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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

later: Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands)
(Vice-Chairman)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the President of the General Assembly had reiterated his firm intention to adjourn the current session of the General Assembly by 17 December 1991. He had therefore prepared, with the help of the Secretariat, a suggested plan of work whereby the Fifth Committee would complete its work no later than 15 December 1991. In addition to the deadlines proposed in the plan, which the Committee would need to adhere to strictly, a number of points should be noted. First, compliance with the President's deadline and with the suggested plan of work would depend on the essential documentation being available on the required dates. In the case of some agenda items - 109 and 110, for example - the Committee could, if it so agreed, begin the general debate while awaiting the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). Second, delegations would need to make maximum use of the time left. Meetings must begin on time and the possibility of holding informal consultations concurrently should also be considered. Third, in some cases, even if the documentation were to be available immediately, it would not be possible to give serious consideration to the issues raised and take the appropriate decisions on all matters by 15 December; some topics would, therefore, clearly have to be deferred. The Committee had already decided to defer to the forty-seventh session the questions of the representation allowance for Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General and the honoraria payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations. It might wish to do likewise with certain aspects of item 105 (Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations), item 123 (Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations), and some of the matters under item 107 (Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993). It would, however, still be necessary to have those items introduced in the Fifth Committee during the current session and to deal with some essential points, for example, under item 123, the question of start-up money for peace-keeping operations. Fourth, with respect to action by the Committee on draft texts, compliance with the 24-hour waiting period would, in many cases, have to be waived. Fifth, the plan of work also had implications for the search for consensus. In order to meet the deadline, work would have to be concluded even if that meant taking decisions by a vote. He did not advocate that course of action, but in the circumstances he felt compelled to put it before the Committee for consideration. He would ask delegations for their comments on the proposed plan of work after they had had an opportunity to study it.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.

2. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that the Committee was undoubtedly in a very serious position. Without a deadline, it would probably not finish its work. However, the timetable in the Chairman's plan of work was not realistic. The Twelve would deeply regret any action that would force the Committee to take a vote on any of the agenda items and compliance with the proposed timetable would make that inevitable. With regard to the Chairman's specific proposals, the Twelve were not in favour of beginning the general debate on any item relating to the budget without the report and recommendations of the Advisory Committee. A prompt start to meetings was, of course, advisable, but the suggestion that the 24-hour rule might need to be waived should be looked at on a case-by-case basis; the Twelve would have difficulty in agreeing to an overall waiver of the rule. He recalled that the Twelve had called consistently for the biennialization of some agenda items. The current situation was proof that that proposal was well-founded.

3. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his delegation shared many of the concerns expressed by the Twelve. More forceful action would have to be taken on the Committee's agenda if its work was to be completed by 15 December. His delegation therefore recommended that all substantive consideration of items 105, 109 and 110 should be postponed to a resumed session. Item 105 was particularly important and his delegation was not prepared to be rushed through it and to adopt a hasty decision. There was no need to adopt an extensive resolution on item 108 (Programme planning) by 15 December; the Committee could approve those parts of the report relating to the budget and defer the rest. Regarding items 109 and 110 (Current financial crisis of the United Nations, and Financial emergency of the United Nations), his delegation was not convinced that, even if all the proposed measures were approved, any additional cash would be generated for the Organization within the first 30 days of 1992. With regard to item 113 (Pattern of conferences), his delegation felt that, given the state of the negotiations, if no agreement was reached by the end of the week, the entire discussion should be deferred to a resumed session. Items 115 (Personnel questions) and 116 (United Nations common system) should also be deferred. There was a possibility that agreement could be reached by 15 December on the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, under item 117, and the Committee should therefore make every effort to adopt a resolution by that date. His delegation was ready to accept the Chairman's suggestion for dealing with item 123.

4. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that it would be very difficult for the Committee to deal properly with all the items on its agenda by 15 December. If it followed the proposed plan of work, it would be obliged to take decisions hastily and possibly not by consensus; that would be regrettable. One solution would be for the Committee to concentrate on a few agenda items that by their nature demanded a decision before 31 December 1991, such as those relating to the budget and the scale of assessments. His delegation could agree to the United States suggestions that consideration of a number of items should be deferred, except for item 116 (United Nations common system), which had implications for other organizations in the system. There had been

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a trend among some specialized agencies towards a weakening of the common system and if the Committee failed to take a decision at the current session that might send a message to the agencies that the United Nations was not interested in defending it. It was important, therefore, that consideration of the item should be completed. The items which were not considered should be dealt with at a resumed session held in the first three months of 1992, not postponed to the forty-seventh session.

