

1738th meeting

Thursday, 13 November 1975, at 10.55 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Christopher R. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago).

A/C.5/SR.1738

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Akashi (Japan), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 106

United Nations pension system:

- (a) Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (A/10009, A/10335, A/C.5/1684 and Corr.1);
 (b) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/10335, A/C.5/1684 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1697)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, in addition to the documents already before the Committee for its consideration of the question of the United Nations pension system, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would be submitting a report on the report of the Secretary-General on pension coverage for members of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/C.5/1697). That question would be considered at a later meeting.

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the report of the Advisory Committee (A/10335), which dealt with the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (A/10009) and the report of the Secretary-General on the investments of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/C.5/1684 and Corr.1).

3. In paragraphs 2 to 15 of its report, the Advisory Committee dealt with questions on which the Board had submitted recommendations for action by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session. It had accepted the Board's recommendation that articles 36 and 39 of the Regulations of the Fund, dealing with widowers' benefits and residual benefits, should be amended to implement the principle of equal treatment of male and female participants, endorsed by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session. The Advisory Committee had suggested that the amendment to article 39 should be in the form indicated in paragraph 3 of its report.

4. The Advisory Committee had not found it easy to accept the Board's proposal that the current maximum contributory service of 30 years be extended to 32 years, an interim measure to be reviewed by the Board in 1977. It could be argued that, when a participant joined the Fund, he did so with the knowledge that the maximum contributory service was 30 years, and that it was therefore not necessary to amend the Regulations so as to accommodate a participant whose contractual participation had only envisaged a maximum of 30 years' contributory service. The Advisory Committee, however, recognized that the problem had arisen for the first time and that the Regulations did not cover it. In paragraph 5 of its report, it forecast the number of staff not yet of retirement age who, on 1 February 1976 and succeeding years, would have

accumulated 30 years of contributory service, should they remain with the organizations until the age of retirement. The Advisory Committee had concluded that at the current time there was no alternative course of action which would meet the principle of equity and fairness to the participant and at the same time guard against a possible negative actuarial effect on the Fund, and had therefore recommended acceptance of the Board's proposal subject to the understanding specified in paragraph 7 of the report of the Advisory Committee.

5. In paragraphs 9 to 15 of its report, the Advisory Committee had commented on administrative expenses of the Fund. In examining the supplementary estimates for 1975, the Advisory Committee had emphasized, in paragraph 10, that the Board, before taking any decision that might have financial implications, should consider such implications. It also suggested that contractual arrangements for investment services should be kept under constant review so as to take advantage of any possibility of reducing as much as possible the expenses involved in the provision of investment services. Subject to those observations, the Advisory Committee accepted the supplementary estimates for 1975 and the estimates of administrative expenses for 1976.

6. In paragraphs 16 to 22 of its report, the Advisory Committee had dealt with the question of the investments of the Fund as described in the Board's report and the related report of the Secretary-General. The comments in paragraph 22 on investment opportunities in developing countries in no way implied that the Advisory Committee was somehow discouraging investment in those countries or indeed in any country; the Advisory Committee was simply saying that rendering assistance was not a function of the Fund. It had therefore indicated that it trusted the Secretary-General would continue to be guided in his investments by the soundness of the particular investment involved and that placement of the assets of the Fund in individual countries would derive solely from the belief that those markets presented the best potential opportunity for the Fund. The question of investment was an important subject and the Fifth Committee now had an opportunity to review in detail the investment policy followed in the past in the context of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/1684 and Corr.1). Any comments by members of the Fifth Committee would be of great value to the Secretary-General in fulfilling his responsibilities under article 19 of the Regulations of the Fund.

7. In paragraph 29 of its report, the Advisory Committee referred to the interim report of the Board on the adjustment of pensions (A/10009, annex V); paragraph 36 of that report summarized the major matters of substance which the Board was studying. The Advisory Committee had not felt it necessary at the current time to offer

detailed comments on that report, but felt that any comments made in the Fifth Committee would certainly be taken into account by the Board in preparing the report it was to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session. The Advisory Committee had, however, found it necessary to refer to its view that a unified scheme should not add to the current or potential liability of the membership.

