

conformity with the principles of rational distribution and economy. At the same time, due consideration should also be given to Asian, African and Latin American regions, according to the same principle, in determining the pattern of conferences and the accommodation of United Nations organizations.

57. Mr. TARDOS (Hungary) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the pattern of conferences was well documented and contained a number of feasible recommendations, the most important one being to establish a new committee on conferences authorized to make binding decisions on requests to alter the approved calendar of conferences. His delegation agreed with the recommendation; when the old committee had been set up, he had pointed out that without authority to make binding decisions it was doomed to failure. The new committee should be compact; its composition might well follow the pattern of the Advisory Committee but its members should be government representatives, since that would make the committee's work more flexible and less expensive.

58. The inspectors' report and the memorandum of the Austrian Government dealt with the extension of the conference programme in Vienna. His Government highly appreciated the generous offer of the Government of Austria to provide the United Nations and IAEA with new office buildings and a large conference area; the new buildings would undoubtedly facilitate the work of the organizations there. However, he saw no need to declare in a formal resolution the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences, since Vienna had been part of that pattern for a long time. It was clear that it was not lack of conference rooms but lack of conference servicing staff that constituted the bottle-neck in conference programme planning. Consequently, he shared the view of the Advisory Committee that extension of the meetings programme in Vienna should be examined in the context of the office space available there for secretariat units over and above the reasonable needs of UNIDO and IAEA.

59. Therefore his delegation considered that the Austrian invitation to make full use of the office space available in Vienna in 1978 should be accepted in principle and that the Secretary-General should enter into negotiations with the Government of Austria and IAEA with a view to clarifying the points needed for a final decision at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. It would also be desirable to decide not later than 1976 which units of the Secretariat would be transferred to Vienna so that the pattern of conferences for the biennium 1978-1979 could be planned accordingly and Vienna duly incorporated. His delegation supported the view that in the meantime more conferences and meetings should be held in Vienna, on the understanding that the extra costs would be covered by the Austrian Government.

60. His delegation was also in agreement with the other recommendations of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 44 of its comments on the inspectors' report. Some of those recommendations, together with some of the recommendations in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, required further action by the Secretary-General and some by the new committee on conferences when established. His delegation would welcome a statement from the representative of the Secretary-General concerning the practical implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraph 44 of the Advisory Committee's report and chapter VII of the inspectors' report.

61. Finally, he wished to raise two questions in connexion with Geneva conference capacity: since with the opening of the new building there were more conference rooms available than were required, was there any plan to convert some of the old conference rooms into offices or to other uses? Secondly, why was temporary shortage of electric power, instead of a more realistic reason, given as an explanation for the fact that conference rooms XIX and XX in the new building had not been operational during the whole of 1974?

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

1660th meeting

Tuesday, 12 November 1974, at 11.45 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Costa P. CARANICAS (Greece).

A/C.5/SR.1660

AGENDA ITEM 77

Pattern of conferences (continued) (A/9589/Rev.1, A/9603 (chap. VI, sect. H), A/9768 and Corr.1, A/9795 and Add.1 and 2);

(a) **Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (continued)** (A/9795 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) **Report of the Secretary-General (continued)** (A/9768 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. ALCONCEL (Philippines) said that since 1952, the General Assembly had been trying to rationalize the growing number of United Nations meetings and confer-

ences, which meant that for 22 years it had been attempting to lay down principles governing the dates and venues of meetings. His delegation was concerned by the proliferation of meetings and conferences because of the severe drain on the scarce financial resources of the Organization, exacerbated by the increase in the volume of documentation.

2. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/9795) and agreed with the observation in paragraph 33 that many Governments felt that there were too many councils, commissions, committees and working groups holding meetings requiring serv-

icing by the Secretariat. The Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly had suggested in its report¹ that the Assembly should periodically review the continuing need for organs which had outlived their usefulness. While his delegation agreed that such organs should be eliminated, great care should be exercised in merging subsidiary organs having specific mandates, particularly those dealing with economic and social activities. Each individual organ should be examined in the over-all context of the volume, scope and complexity of the work of the United Nations.

