internal candidates for promotion to the Professional category, and should therefore be continued as an invaluable means of offering General Service staff access to fruitful careers in the Professional category.

39. He congratulated the Secretariat on its success in bringing the proportion of women in the Secretariat closer to the 30 per cent target set by the General Assembly, as indicated in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/45/548) which showed a net increase of almost 10 per cent over the previous 10 years, even at a time of retrenchment and staff reduction. The target did not, however, reflect the need to improve the status of women in the Secretariat in qualitative terms; that called for additional efforts, The promotion of women to the higher levels, including the upper echelon, was long overdue, Meanwhile, continued efforts should be made to achieve a better geographical, political, social, cultural and linguistic balance among women staff in the Secretariat, which would more accurately reflect the diversity of the world community.

40. On the subject of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organiaations, his Government had fully accepted the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the applicability of article VI, section 22, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. It concurred with the opinion expressed by the Legal Counsel that the significance of that opinion went far beyond the case considered by the International Court of Justice.

41. On the issue of forced salary payments to Governments by staff members (A/C.5/45/19, para. 24), he informed the Committee that, as of January 1990, his Government had annulled the decree of the previous authorities requiring Romanian nationals on the staff oi international organiaations to transfer a portion of their salary to thn Government. In addition, upon termination of their contracts with international organizations, Romanian nationals were entitled on their return home to be reinstated in posts corresponding to their seniority, taking into

(Mr. Dinu, Romania)

account the period spent as an international civil servant, and to any other legal benefits. The same treatment was applied to their spouses. His Government pledged full respect Eor the international civil servant status of any Romanian working in international organizations, and would contribute to the establishment of normal and correct relations with those otganiaations.

42. Mr. AKOLZIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation attachod great importance to the permanent renewal and improvement of the Secretariat's working mothods. The Secretariat could become a really effective organ if professionals woro recruited on a broad geographical basis in accordance with the requiromonts of the Charter and the established quotas of posts. As a result of the reforms in recent years, the Secretariat's efficiency had increased a little and the number of staff members had been reduced, Progress was also being made in improving the representation of underrepresented States, including the Byelorussian SSR, and the Secretariat's efforts to recruit young professionals were commendable. Tho administrative reform was of course a long process and many of the improvements called for by Member Stateo were still being implemented. However , tho results of the reform could be even more impressive if the Secretariat persisted *in* its efforts to remove the shortcomings in recruitment practices and allowed no exceptions to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

43. The obstacles to the solution of personnel problems stemmed from the system of permanent contracts. Tho specialized agencies, which sought a constant influx of specialists with knowledge of the latest developments in the relevant fields, had a much smaller proportion of permanent staff than the United Nations Secretariat, At present some 70 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution in the Socrotariat woro occupied by permanent staff, and that rate would apparently increase still further as a result of the Secretariat's decision to award permanent contracts to staff who were successful in the competitive examinations. The preponderance of permanent over fixed-term staff did not enhance the efficiency of the Organization's work, for it impeded the replacement of staff members who could not carry out tho new programmes. A staff representative had himself acknowledged in the Committee that changes in professional knowledge were happening so fast that members of the Socrotariat would lag behind unless adequate resources were provided for retraining.

44. The continuing practice of awarding permanent contracts to nationals of overrepresented countrioa was particularly unacceptable, for it closed off access to Secretariat posts to nationals of unropresented an% underrepresented countries. Tho Secretar iat must, of. course), have a contingent of permanent staff with expor ience of tho Organization, but it should not exceed 30 to 35 por cont.

45. Much clearly remained to be done to increase the representation of women in the Socrotar iat, despite all the efforts to solve tho problem. The main obstacle was that thu existing procedure for the recruitment of women sorved the intereots of only tne small number of Member States in which headquarters cities were located. A joint effort to find generally acceptable solutions must be made by Member States and the Secretariat.

/...

(Mr. Akolzin, Byelorussian SSR)

46. The Secretary-General's report on secondment was particularly useful, and his delegation shared his conclusions about the advantages of the practice. Secondment was an important means of securing qualified and experienced specialists for the Organization and it helped to ensure a proper balance between fixed-term and permanent staff. The problems of secondment described in the report could easily bo overcome by Member States and the Secretariat, and the Byelorussian SSR intended to work towards that end.

47. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), after commending the efforts made to improve the working conditions of the staff and paying tribute to the staff itself, said that the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution - 2,561 out of a total of 14,043 assigned to the Secretariat of the United Nations - was insufficient, and should be increased. Furthermore, the time had come, in the interests of equitable geographical distribution, to establish parity between the membership *and* contribution factors used as the basis for the system of desirable ranges, as called for by General Assembly resolution 42/220, and to re-examine the coefficient assigned to the population factor.

48. To judge from the information given in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541), further efforts should be made to enable unrepresented Member States to be represented in the Secretariat; for their part, the States concerned should submit candidates. The notable improvement in the situation of underrepresented States was particularly appreciable at a time of retrenchment and reduction. The report of the Sacretary-General failed to deal with the case of overrepresented States and thus presented an incomplete picture of the situation, As could be seen from table C of annex I to the report, there had been no improvement in the representation of Member States of developing countries at the senior and policy-formulating levels of the Secretariatr it had in fact declined between 1906 and 1990. His delegation accordingly reiterated its request to the Secretariat to take all necessary steps to improve the representation of the developing countries, especially at those levels. Morocco was among the countries which were not well rapreeented.

49. The proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had still not attained the 30 per cent target. Although some progress had been made, particularly with regard to the recruitment of women, further efforts were needed to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. The proposed re-examination of measures already adopted should be carried out with due regard for the representation of women from developing countries, which was still inadequate.

50. It was a matter of serious concern to note from the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/10) that the number of cases of arrest and detention of officials of United Nations organizations was still very high and that the situation with regard to previously reported cases had worsened. His delegation supported the measures taken by the Secretary-General on behalf of those officials and urged States which violated the privileges and immunities of international civil servants by arbitrarily detaining them to put an end to those violations and release all victims. All States were bound to respect the privileges and

(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

immunities of these officials to enable them to discharge their duties properly and independently, and the officials, for their part, must refrain from any interference in the internal affairs of States,

51. Faced as it was with new challenqos and an increasingly important role, the Orqanisation needed more than ever to function efficiently. The administrative reform initiated in 1986 had contributed to greater efficiency, but had also affected the morale of the staff, who were more than ever vital to the Orqaniaation. While competence and integrity remained the prerequisites for recruitment, keeping persons of high oalibre *on* the etaff depended largely cn working ooniditions and career prospects. In that connection, he recalled the General Assembly's request to the Secretary-General, in resolution 44/185 A, to complete his efforts towards the development of a comprehensive career development plan for all etaff and to develop a porsonnel policy to increase the mobility of staff. Some progress had been made in the area of career development for staff in the General Service category, and he hoped that the handbook referred to by the Assistant Secretary-Qenoral for Human Resources Management could be made available to the staff concerned as soon as possible. Other measures should be adopted to ensure adequate, equitable and transparent promotion procedures and recoqniae merit through a rational performance evaluation and reporting system. The comprehensive career development plan should cover all staff members, His delegation hoped that the Secretariat would spare no effort in implementing the General Assembly resolutions on that question.

52. His delegation was gratified to note *the* progress made in training activities, and requested further information on the establishmont of information centres, the training programme for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the self-study courses in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

53. The idea put forward by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in his introductory statement (A/C.5/45/SR.15) that staff promotions from the entry levels up to the middle levels should depend on merit and seniority even when a post at the higher level might not be available was an extremely interesting one which merited serious examination, including consideration of its immediate and long-term impact. His delegation, convinced as it was that staff motivation was one of the best ways of improving the efficiency of the Orqaniaation, was in favour of any measure to improve the well-being of staff members.