8. In paragraph 23 of its report, the Advisory Committee expressed some concern about the results of the most recent actuarial valuation of the Fund, which indicated an excess of anticipated liabilities over assets of some \$116.6 million. The Advisory Committee noted that the Board had regarded that actuarial deficit with conservative optimism, but it believed that the situation would need to be carefully watched so as to guard against significant liberalization of benefits which might exacerbate the actuarial position of the Fund.

9. Mrs. TSIEN (Chairman of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board) introduced the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (A/10009). She invited the Committee to adopt the proposals contained in the report and thus complete the task begun in 1974 of establishing equality of treatment for women and men in pension matters. The most important of those proposals would grant the same survivors' benefits to the widowers of pensioners as were currently accorded to widows, under exactly the same conditions. She hoped that the Committee, taking into account the provisions of Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations, would adopt that proposal and certain ancillary proposals contained in annex VII of the report, in the slightly amended formulation suggested by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 3 of its report (A/10335). Adoption of the proposals would be a belated act of justice, and the financial implications were modest.

10. The Board had also proposed a change in the Regulations in respect of the 30-year limit on the length of contributory service which could be accumulated. It was necessary to deal with the problem of how to treat a number of participants in the United Nations and other member organizations of the Fund who, prior to reaching the retirement age of 60, would have accumulated the maximum 30-year period of 1 February 1976. The various alternatives had been analysed by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 5 and 7 of its report. She stressed that the solution proposed by the Board, while deriving from considerations of equity, was an interim solution, and the Board would take up the matter again with a view to making further proposals in the light of the next actuarial valuation of the Fund in 1977.

11. The Board had been fully aware of the need for restraint because of the situation of the Fund as reflected by the actuarial valuation of 31 December 1974. It regretted that it had not been able to consider the urgent need for other changes, especially those relating to death and disability benefits, and intended to take up that question after the next actuarial valuation.

12. In response to the request by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session for an interim report on the

adjustment of pensions, the Board had prepared a survey of the functioning of the current "dual" system. It had also outlined the issues of principle and of practical implementation which would have to be resolved in the search for a new system which would meet the requirements of unity, equity, durability and flexibility laid down by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session. Some of those issues were of a fundamental nature, such as how to maintain and adjust the level of purchasing power which a pension should have at the time of its award according to changing conditions in different parts of the world. That meant that differences in the pensions of staff members who retired at different times after equivalent service in the organizations would have to be considered. The effect on pensions of the difference in the salary systems of staff in the General Service and in the Professional and higher categories also required examination. She invited members of the Committee to facilitate the Board's task by expressing their views on the basic questions listed in annex V of the report and in particular on the relative importance they attached to the key factors involved. The Board would appreciate most of all guidance on the course to be pursued in the event that it should appear that one or more of the desired features in the scheme could not be included within the financial limitations.

13. In conclusion, she expressed appreciation to the Advisory Committee for the constructive analysis and recommendations provided in its comments on the Board's report.

AGENDA ITEM 96

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (continued) (for the documentation, see 1737th meeting)

The effect of continuing currency instability on the budgets of the organizations in the United Nations system (continued) (A/10008/Add.4; A/C.5/1692)

14. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), recalling the growing concern of Member States over the impact of the crisis in the capitalist world and of currency instability on the budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1692) showed a considerable increase in the expenditure due to the effects of inflation and currency instability. While that report indicated that the cost of currency changes anticipated for 1976 was lower than for 1975, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had pointed out in paragraph 2 of its report (A/10008/Add.4) that the cost of currency changes and inflation for the biennium 1974-1975, estimated at \$27 million by the Secretary-General, was in fact much higher—approximately \$72 million, and much more if the budgets of all specialized agencies were included.