3. As the Joint Inspection Unit had recommended, no subsidiary body of the General Assembly should create intersessional subsidiary bodies without prior approval from the Assembly. The Inspection Unit had also pointed out the deficiencies in the calendar of conferences with regard to the timing, duration and location of meetings: his delegation believed that the calendar should be prepared systematically and efficiently by an appropriate machinery in order to avoid unnecessary costs. That measure had become all the more urgent and necessary because the number of meetings in New York and Geneva exceeded the combined capacity of the Secretariat to handle them. The *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies had expressed a similar view in a series of recommendations set out in its second report² and reproduced in paragraph 54 of the Unit's report.

4. One of the most pressing problems was the shortage of highly qualified conference staff. In that connexion, it was encouraging to note that the Secretary-General had taken steps to expand training programmes, but since that was a long-term measure, it could not be expected to eliminate the shortage of language staff right away. One solution would be to recruit on a permanent basis free-lance interpreters with the experience enabling them to service any type of conference. Meanwhile, the Office of Personnel Services should send teams to various parts of the world to recruit competent interpreters. At the same time, Governments should make an effort to publicize United Nations needs for conference staff in their respective countries and, if possible, encourage the organization of training programmes.

5. At the current session, the General Assembly had before it an important proposal to establish a committee on conferences, which his delegation regarded as essential in formulating a systematic and rational pattern of conferences adaptable to available resources. It agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that the Secretariat was not in a position to choose between competing demands of inter-governmental bodies in drawing up the calendar of conferences or to overrule them regarding changes in the dates and venues for conferences or to overrule them regarding changes in the dates and venues for conferences and meetings. Nor could the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Question, which was not an inter-governmental body, take decisions on the issue, as past experience had demonstrated. It was therefore essential to

establish a committee on conferences with terms of reference which would enable it to rationalize the conference programme. At the twenty-fourth session, his delegation had expressed regret that the Committee on Conferences established in 1966 did not have a firm and comprehensive mandate, which had led to its demise. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that, should a committee on conferences be established, the General Assembly should approve in full the recommendations of the Inspection Unit contained in chapter V of its report. The committee should be composed of 15 members selected by Governments of Member States and should work in close co-operation with the Advisory Committee. In establishing its terms of reference, account should be taken of recommendation 3 relating to the committee's role, in chapter VII of the Unit's report.

6. His delegation had noted with great appreciation the offer of the Austrian Government to accommodate certain units of the United Nations Secretariat in Vienna. The statement made by the representative of Austria at the 1658th meeting indicated that the premises offered would be made available to the United Nations on a permanent basis, and the Austrian offer should be accepted. It would assure the United Nations of sufficient space for its expanding staff in the years to come. Currently, however, his delegation reserved its position on the issue of making Vienna a third conference centre on a level comparable to that of New York and Geneva, pending the submission of the Secretary-General's statement on the administrative and financial implications of the project. His delegation would like to know, for instance, what units could be ideally situated in Vienna, how the costs of the space allotted to them would be apportioned between the United Nations and IAEA and what extra costs would have to be borne by the United Nations after 1978. The Austrian Government might also submit to the Committee, at the thirtieth session, a report on the availability of interpretation staff at the new conference centre and of hotel accommodations on a year-round basis. Pending the establishment of the committee on conferences, which would be engaged in rationalizing the pattern of conferences, the existing arrangements for holding certain meetings in Vienna should continue, taking into account the views of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 43 of its report (A/9795/Add.2).

7. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit was of undoubted value in drawing the attention of Member States to problems which would seem to require prompt remedial action. It also described in detail the difficulties repeatedly encountered by the United Nations in organizing meetings and conferences. His delegation had studied the report with interest, together with the related reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee.

8. It was his delegation's impression that the inspectors should have laid greater stress on a fact which they had mentioned in passing in the foreword to their report, namely, that conferences did not have an existence *per se*, but were a consequence of the continuous interplay of international activities. They took place essentially because they were the indispensable multilateral forums in which Member States could get together and air their interests and views on the problems of the day. They therefore played a

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 26, para. 313.

² *Ibid.*, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343.

vital role, which was closely linked with the dynamic and fluid aspects of international affairs and therefore was itself quite fluid. The expansion of the pattern of conferences chiefly indicated the growing interdependence of the international community. Consequently, the Committee should never lose sight of the fact that, even if the calendar of conferences generated heavy costs and strained the human resources of the Secretariat and participating delegations, it was not an anomaly, but a necessity of the United Nations system, and attempts to rationalize or control conference activities should not disregard the legitimate aspirations from which they arose.