54. Miss ROBERTS (Jamaica) said that the task of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management was a formidable one, for the Secretariat must be equipped to respond to the enhanced role of the United Nations in the new international climate. The United Nations could achieve its lofty goals only with a staff of the highest integrity and dedication, The Secretary-General had pointed out that it was difficult to recruit such staff because the Orqaniaation no longer offered an adequate level of remuneration. Furthermore, if the Secretariat was to perform its tasks properly, Member States must be confident that the United Nations system would be responsive to their needs. Her delegation was glad that the

(Miss Roberts, Jamaica)

Assistant Secretary-Qoneral had a full cppreuiation of that prerequisite and that efforts would be made to reduoo the number of underrepresented States and identify high-quality candidates for recruitment,

55. The failure to reach the 30 per cent target for the representation of women in the Secretariat was disappointing, as was the failure .o appoint *any* women to posts above the D-2 level in the past year. The part played by women in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, referred to in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/548), demonstrated that women were a force to be reckoned with. There was therefore no logical explanation for the disparity, especially in higher-level posts, between the numbers of women and men in the Secretariat. Furthormore, the number of women recruited from developing countries should be increased to 50 per oont from the current level of 38 per cent.

56. Her delegation was unhappy about the continuing practice of secondment, for an international civil servant should not have a conflicting loyalty to his Government, Moreover, the Seoratary-General's report indicated that secondment could have other disadvantages. The Orqaniaation should review its secondment procedures in ordnr to ensure that. all parties to an agreement had no doubts about the nature of the individual contract.

57. Although the Assistant Secretary-General had addressed the vexing question of the olassifioation system, the new proposals for promotion might adversely affect recruitment, Efforts to promote staff members who had performed satisfactorily but for whom a higher-level post was not available were of course welcome, but her delegation would like to have more information about the procedures involved.

58. With regard to the question of respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system, her delegation attached the highest priority to the security of staff members and urged all Governments to ensure that their privileges and immunities were fully respected.

59. The staff representatives had indicated that little or nothing had been done about the comprehensive oaroor development plan. An effort must be made to implement the *plan,* for staff must know that they had room to grow. *On* the thorny subject of the administration of justice, it was heartening to see that staff mambers had adequate recourse to the appeals *process* end could at least air their grievances.

60. At the previous session her delegation had supported the recommendation to increase staff salaries by 5 per cent because the well-being and morale of the staff constituted the backbone of any well-run orqaniaation. The success or failure of the United Nations would depend on the performance of its staff members, and thoy had already shown that they were up to the task. Member States must provide them with the opportunity to continue to excel.

61. Mr. SILGA (Burkina Fasoj said that the importance of personnel questions was evident, especially at a time of renewed interest by the international community in an increased role for the United Nations. His delegation welcomed the

(Mr. Silga, Burkina Faso)

Secretariat's efforts to improve tho situation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries, most of which were developing countries. The level of qualifications of the nationals of such countries was not the issue, for they had demonstrated their capacity tn supply highly qualified staff. Recruitment f ram the developing countries must therefore be stepped up.

62. The underrepresentation of the developing countries at the higher levels was also a souroe of concern, for their share of posts at the D-l and higher levels had declined, while thst of the developed countries had increased, contrary to the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The geographical composition of the Secretariat must be improved, and no post should be monopolised by any country or group of countries.

63, With regard to the status of women in the Secretariat, the figures spoke for themselves) for example, only two top-level posts were occupied by women. The situation was far from consistent with the provisions of resolution 44/185 C. The percentage of women in posts subject to qeoyraphical distribution had indeed increased, and his delegation hoped that the target of 30 per cent would be achieved. Care must be taken, however, not to accentuate the imbalance in the geographical distribution of posts. The example given in paragraph 49 of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541) was not reassuring in that respect. The report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/54&) also indicated that the percentage of women from developing regions remained far below 30 per cent. The information missions referred to in paragraph 16 of that report should be increased. The United Nations could not achieve its full potential until women occupied their proper place in it. His delegation therefore supported all the measures designed to achieve that end and counted on their effective implementation.

64, The practice of secondment could offer advantages for the Orqanisation, but his delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report (A/C.5/45/12). It supported the Secretary-General's proposal that the secondment procedures should be clarified, for that would help to avoid difficulties in the future.

65. The Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system contained disturbing information, but it was encouraging to note that the qreat majority of Member States respected the privileges and immunities in question. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that the combined efforts of Member States and international orqaniaations could produce positive results. Accordingly, the current difficulties between the Orqaniaation and certain Member States did not justify calling into question the good faith of those States in their support for the United Nations or constitute a reason for denying a Member State its right to reyuest aid from the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.