15. The Secretariat had been following the somewhat dubious practice of covering the additional costs arising from currency changes and inflation by increasing the contributions payable by Member States. Such a practice was unjust because there were many States that were in no way responsible for inflation in the capitalist countries or

for currency instability. The practice was, moreover, wrong because it was contrary to General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) which approved the second report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. In that report, the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts¹ had recommended that increases in expenditure due to rises in prices should so far as possible be absorbed by savings, reassessment of priorities, redeployment of resources, and, where necessary, by adjustments within the budget. The inclusion in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 of amounts to cover the effects of inflation was also counter to the provision of General Assembly resolution 3360 (XXIX) requesting the Secretary-General to keep the problem under review, taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

16. One solution, considered of great importance by all Member States, was that saving should be affected and adjustments made within the budget. Yet the report of the Secretary-General gave no information on what measures had been taken to that end. He supported the view expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 4 of its report that, while a number of agencies had attempted to absorb all or part of the extra costs through economies, the United Nations had taken a more passive approach with reliance on "full budgeting" technique and supplementary appropriations. He also fully supported the suggestion by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 8 of the same report and in its first report (A/10008 and Corr.2) on the proposed programme budget that a serious effort should be made to obtain significant savings. His delegation expected the Secretariat to take urgent and effective measures to that end. The Secretary-General should report on those measures and their effect on all main activities of the United Nations and its budget in his next report.

17. It had been suggested by a large group of Member States that additional costs due to inflation should be covered by voluntary contributions from the developed countries which were responsible for inflation and in which the additional expenditures would be made. Yet the report of the Secretary-General did not contain any information on action to follow up that suggestion. He requested information on what steps had been taken, what consultations had been held with which countries and what their outcome had been. A decision on the question under consideration should be deferred until that information was made available.

18. In conclusion, he reiterated his opposition to the inclusion in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 of estimates to cover additional costs due to inflation. Such costs should be excluded from the budget estimates, in keeping with earlier General Assembly decisions and the views of Member States. He hoped that the Secretary-General would endeavour to achieve savings to lessen the effect of inflation on the budget and that he would hold consultations with the Governments of the developed countries with a view to reaching an agreement on voluntary contributions to offset the effect of inflation on the budget.

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343, para. 40.*

19. Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany) observed that, since the economic circumstances had remained much the same in 1975 as in 1974, there had been very little change in the approaches adopted by the agencies and the governing bodies with regard to the effects of currency instability and price movements. Document A/C.5/1692 showed quite clearly, however, that some organizations, including the ILO, UNESCO and WHO, were more successful than others in containing those effects and had at least partially absorbed the additional costs due to price movements. Whereas in the case of the agencies the savings might entail a scaling-down of operational activities and thus directly affect the interests of Member States, economies by the United Nations would simply result in the employment of fewer staff and the preparation of thinner reports.

20. The Secretary-General was accustomed to requesting and obtaining supplementary funds to offset almost every upward movement in prices and every currency adjustment. Similarly, the General Assembly was accustomed to acceding to virtually every proposal for new studies and additional staff. Sooner or later the passive attitude displayed by both the Secretary-General and the General Assembly would have to change. As a start, serious consideration should be given to the suggestion that CPC should look into the matter of the absorption of the additional costs generated by inflation.

21. Semi-full budgeting was one way of ensuring the absorption of additional costs, but the same results could be achieved by tighter budgetary control. While it might not be wise to carry reform to the extreme point of excluding from the budget all costs attributed to inflation, as was proposed by the delegation of Cuba in document A/C.5/L.1232, the Organization might well go part of the way in that direction. He would like the Secretariat to inform the Committee what savings could be achieved if inflation factors of 6 to 8 per cent or 5 to 7 per cent were applied to the budget estimates, instead of the current factor of 7 to 9 per cent.

22. His delegation was wholly opposed to the suggestion that costs arising from currency adjustments and inflation should be excluded from the budget altogether and be borne by a number of developed countries which were supposedly responsible for inflation. If such a policy was adopted, the chances were that those asked to bear the additional costs would refuse to do so and that the Organization's deficit would become even larger.

23. Rather, the view should be taken that the inflation component was an inseparable part of the Organization's budget. Although it represented a fairly small proportion of the budget for any given year, the inflation component over a 10-year period was sizable and could not simply be removed. He urged the Committee to display moderation and to rely on the Secretariat to keep the situation under close review. There was no need for further reports unless there were new developments.

24. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that the delegations of Cuba and the Soviet Union had again engaged in brain-washing and double talk. On the difficult subject of assigning responsibility for inflation, he would merely say that no country sought either inflation or devaluation;

indeed, all were struggling against the former and trying to avoid the latter. That was certainly true of his country. An article in a Soviet publication entitled *Soviet Life*, dated July 1975, had expressed the view that even though the price of alcoholic beverages had risen, there was no inflation in the Soviet Union and there never had been any. The article also spoke of a great improvement in productivity and the standard of life in the Soviet Union. His delegation was puzzled that such a prosperous country should continue to employ a non-convertible currency and that all it could do to help the developing world was to export arms and terminological inexactitudes.