9. Of course, absolute systematization was impossible, but there were still areas in which improvements could be made. In paragraphs 79 to 85 of their report, the inspectors suggested that psychological factors accounted for the failure of the General Assembly to apply strict discipline to the programming of conferences. There again, the inspectors had perhaps minimized the importance of an essential fact, namely, that the broad demands of international political, economic and social life could not always be tailored to suit administrative tidiness. To put the blame for that on an assumed psychological disinclination on the part of delegations to face up to their responsibilities was an exaggeration which tended to obscure, if not falsify, the issue.

10. In paragraphs 186 to 190 of their report, the inspectors gave a clear illustration of the situation in Geneva and New York in connexion with what seemed to be the main stumbling-block, namely, the provision of interpretation services. The remarks of the inspectors on that subject formed the basis of their recommendation 4 in chapter VII, and his delegation had no difficulty in supporting the practical steps recommended therein. It particularly welcomed the recommendation that the Secretariat, in co-operation with the specialized agencies, should arrange for adequate training programmes for interpreters, should broaden their recruitment policies and intensify their recruitment efforts, should seek governmental assistance in finding candidates and should review their grading standards—probably including salary levels—for interpreters in order to make certain that those would attract qualified candidates. With regard to the difficulties mentioned in paragraphs 163 to 165 of the report concerning Russian-language interpreters, his delegation hoped that the Moscow Pedagogical Institute for Foreign Languages would take urgent steps to increase the number of Russian-language interpreters produced for United Nations use; an average of three interpreters per year seemed skimpy indeed, especially when it was considered that the United Nations contributed to the financing of the Institute from its regular budget, \$214,000 having been contributed for the current biennium. It was to be hoped that the number of interpreters which the Institute anticipated training in 1974 and 1975—6 and 10 respectively—would be not only attained, but surpassed. His delegation had also heard with interest the announcement by the representative of Austria that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his country had decided to set up a special training programme for conference interpreters to start in April 1975.

11. His delegation shared the astonishment of the inspectors regarding co-ordination between Headquarters and the

United Nations Office at Geneva which was discussed in paragraphs 195 to 207 of the report. Judging from the concrete examples furnished by the Joint Inspection Unit, the picture was one of such confusion that it would be comical if it were not so regrettable, and it should be remedied without delay. His delegation therefore unreservedly supported recommendation 6 of the inspectors.

12. On the other hand, his delegation could not endorse the observations of the inspectors about the possibility of biennial sessions of the General Assembly, contained in paragraphs 257 to 270 of their report. It was true that the inspectors had not issued a straightforward recommendation on the matter, but they had raised the question. His delegation was no more convinced of the soundness of such a measure today than it had been in 1966, when taking part in the work of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts. That position was not motivated by considerations relating to the experimental adoption of a biennial budget cycle or by the fear of a decline of public interest in the work of the United Nations. To begin with, it obviously would not make sense to judge the General Assembly in terms of manpower and costs alone; if pursued to the extreme, the logic of that reasoning would lead to the abolition of the General Assembly so that maximum savings could be achieved in that area. The Assembly represented much more than the formal action it took in voting on resolutions. It also generated a renewal of faith in and commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter that far exceeded concerns of a managerial or financial order. In the autumn of each year it brought together representatives of Member States from almost the entire planet, providing them with a unique opportunity for joint endeavours also on a bilateral level. Those results could not be quantified and had a significance far beyond the cost—however high it might be—of the human and material resources expended to make them possible. He was confident that those considerations would be sufficient to discourage any initiative to alter the annual schedule of General Assembly sessions as established in the Charter.