5. Mr. CLAVIO (Colombia) said that the Committee could certainly work faster but the proposed plan of work was not realistic. There were many important agenda items which should not be dealt with in haste. Matters could be so arranged as to allow the Committee to deal with some of them at the beginning of 1992. At the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the item on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations - an item that needed much time for proper consideration - had been dealt with at the last minute and no substantive decision had been taken. Items 111 (Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency) and 115 (Personnel questions) could be dealt with in 1992, together with items 109 and 110, which were the subject of very important proposals that needed careful and detailed consultations. The deferment of a number of items should not be taken as a precedent for biennialization. That was a separate matter which required careful consideration on its own merits.

6. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his delegation also felt that the proposed plan of work was not very realistic. Not enough time was allowed for consultations on important items that had not yet been introduced. A spirit of consensus was beginning to make itself felt and the Committee should not endanger the process through haste. His delegation believed that the Committee should concentrate on those items which were the most urgent, given the Organization's financial condition, namely, the proposed programme budget and the scale of assessments, which was the basis of the budget. The financing of United Nations peace-keeping operations also demanded an immediate decision. The Committee could and should make an effort to deal with the reports of the Joint Staff Pension Board and the International Civil Service Commission, but deferring them to a resumed session would not have any serious adverse effect. He noted that a draft resolution was almost ready on agenda item 108 (Programme planning) and it should be possible to introduce it at the Committee's next formal meeting. The Committee's best course would be to concentrate on three or four urgent items and leave the rest for a resumed session.

7. Mr. GREGG (Australia) endorsed the suggestions made by the United States delegation, as amended by the delegations of Mexico, Colombia and Morocco. Some of the remaining items would need to be dealt with early in 1992, while some could be postponed to the forty-seventh session. He believed that the Committee would be able to reach consensus decisions on all the key items by 15 December.

8. Mr. RAE (India) said that the issues before the Committee were important and called for detailed consultations. The advice of the Advisory Committee was also essential. His delegation would be reluctant to agree to any proposal which implied that the Advisory Committee's reports were not vital to the Fifth Committee's considerations. Consensus procedures were equally important and the Committee should not abandon them. The inevitable conclusion was that some agenda items would have to be postponed. There would need to be some accepted criterion for deciding which items should be dealt with immediately, which should be considered at a resumed session, and which should be postponed to the forty-seventh session. He asked the Secretariat to provide a list of those items where technical considerations demanded a decision at the current session. Items could not be ranked according to their presumed importance, because that depended on the individual views of delegations. The Committee should therefore be guided by technical considerations alone. Among the items suggested for consideration at the resumed session, his delegation would like to see items 105, 109, 110 and 115 taken up early in 1992. Some aspects of item 115 (Personnel questions) had already been postponed from the forty-fifth session.

9. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that one aspect missing from the plan of work was the Committee's treatment of the programme budget implications of resolutions adopted by other Main Committees. The Fifth Committee's workload was not completely under its own control. If the other Committees agreed to finish their work sufficiently in advance, the Fifth Committee would be able to complete its work by 15 December. The Chairman should make that point to the Chairman of the other Committees, as well as to the President of the General Assembly, or any decision that the Fifth Committee might take on its plan of work would be invalidated.

10. The criteria for deferring and retaining items might need further clarification. In his delegation's view, the statutory requirements of all the bodies concerned would make it essential to retain for immediate consideration the items relating to the scale of assessments, the proposed programme budget, the calendar of meetings, possibly pensions, and certain aspects of the financing of United Nations peace-keeping operations for which the appropriation of start-up funds would be necessary. On some items, the documentation had still not been issued. However, even where the documents were out, discussion of the item should be postponed if the Advisory Committee had not yet reviewed them. His delegation was opposed to taking hasty decisions on matters which were customarily first examined by the Advisory Committee. Accordingly, it would not be advisable to begin a general debate on the financial crisis. However, the Committee should take into account work which had already been done by some bodies, in particular those in which a major consensus had emerged, such as the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC). In that context, it would make sense for the Committee to start discussing the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and endorse what had already been recommended by CPC. It could then, at a later stage, discuss the Secretariat documents that still needed review by the Advisory Committee. CPC, which was

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an intergovernmental body, had already made recommendations on certain elements and there was no need for the Committee to delay its decision on those recommendations. As far as decision by consensus was concerned, he took it that the Chairman's reference to possible voting related only to elections.

11. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Committee must plan its work in such a way as to be able to give due consideration to all the items on its agenda. He agreed with previous speakers that, as it stood, the Chairman's plan of work was not realistic. If the President's decision to adjourn the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly by 17 December remained firm, the Fifth Committee would, of course, have to take it into account. Undoubtedly, the Committee would have to make the most efficient use of the remaining time. With regard to the 24-hour rule, his delegation agreed with the Twelve that any waiver would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. It also believed that the reports of the Advisory Committee were essential and it could therefore not agree to the Committee taking decisions on items relating to administrative and budgetary questions without first hearing the expert views of ACABQ. In order to draw up a realistic plan, his delegation agreed that the sequence should be established according to technical requirements, rather than the importance which particular delegations attached to the various items. Since all the agenda items before the Committee should be given due consideration, he suggested that they should be divided into three categories: those on which work could not be halted and on which consensus agreement was possible; those which could not be postponed to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and must be considered at a resumed session; and the remainder, which could be postponed without difficulty. From a procedural point of view, it would be useful, after the general exchange of views, to convene a meeting of an expanded Bureau in order to agree on a work programme. If there was general agreement, items in the second and third categories could be postponed and a realistic programme could be drawn up for the completion of consideration of items in the first category.

12. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that, while the Chairman's plan of work represented a sincere attempt to expedite the Committee's deliberations, it did not take into account the real needs of the Committee. Some elements of the plan would present particular difficulties. For example, the holding of concurrent informal consultations would tax the resources of small delegations; moreover, her delegation could not accept any waiving of the 24-hour rule, given the need for consultations with Governments. In what was an emergency situation, it was clear that extraordinary measures were required, and she concurred in the view that the Committee would do well to concentrate on certain items on which immediate decisions were required, namely, the programme budget, the scale of assessments, the common system and the approval, as a minimum, of a calendar of conferences for 1992. Other items could be postponed, either to a resumed session or to the forty-seventh session. She shared the concerns expressed regarding the possible impact of postponing items in terms of biennialization; while biennialization was a worthwhile objective, it needed to be considered in a broader context.

13. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the Committee, having elected its Bureau, should be guided by its suggestions. He did not find the Chairman's plan of work unrealistic, and it would not be impossible for the Committee to proceed on that basis. In particular, if the Bureau thought it expedient to postpone certain items, then the Committee should accept that decision. Nevertheless, certain issues demanded immediate attention, namely the programme budget and statements of programme budget implications in respect of decisions by other Main Committees, the scale of assessments and the financing of peace-keeping operations. One point of concern to his delegation was the somewhat unrealistic approach being taken in some of the informal consultations, in which much time was being spent on issues that were not central to the Committee's work. In the consultations on personnel questions, for example, much attention had been paid to the criteria for the recruitment of staff, even though those criteria were specified in the Charter and were thus beyond the Committee's purview. Delegations should adopt a pragmatic approach, otherwise, the Committee would never complete its work.

14. Mr. WU Gang (China) said that the plan of work proposed by the Chairman was not realistic. Reaching a consensus on all the items before the Committee and taking decisions thereon was an enormous task. It would be better to defer some of the items, but to a resumed session early in 1992, rather than to the forty-seventh session. His delegation's acceptance of postponement did not mean that it was endorsing biennialization of the Committee's work. For the time being, priority should be given to the programme budget, the scale of assessments and the financing of peace-keeping operations. He welcomed the proposal by the Indian delegation that the Secretariat should be asked to identify items on which immediate decisions were necessary. Lastly, he regretted the time that was being spent at the current meeting on discussing the Committee's programme of work - time that could have been spent on substantive matters.

15. Ms. ERIKSSON FOGH (Sweden) said that it would be a matter of regret to her delegation if the Fifth Committee was compelled to vote on some of the items before it. She agreed that it would be useful for the Secretariat to prepare a list of priority items on which immediate action was needed. In that connection, the items on the financial crisis and the financial emergency would seem, by their very nature, to be urgent. Lastly, it was important for the Committee to hear the views of the Advisory Committee before taking decisions.

16. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that the plan of work suggested by the Chairman should have been submitted earlier. It was important to deal with some items immediately. For example, consideration of items 116 and 117 should be completed in order to prevent any erosion of the common system. He endorsed the view of the Cameroonian representative that without a change of attitude the Committee would never complete its work. He agreed that it was important to hear the views of the Advisory Committee before taking decisions. His delegation could not agree to biennialization of the Committee's work and those items that were not dealt with immediately should be taken up again at a resumed session in February.

17. Mr. DINU (Romania) said that his delegation would have welcomed earlier submission of the plan of work. It was clear that the Committee could not complete all the remaining items before the session was suspended in December, even if it resorted to voting; there were, for example, some 25 statements of programme budget implications still awaiting the Committee's consideration. His delegation agreed that priority should be given to programme budget matters and to the scale of assessments. Any decision on immediate priorities should be taken not by the Bureau alone, but in consultation with delegations. Specific time-frames for taking action should be established in respect of any items that were deferred to a resumed session in 1992. Any decisions to defer items to the forty-seventh session should be taken by consensus.

18. Mr. FORAN (Acting Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the latitude available to the Committee in terms of deferring items was not as great as many delegations seemed to suppose. While some or all the elements of the items relating to the review of efficiency (item 105), the performance report (item 106), other budget items (item 107) and personnel questions (item 115) could be deferred, together with some of the issues relating to peace-keeping (items 118-122, 123, 136 and 138), and while the Committee had virtually completed its work on the financial reports (item 104), administrative and budgetary coordination (item 111) and the Joint Inspection Unit (item 112), immediate action was needed on all other items. In particular, the items on the programme budget for 1992-1993 (item 107), the financial crisis and the financial emergency (items 109 and 110), the pattern of conferences (item 113), the scale of assessments (item 114) and the common system and pensions (items 116 and 117) were all of top priority. Similarly, decisions on the various appointments (item 18) could not be readily deferred. The Committee should thus strive as best it could to reach a consensus on those questions so as to facilitate prompt decisions.

19. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) expressed concern at the time schedule envisaged for dealing with peace-keeping budgets. In particular, he wished to know whether the necessary documentation would be ready for introduction on 11 December, because the Secretary-General's proposals were still not available. In view of the urgency of peace-keeping operations and the fact that parliamentary processes were required before countries could make their contributions, he asked for further clarification of the schedule envisaged.

20. The CHAIRMAN, summing up the discussion, said that the general opinion seemed to be that the plan of work was not practical. If the deadline of 15 December had to be met, it would be necessary to postpone consideration of certain items and concentrate on more urgent ones, such as the proposed programme budget, the scale of assessments and peace-keeping operations. A number of delegations had suggested that items that were postponed could be dealt with in two stages, the more urgent ones being considered at a resumed session in 1992 and the remainder being deferred until the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The majority agreed that the programme set out in the plan of work could not be completed by 15 December. He hoped,

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however, that it would be possible to complete work on the more important items by then and that he could so inform the President of the General Assembly.

21. Mr. CONMY (Ireland) said that time was required to achieve consensus and it would be unrealistic to set any deadline as early as 15 or 17 December. The President of the General Assembly should be informed that it was not in the interests of either the Organization or the Fifth Committee to set an early deadline.

22. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Ireland and by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the Twelve States Members of the European Community. It was likely that a resumption of the current session of the General Assembly would be required in 1992 to deal with peace-keeping operations and the optimum use would be made of resources if the Committee resumed its work at the same time. In view of the high costs involved, however, the Committee should take up as few items as possible at a resumed session and defer as many as possible until the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

23. Mr. Spaans (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 104: FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (continued) (A/C.5/46/48; A/C.5/46/L.3)

24. The CHAIRMAN said that, following further discussions on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/46/L.3, it had been agreed to remove the second preambular paragraph and paragraph 3 and place them in the draft decision on administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and IAEA (agenda item 111). Since the statement of programme budget implications contained in document A/C.5/46/48 related only to the matter covered by those paragraphs, it would be taken up when agenda item 111 was considered.

25. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that, before the draft resolution was adopted, he wished to recall that his delegation had reserved its right to speak on agenda item 104 when the views of the Advisory Committee on the report of the Secretary-General on unliquidated obligations contained in document A/46/404 were available. Although it did not wholly support the proposals made in that report, it had decided to endorse the agreement reflected in paragraph 21 of the draft resolution because it shared the concern expressed by the Secretary-General. It hoped that the Secretary-General would submit another report on the subject, as requested in paragraph 21.

26. His delegation wished to reiterate the importance of strict compliance with financial regulations and rules on the subject of unliquidated obligations. It therefore considered it inadvisable to make any amendment to them. It believed that the problems of reappropriation which the

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Secretary-General had encountered in transferring valid charges of unliquidated obligations to the current biennium would effectively be resolved if the General Assembly decided that those regulations and rules should be implemented, where appropriate, in accordance with the following procedure. In cases where an outstanding legal obligation could not be liquidated within the time period set forth in regulation 4.3, regulation 4.4 should be implemented. Each such obligation should be examined in accordance with rule 110.9 before it was cancelled or reobligated against current appropriations. When the unliquidated obligation was determined to be a valid charge, the Secretary-General should propose that the General Assembly authorize its reobligation against the appropriation of the current biennium in the first performance report of the programme budget for the current biennium. In so doing, the Secretary-General should determine that the obligation could not be accommodated within the overall level of the budget, through savings or through redeployment of resources between sections, without causing a negative effect on programme delivery. If the General Assembly found the Secretary-General's request justified, it would reappropriate the required amount under the relevant section of the revised estimates of the programme budget, without recourse to the contingency fund, provided that the amount of the appropriation surrendered was identified as savings in the biennium to which it related and was set off against the assessment on Member States for the financial year immediately following the adoption of the revised estimates.

27. Ms. BEAULIEU (Canada) and Mr. RAE (India) said that their delegations had not been involved in the further discussions on the draft resolution to which the Chairman had referred and requested clarification of the situation.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that it had been agreed to remove the second preambular paragraph and paragraph 3 of the draft resolution following suggestions that their contents would be more appropriate in the draft decision on agenda item 111. That draft decision would soon be available and would incorporate the two paragraphs in question.

29. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that, when preparing the report requested in paragraph 21 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General should also take into account the views of ACABQ.

30. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that the subject of unliquidated obligations was a very complex one and should be considered in technical seminars. Divergent views had been expressed during the informal consultations, but his delegation was prepared to support the draft resolution.

31. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that he understood the Chairman to be asking the Committee to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/46/L.3, as orally revised by him.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that that was so. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/46/L.3, as orally revised.

33. It was so decided.

34. Mr. MUNCH (Germany), speaking in explanation of his delegation's position, said that he interpreted the reference to appropriate accountability in paragraph 13 of the draft resolution as meaning full accountability.

35. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) and Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) endorsed the observation made by the representative of Germany.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/46/L.13 concerning agenda item 29 (A/C.5/46/38; A/46/7/Add.10)

36. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that he would appreciate clarification of two items in the Secretary-General's statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/46/L.13 (A/C.5/46/38). First, in table 2 of the annex, there was an estimated requirement of $13,500 for office furniture and equipment, while in paragraph 14 of the annex, a provision of $33,000 was proposed for office equipment; he wondered whether those two line items were the same and, if so, why the amounts differed. Second, paragraph 16 of the statement mentioned an amount of $369,400 for staff assessment, which represented a tax reimbursement to United States nationals totalling approximately $90,000 per year. His delegation would like to know the basis for that estimate and would appreciate a breakdown of the amounts included for staff assessment in the 1990-1991 budget for the Afghanistan programme, as well as an indication of the actual tax reimbursements paid to United States nationals from that line item.

37. Mr. RAE (India), referring to paragraph 9 of the statement, requested further information on the efforts made to obtain rent-free premises.

38. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the questions raised by the United States representative, said that the figure of $33,000 represented the consolidated amount of the last three items in table 2. With regard to staff assessment, his office would provide the relevant information for 1991 and 1992 to the United States delegation at a later time. Replying to the question raised by the Indian representative, he said that efforts were continuing to obtain the agreement of all the Governments concerned to the provision of rent-free premises.

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, based on the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/46/L.13,

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the estimated requirements for 1992 would be $6,600,000, and that no modification of activities under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 would be required. The additional requirements that would arise were clearly of an exceptional nature, relating to the maintenance of peace and security, and should be treated outside the procedures relating to the contingency fund.

40. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) asked whether the decision suggested by the Chairman implied endorsement of the views expressed by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/46/7/Add.10); if not, such endorsement should be made explicit.

41. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana), said that the meaning of paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report was perhaps not really clear. After recommending the reduction of the Secretary-General's estimate from $6.8 million to $6.6 million, the Advisory Committee stated that an additional appropriation of $6.6 million would be needed and that it should be provided without recourse to the contingency fund. Accordingly, he requested confirmation of his understanding that the additional appropriation would be added on to the regular budget, thus raising the level of resources.

42. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) requested confirmation as to whether the procedure recommended by the Advisory Committee was the same as that which had been followed in respect of other United Nations missions in Afghanistan since the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

43. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that the concept of additional expenditures was clearly provided for in annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213. In view of the current methodology, he believed that the Committee had no choice but to accept the proposals before it. It would be advisable for future technical seminars to deal with ways of handling additional expenditures when they did not relate to peace-keeping operations financed from the contingency fund, to inflation or to currency fluctuations.

44. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Ghanaian representative's interpretation of paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report was correct; with the exception of the $200 million reduction, the report corresponded to the Secretary-General's statement. Replying to the United Kingdom representative, he said that the procedure recommended was indeed the one which had been followed for several years. With regard to the statement made by the representative of France, he said that the proposal which was before the Committee did indeed reflect the French interpretation of General Assembly resolution 41/213; while the expenditure involved was renewable, it had not been possible to include it in the budget when it had been drawn up for obvious political reasons. In reply to the representative of Japan, he said it was his understanding that the Advisory Committee's recommendations had been taken into account in the proposal read out by the Chairman, not only with regard to the amount, but also in terms of their qualitative aspects.

45. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that the Chairman had used the formulation "based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee". That wording had also been used in cases where the recommendations concerned had not been fully endorsed by the General Assembly. If the decision was not endorsing those recommendations, it should be amended so as to do so.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that, according to his understanding of the Japanese proposal, the decision should read: "Based on the report of the Secretary-General and endorsing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/46/L.13, the estimated requirements for 1992 would be $6,600,000, and that no modification of activities under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 would be required. Furthermore, the Committee should inform the Assembly that the additional requirements that would arise, should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/46/L.13, were clearly of an exceptional nature, relating to the maintenance of peace and security, and should therefore be treated outside the procedures relating to the contingency fund."

47. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) requested confirmation from the Secretariat that the proposal, as revised by the Chairman, was technically correct. He also questioned whether the Committee was really in a position to take action on the proposal at the present stage. While his delegation would have had no difficulty with the Chairman's original formulation, it was not clear about the meaning of the proposal as revised. It would be helpful if the Chairman of the Advisory Committee could clarify what the Fifth Committee was being asked to adopt.

48. The CHAIRMAN said it appeared that the original wording of the decision would satisfy the concerns of most delegations. He asked whether the representative of Japan would insist on further clarification, or whether he could accept the explanation given by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division so that the decision could be adopted.

49. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that if the question was to be put to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, that would require another round of discussions in ACABQ. If his delegation agreed to withdraw its proposal, that would imply uncertainty on the Committee's part as to whether it was endorsing the Advisory Committee's recommendations. Perhaps the Ugandan representative could state which aspects, if any, of the Advisory Committee's report he opposed; if none, the report should be approved.

50. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said he was not sure whether his delegation was in a position to respond as requested by the representative of Japan in view of the absence of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. He suggested that the Committee should take action on the basis of the original formulation.

51. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his delegation had no difficulty in accepting the original formulation, which it construed as a means of endorsing the Advisory Committee's recommendations. He proposed that the Committee should adopt a decision in two parts, with one endorsing the Advisory Committee's recommendations and the other consisting of the Chairman's revised formulation. It was not necessary for the Chairman of ACABQ to be present, as it appeared that the Committee had accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that, as one delegation had requested the presence of the Chairman of ACABQ, no decision could be taken at the current meeting.

53. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said he wished to place on record that his delegation had no objection to adopting the decision as originally read out by the Chairman, even without the Chairman of ACABQ being present. However, if the Committee decided to proceed along the lines of the revised formulation, then the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be requested to provide clarification.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.