25. It was unrealistic to maintain that the additional costs caused by inflation and currency changes could in some way be absorbed or removed from the United Nations budget. The prices of the resources in the budget had gone up and must be paid for. The size of the budget could be reduced, but the inflation element would remain. The only method of almost totally eliminating the inflation element from the budget would be to abolish the post adjustment system so that the price of employing staff remained static in money terms; that method was totally unacceptable to his delegation. However, the inflationary rise in the budget could be reduced somewhat through an increase in productivity. The United Nations needed more programme for less input and must eliminate wasteful and obsolete activities. His delegation agreed with the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany that the Committee should decide on a conservative figure for inflation for inclusion in the budget estimates and it would co-operate with other delegations in producing a draft resolution embodying that approach.

26. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that there was no point in dealing at length with the origin and cause of currency instability and inflation. Accordingly, his delegation would merely ask the Fifth Committee to endorse in strong terms the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 4 to 9 of its report (A/10008/Add.4) and to adopt measures to ensure that the budget for 1976-1977 would absorb a large part of the additional costs resulting from inflation. His delegation looked forward to the Secretariat's reply to the questions put by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany and would participate in any endeavour that would bring about a reduction of some \$20 or \$30 million in the budget for the next biennium.

27. Mr. GAMBOA (Venezuela) noted that the problems connected with inflation and currency instability had been discussed exhaustively in the past two years, particularly at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

28. He drew attention to paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report to the effect that the review by ACC during 1975 had not produced substantial changes in the solution adopted in the United Nations system and had failed to generate any new approaches that could be uniformly applied on a system-wide basis. He endorsed the Advisory Committee's comment in paragraphs 4 and 5 of its report that the United Nations had taken a passive approach with reliance on the "full budgeting" technique and supplementary appropriations and agreed that there was a need for "a much more imaginative and less passive approach". At the very beginning of the session, his delegation had noted the lack of a uniform approach in the

budget towards determining the additional costs arising from currency instability and inflation. It had also pointed to the disturbing trend whereby an increasingly large number of posts was requested without any information on the fate of the funds released as a result of discontinued programmes. It realized that the problem was very complex; none the less it believed that the effects of inflation could be alleviated in part through a freezing of requests for new posts, an examination of programmes by an inter-governmental body, and a redistribution of resources.

29. His delegation to some extent shared the concern expressed by the delegation of the Philippines at the 1735th meeting, regarding the bankruptcy threatening New York City and the need to safeguard any funds that the Organization had on deposit in New York banks. While it seemed virtually certain that the Federal Government would provide the assistance requested by the municipal authorities, any measures taken by the Secretariat to preserve the value of those funds would be most welcome.

30. Mr. TODOROV (Bulgaria) said that, as far as the budget was concerned, the problem of inflation was even more important than the effects of currency instability. Like the Advisory Committee, his delegation had been unable to ascertain to its satisfaction the accuracy of the Secretariat's estimates relating to inflation and continuing currency instability. It fully shared the views expressed by the delegations of Cuba and the Soviet Union, among others, on that point. Additional costs resulting from inflation and currency instability should be financed from savings achieved in the course of programme implementation or from contributions by the developed countries which generated inflation and acted as hosts to the various Secretariat offices. The Secretary-General should evolve and apply effective measures to counteract the effects of inflation and currency instability. Such measures should focus on any possible savings, better planning and consultations with the developed countries acting as hosts to United Nations Secretariat units, with a view to reaching agreement on potential contributions to defray the additional costs. His delegation shared the views of the Advisory Committee as expressed in paragraph 8 of its report. It opposed the inclusion in the regular budget for the next biennium of additional expenses generated by inflation and currency instability.

31. Mr. NORBURY (United States of America) said that his delegation fully shared the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee that the United Nations had taken too passive an attitude in the face of the pressures caused by currency fluctuations and inflation. Those problems, together with the competing demands on the resources of all Member States, made thrifty management essential. His delegation supported in particular the Advisory Committee's recommendation that posts falling vacant should be filled only when such action was fully justified by the workload.