13. In several paragraphs of their report, chiefly in paragraphs 317 to 334, the inspectors addressed themselves to the International Law Commission. His delegation differed with their approach and their conclusions. In attempting to improve its methods and organization of work, the inspectors had failed to take into account the special expert status of the Commission and had drawn analogies with other bodies which had certain specific goals. The Joint Inspection Unit seemed to have been unaware of the complex and delicate task involved in formulating rules of international law, and its report appeared to be based on the premise that the number of legal texts produced was directly proportionate to the amount of time spent around a table—a rationale which could perhaps be applied to the manufacture of consumer goods, but not to the work of the International Law Commission, whose members brought many years of study and accumulated knowledge to their deliberations. He noted that the relevant section of the inspectors' report was currently being discussed in the Sixth Committee, and he drew attention to chapter VI, section H of the report of the International Law Commission,³ which refuted the recommendations of the inspectors: the Com-

³ *Ibid.*, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 10.

mission had unanimously concluded that its composition, procedures, methods of work and organizational pattern were correct and appropriate and represented the most effective means to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly. The delegation of Brazil in the Sixth Committee had firmly supported that conclusion at the 1487th meeting of that Committee and had addressed itself in unambiguous terms to the work of the inspectors. The delegation of Brazil in the Fifth Committee reiterated that stand and could not, therefore, agree with the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning the International Law Commission.

14. With regard to the limitation of major special conferences to a given number per year, his delegation was sceptical about the usefulness of adopting any rules to that effect. The inspectors themselves recalled that the number had initially been limited to one per year at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly, but that that decision had always remained a dead letter. There was no certainty that the same situation would not occur if the number was increased to five per year. If the Fifth Committee decided to adopt the suggestion of the inspectors, as reflected in recommendation 12, it should keep its fingers crossed.

15. The crux of the inspectors' report was, of course, that there was need for a committee on conferences. All previous attempts to predetermine conference programming by establishing a special committee to deal with it had ended in failure. However, if the majority of the General Assembly decided to implement the recommendation of the inspectors and the Advisory Committee, his delegation would not object, despite its scepticism as to its value. In any case, it would like to hear the views of other representatives on the creation of such a committee, its terms of reference and other pertinent matters.

16. His delegation had studied the memorandum from the Government of Austria (A/9589/Rev.1, annex), and the statement made at the 1658th meeting by the representative of Austria, with all the interest that the generous offer of his Government commanded. He would have wished that the Fifth Committee might be in a position then and there to take a clear-cut decision on the two parts of the Austrian offer. His delegation therefore was disappointed that the Secretary-General had not yet assessed the full implications of the possible installation of Secretariat units in Vienna. Attractive as the offer might appear, it would not be prudent for the United Nations to commit itself as to acceptance until its implications had been analysed and clarified. He would echo the preoccupations voiced at the 1659th meeting by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago concerning the impact of any such decision regarding Vienna on the policy of decentralization of the United Nations personnel structure, in view of the fact that the General Assembly had indicated in the past that such decentralization should include as a matter of preference the establishment of United Nations units in developing countries. Consequently, his delegation would for the time being adhere to the cautious approach adopted by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 33 of its report (A/9795/Add.2). The possibility of using Vienna as a major conference centre had been more substantially analysed by the Joint Inspection Unit and by the Advisory Committee, but there again the problem was knowing exactly what the

administrative and financial implications would be. The Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee pointed out in their reports the uncertainties which still seemed to cloud the promising prospects afforded by the Austrian invitation. All in all, his delegation felt that it would be too early to go beyond the position adopted by the inspectors and the Advisory Committee, whose recommendations it was inclined to endorse. Nevertheless, it trusted that the questions raised would receive prompt answers so that in due time the Assembly could take a decision based on full knowledge of where the interests of the Organization lay.

17. Subject to those criticisms and reservations, his delegation generally supported the conclusions of the inspectors on the several points under consideration, as modified by the Advisory Committee.

18. Mr. DIPP GOMEZ (Dominican Republic) said he had been greatly impressed by the statistical data provided to the Committee concerning documentation, meetings and, in general, the work performed by the Department of Conference Services. At the 1658th meeting the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments had reported that 8,993 meetings of various kinds had been held in 1973, which amply testified to the volume of work that both the Secretariat and delegations had to cope with. Those meetings could be divided into two categories: official meetings, included in the schedule of conferences in response to formal decisions, and informal meetings, such as those of the regional groups or of working groups. Both types of meeting were of importance to the activities and deliberations of United Nations organs. For instance, informal meetings were an opportunity for exchanges of views which could help in solving certain problems. All meetings were provided with a number of services by the Secretariat, but it should be noted that informal meetings, although not receiving summary record coverage, nevertheless achieved the desired results.

19. As things stood, the committee on conferences envisaged by the Joint Inspection Unit might help to rationalize the organization of conferences of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and would no doubt enable better use to be made of the services involved. Like the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee, however, he wondered whether such a committee would not be simply one more organ. To avoid the difficulties encountered by the previous Committee on Conferences and to achieve the desired results, the new committee should have sufficient authority, not of course to decide on, but to recommend, effective measures that would help the General Assembly and the relevant committees to solve the problems presented by the pattern of conferences.

20. His delegation had read with interest the text of the revised memorandum on the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences and on the accommodation in Vienna of additional units of the United Nations secretariat and had listened carefully to the explanations given by the representative of Austria. The Austrian Government's offer was very advantageous and, in view of current rental costs, showed laudable generosity. The memorandum also showed that the Austrian Government had considered the problem of interpreters, and the question of schooling for children of international civil servants and diplomats stationed in

Vienna. It was therefore an objective proposal. His delegation hoped the General Assembly would recommend that the Secretary-General should enter into negotiations with the Austrian Government and submit a final recommendation on the question.

21. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to the Secretariat staff concerned with the organization and servicing of conferences for the considerable task which they performed efficiently and competently.

22. Mr. MURG (Romania) said that his delegation had studied with care the documents submitted to the Fifth Committee on the question of the pattern of conferences. The Joint Inspection Unit had proved once again that it was trying to increase the effectiveness of United Nations programmes and to ensure more efficient use of the Organization's human and financial resources. It was true to say that the programme of conferences was of special importance to the United Nations, that it must be decided on jointly by the Member States and that it must be carried out subject to rigorous control by their Governments.

23. Accordingly, his delegation subscribed to the conclusions in chapter V of the Joint Inspection Unit's report concerning the need for a committee on conferences. That would be a judicious solution, since an organ of that kind could consider the measures needed to ensure a better distribution of conferences, such as a general system of periodic quotas or an increase in the number of conference centres, as envisaged by his own delegation. It could also suggest ways of ensuring that the United Nations had enough qualified interpreters available in the future.

24. According to the Charter, the General Assembly must make the final decision on the programme of conferences and on the practical arrangements for its implementation. Furthermore, the only committee in a position to submit recommendations on that question to the General Assembly was the Fifth Committee. However, it was apparent that neither the General Assembly nor the Fifth Committee could possibly consider the biennial programmes and annual calendars of conferences in detail. The support which the proposed committee on conferences could provide to them in that respect would be valuable, as long as it was properly structured and had real competence and sufficient authority.

25. The Joint Inspection Unit's report gave an account of past efforts to achieve a more efficient distribution of conference service resources. It also stressed a number of measures to be adopted in that regard, including total compliance with decisions concerning the dates and venues of meetings; elimination of the tendency to hold meetings only in summer and at certain centres; observance of time-tables and full use of the time allocated for meetings; reduction of the number of meetings to the absolute minimum. Although those suggestions were reasonable, his delegation would also like to recommend that, before an international meeting was convened, an in-depth analysis should be made of the utility of such a meeting and everything possible should be done to ensure that its deliberations would actually produce the results anticipated.

26. As far as the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of United Nations conferences was concerned, his delegation, bearing in mind the need for a better knowledge of the different parts of the world and the importance of contacts between countries, had studied with interest the revised Austrian memorandum and the conclusions contained in chapter VI of the Joint Inspection Unit's report. His delegation supported the proposal that Vienna should be included in the United Nations pattern of conferences along with New York and Geneva. The efforts made to create adequate facilities in the Austrian capital deserved the Committee's full attention.

27. His delegation considered that the difficulties encountered with regard to conference staff were of a temporary nature and could be overcome and that, in any event, they probably had nothing to do with where international meetings were held.

28. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that his delegation subscribed to the principles of sound economic management of the conference programme. In the language of micro-economics, the marginal cost of an additional conference scheduled for a peak period was very high, since the cost reflected the need for additional premises, equipment and manpower. Consequently, the greatest possible benefit must be derived from fixed costs by spreading the load over periods when the demand was lower. If that measure was not enough, the United Nations would have to allocate additional resources to the conference programme. In the case of manpower, the Organization was already facing difficulties which were not of a budgetary nature; as the Joint Inspection Unit pointed out in its report, there was a global shortage of interpreters.