32. His delegation attached a great deal of importance to the principle of collective responsibility for meeting the operational costs of the Organization—a principle which had been repeatedly affirmed by the General Assembly. Inflation was a world-wide phenomenon and responsibility for it could not be pinned on any one nation or group of

nations. Furthermore, it effects varied widely. One of the countries which had complained the loudest about the impact of inflation had been more helped than harmed in its foreign trade by the recent world-wide inflation.

33. His delegation sympathized with the approach suggested by the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom, whereby a lower figure would be assigned to the inflation component in the budget estimates. It looked forward to the Secretariat's reply to the request made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

34. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), exercising the right of reply, recalled that, at the twenty-ninth session, the representative of the United Kingdom had opposed a proposal under which the countries responsible for inflation would assume part of the burden of inflationary costs in the United Nations regular budget. The same representative had attempted to prove that inflation afflicted all countries, including the socialist countries. Having no facts to support his fabrications, the representative of the United Kingdom had resorted to dubious anecdotes and tricks. The facts, however, spoke for themselves: the socialist countries were not plagued by inflation because they planned their economies in such a way that state expenditures were fully covered by national income. They avoided deficit budget financing, a technique used only by the Western capitalist countries.

35. It was easy to see why the representative of the United Kingdom was so concerned at the prospect that the countries which generated inflation should pay the additional costs in the budget. The United Kingdom had the highest inflation rate of all the capitalist countries in Western Europe: in the preceding year the retail price index had risen to 26 per cent. The socialist countries and the developing countries were highly concerned about the additional burden placed on the United Nations budget by inflationary pressures and sincerely believed that it would be equitable if at least a part of that burden was assumed by the countries responsible.

Mr. Thomas (Trinidad and Tobago) took the Chair.

United Nations public information policies and activities (continued)* (A/10008/Add.2, A/C.5/1679, A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4, A/C.5/L.1242/Rev.2, A/C.5/L.1243, A/C.5/L.1245, A/C.5/L.1247)

36. Mr. AL-ZAID (Kuwait), referring to the fourth revised version (A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4) of the draft resolution before the Committee, said that since the amendment submitted by Tunisia (A/C.5/L.1246) had been incorporated in the new text, his delegation would fully support that text. However, it would vote against the amendment submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany (A/C.5/L.1247).

37. Mr. RAMAMONJISOA (Madagascar) said that OPI should direct its activities more towards the countries of

the third world which were particularly in need of detailed information about the activities of the United Nations, particularly those concerning the establishment of a new economic order. His delegation was pleased to note that the representatives of Tunisia, Algeria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concurred to some extent with its view that the Fifth Committee's mandate extended only to the administrative and financial aspects of United Nations public information policies and activities. Accordingly, it had joined the sponsors of the latest revised text of the draft resolution, which incorporated the amendments proposed by the representatives of Afghanistan and Tunisia to operative paragraphs 1 and 3, respectively, of the previous text (A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.3).

38. Mr. AGYEMAN (Ghana) said that his delegation maintained the amendment to the preamble which it had proposed at the 1730th meeting; by that amendment, the words "to improve" in the sixth preambular paragraph would be changed to read "to improve further".

39. His delegation would be happy to support the amendment proposed by the Federal Republic of Germany (A/C.5/L.1247) provided that the words "full and balanced" were replaced by "comprehensive".

40. Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany) agreed to that change.

41. Mr. RIVAS (Colombia) said that, in view of the advanced stage of the discussions on the draft resolution, the sponsors would prefer to leave the text as it was.

42. Mr. AL-NAKKASH (Iraq) said that his delegation supported draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4. It was opposed to the United Kingdom proposal that the definite article be replaced by the indefinite article before the words "new international economic order" in operative paragraph I and could not accept the amendment of the Federal Republic of Germany (A/C.5/L.1247).

43. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria) said that his delegation objected to the fact that, following all the amendments made to it, the draft resolution would in effect take the question away from the Fifth Committee. Yet it was not the first time that the Fifth committee was considering a question that had political as well as financial aspects; moreover, it was not for the Fifth Committee to divest itself of a very important question. His delegation was not against the draft resolution as a whole but only against operative paragraph 3, first of all, because it felt that the budgetary and political aspects should not be separated and secondly, because any delegation could submit a written request the following year for the inclusion of a new question on the agenda of the General Assembly. The General Committee would then decide which organ should consider it. He requested that the Committee should vote on the draft resolution paragraph by paragraph.

44. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) recalled that in introducing his amendment (A/C.5/L.1246) he had said that his intention was not to deprive the Fifth Committee of the privilege of considering the question. However, the matter was very important and should be studied with a little more care and

* Resumed from the 1736th meeting.

interest. His delegation had stressed the need to separate budgetary questions from matters of substance and had therefore welcomed the suggestion that the question of information should be discussed in off-budget years. His delegation did not wish to create any ill feeling between the various Committees or to make the question a source of confrontation, but it maintained its position.

45. Mr. SCHÜTZE (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation was prepared to support the proposal to keep the question of information in the Fifth Committee.

46. Mr. QUÉDRAOGO (Upper Volta), speaking on a point of order, suggested that, in view of the lateness of the hour and the lengthening list of speakers, the meeting should be adjourned. Those delegations which were still inscribed to speak on the question under consideration should do so promptly at the start of the afternoon meeting, after which the Committee could take a decision.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

1739th meeting

Thursday, 13 November 1975, at 3.05 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Christopher R. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago).

A/C.5/SR.1739

AGENDA ITEM 96

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (continued) (for the documentation, see 1737th meeting)

United Nations public information policies and activities (continued) (A/10008/Add.2, A/C.5/1679, A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4, L.1242/Rev.2, A/C.5/L.1243, A/C.5/L.1245, A/C.5/L.1247)

1. Mr. DJELOU (Togo) said that all delegations had stressed the importance that should be attached to United Nations public information policies and activities. He agreed with the representative of Tunisia at the 1738th meeting that the effect of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4 would not necessarily be to take that question away from the Fifth Committee. In any event, the Committee would always have to decide on the financial implications of the OPI programme submitted by the Secretary-General. Besides, it might be preferable—precisely because of the importance of that question—if other Committees were also called on to decide on some of the other aspects, for instance the political aspects. On the whole, he unhesitatingly supported draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4.

2. Mr. TALIEH (Iran) said that he would not be able to support the amendments (A/C.5/L.1245) submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/L.1242, or the amendment (A/C.5/L.1247) submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany to draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.2. However, he supported the draft decision of Pakistan (A/C.5/L.1243) and the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/L.1242/Rev.2.

3. He would also support draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4, although he would express reservations on the fifth preambular paragraph. He was not sure that OPI would be able to do anything about the public's disaffection with the United Nations system.

4. Mr. OUATTARA (Ivory Coast) felt that the main thing was to ensure that the United Nations had an infrastructure that would enable it to provide abundant and objective information to the public in general. He could accept the amendment of the Federal Republic of Germany (A/C.5/L.1247), but would have more difficulty in accepting the suggestions made by the representative of Tunisia at the 1738th meeting since, in his view, the Fifth Committee was perfectly competent to study the question of public information policies and activities from every aspect, political as well as technical.

5. He had reservations on the fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4, for the prevailing attitude of the information media and the public opinion in some of the Member States towards the United Nations system was not within the competence of the United Nations but of the State concerned.

6. Mr. BEATH (New Zealand) noted that the latest 12-Power text (A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4) of the draft resolution continued to create difficulty on two points.

7. The first point was whether or not the Fifth Committee should remain competent to examine the substance of United Nations public information policies and activities. No delegation had proposed that the question should be taken away from the Fifth Committee. On the contrary, many delegations wished the Committee to continue to consider it. The Tunisian delegation itself had said that it had no objection on that score. Under the circumstances, he formally proposed that the Rapporteur should include, in the section of the report relating to the consideration of that question, a sentence or paragraph that might read as follows:

“It was the sense of the Fifth Committee that it would prefer that the question entitled ‘United Nations public information policies and activities’ should continue to be considered by the Fifth Committee”.

8. The second point which was creating difficulty was whether or not draft resolution A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.4 would