29. The problem was therefore not just how to restrain expenditure: it was that of rationing a scarce resource. His delegation therefore supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit to revive the old committee on conferences with enhanced powers with regard to the holding and scheduling of conferences. The failure of the previous committee was not a reason for deciding against its revival. The committee had to be made effective, for the alternative was the breakdown of the whole conference system.

30. His delegation believed that the generous offer made by the Austrian Government in its memorandum should be considered in the light of the conference resources available to the United Nations system globally. Additional conference buildings would not solve the crucial shortage of interpreters, but might relieve the shortage of office accommodation for the Secretariat. As the report of the Joint Inspection Unit pointed out, if units of the Secretariat were moved to Vienna, that city would automatically play a larger role in the United Nations pattern of conferences, since the bodies serviced by those units of the Secretariat would normally be expected to meet at Vienna. His delegation therefore urged an affirmative response to the offer, subject to the principles of sound economic management.

31. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that expenditure on conference services absorbed 20 per cent of the appropriations in the United

Nations budget. The Organization's activities in that field should therefore be organized rationally and the resources assigned to it should be used economically.

32. His delegation supported the Joint Inspection Unit's major recommendation, which the Secretary-General had also approved, on the creation of a committee on conferences to help the Secretary-General to organize the pattern of conferences in a rational and economic way.

33. In its report the Joint Inspection Unit drew attention to a number of short-comings in the organization of conferences. The number of meetings seemed to be increasing without restraint and decisions by intergovernmental bodies to create subsidiary bodies without the prior approval of the General Assembly were completely disorganizing the work of the Department of Conference Services. His delegation therefore supported the proposal of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee that the General Assembly should expressly decide that no subsidiary body should be permitted to create either standing or *ad hoc* inter-sessional bodies without its prior approval. It also supported the Advisory Committee's proposal for the periodical review of the number, size and functions of subsidiary bodies. It would also be useful to study the number of members of each of those bodies, since any rise in their membership brought about an increase in the number and length of their meetings. His delegation therefore wholeheartedly supported the proposal made by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 83 of its report for a special study on the question of the optimum size of subsidiary bodies. Their size could easily be reduced without affecting the quality of their work or the observance of the principle of geographical distribution. It also welcomed the proposal made by the Secretary-General and supported by the Advisory Committee to establish a quota system for meetings, whether recurrent or special, in each major field. The system would not, of course, apply to meetings of the Security Council, which should have at its disposal permanently all the necessary services to enable it to discharge its responsibilities properly. The number of unofficial meetings should be reduced, particularly those which required full conference services.

34. In resolution 2609 (XXIV) the General Assembly had decided that there should not be more than one major

special conference a year. In recent years, however, that principle had not been observed. The Advisory Committee had recommended that the number of major special conferences should be set at a maximum of three a year, but his delegation could not accept that proposal and considered that the General Assembly should abide by the principle it had laid down earlier. It supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to maintain and strictly enforce the principle requiring Governments which invited United Nations bodies to meet in their countries to defray the additional costs involved. It also supported the principle that United Nations bodies should meet at the location of their respective headquarters. The recommendation that co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be strengthened was also very useful since its implementation would make possible a better use of the available premises, funds, and staff. In that connexion, his delegation opposed any proposal to recruit more temporary staff to service conferences.

35. With regard to the offer of the Austrian Government to accommodate a certain number of units of the Secretariat in Vienna, it should be pointed out that because of the many important meetings held in Vienna in recent years, the Austrian authorities had gained considerable experience with conferences. Furthermore, as the Austrian Chancellor had pointed out to the General Assembly on 11 November 1974 (2279th plenary meeting), Austria's policy of neutrality was a valuable stabilizing factor which made Vienna an ideal place for holding international conferences. The Austrian Government's offer was all the more generous in that the premises would be placed at the Organization's disposal free. It was therefore to be hoped that the General Assembly would accept it. The Secretary-General should submit at the thirtieth session a full report on the possibility of transferring certain Secretariat units to Vienna.

36. Finally, he thanked the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and his staff for their praiseworthy efforts to increase the efficiency of the Department and reduce the cost of its operations.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.