



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FERNANDEZ (Philippines)

later: Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: TRAINING AND RESEARCH (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (continued) (A/43/14, A/43/697 and Add.1)

(b) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (continued) (A/43/31)

1. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that it was unfortunate that although the Committee had devoted a great deal of time and effort at the forty-second session of the General Assembly to the issue of UNITAR, the Secretary-General, the Director General and the Executive Director of UNITAR had decided to ignore the warnings and concerns voiced by certain delegations.
2. His delegation's position on UNITAR had been clearly stated and restated. As currently constituted and operated, UNITAR contributed little that was of real use to Member States, especially developing countries. For that reason, although the United States had been among the founders of the Institute, it no longer contributed to UNITAR nor did it have any present plans to do so. The statement in paragraphs 6 and 8 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/43/697) to the effect that no one who had been asked to give favourable consideration to the request to provide UNITAR with the financial resources it needed for the implementation of its training and research projects had responded favourably to the request was further evidence of the Institute's marginal usefulness.
3. Noting that, according to paragraph 9, certain costs had been carried temporarily outside the budget of UNITAR, he said that if the practice of carrying costs outside the approved budget became widespread, the Second and Fifth Committees would become meaningless.
4. Noting further, that no provision had been made in the 1988 budget to repay the advance previously approved by the General Assembly, he said that he had the unhappy impression that the officials who had approved publication of the Secretary-General's report had not fully grasped the gravity of its contents. He wondered why the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee had not been consulted. Those bodies did consider the budget estimates of UNDP and UNICEF which, like UNITAR, were financed from voluntary contributions. If the amount of \$525,000 which had been carried outside the budget, were added to the \$1,917,888 which UNITAR owed the United Nations as of 31 July 1988, the Institute's total debt to the United Nations would come to at least \$2,442,888.
5. Concerning the purchase of the land and the sale of the entire property of the UNITAR building, he said that the information made available to the Second Committee was inaccurate. UNITAR at that time did not have a valid legal agreement in writing to acquire the land under the building. Accordingly, it was not in a position to sell the total property nor to repay the United Nations and establish a

(Mr. Saddler, United States)

reserve fund. Moreover, the present owners of the land had raised their asking price, and therefore, even if UNITAR did manage to purchase the land and repay its debt to the United Nations, it would have only a very small amount of money left for its reserve fund. He wondered whether the incomplete presentation of the facts had not merely been an attempt to play for time so that the matter would be deferred until the following session.

6. The proposed amendments to the UNITAR Statute should be examined further by the Board of Trustees and thus should be considered only as information by the Second Committee. Likewise, before the General Assembly took any decision on the issue, the Secretary-General would have to consult the Board of Trustees on the specific criteria and qualifications to be established for, and used in, the selection of full-time Fellows. He pointed out, for the benefit of the Secretary-General and the Board of Trustees, that the United States had a dual role in the matter, as a Member State of the United Nations and as a host country. Perhaps the main reason for seeking to permit full-time Fellows to be covered under the Convention on Privileges and Immunities was so they would be exempt from income taxes. He suggested that the Secretary-General should provide full details to the Board of Trustees regarding the question of income taxes, the number of persons currently involved, their location and nationality and also regarding the specific criteria to be used when making appointments. In that connection, he suggested that all Fellows should be appointed by the Secretary-General himself for no more than one year; their skills should be relevant to UNITAR's approved work programme and there should be no more than 10 to 12 Fellows at any one time who should work full-time. Appointments should be limited to UNITAR and should be restricted mainly to former United Nations officials previously covered by the Convention on Privileges and Immunities. Perhaps the rigid application of the mandatory retirement age of 60 might be relaxed since that rule had created the need to appoint full-time Fellows.

7. Finally, he said that the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNITAR and the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Human Resources Management all had an obligation to reassign as soon as possible after their present contracts expired the four Professional staff members who were affected by the restructuring and had not been reassigned. The time had come to end the suspense and to either really restructure UNITAR or terminate its activities.

8. Mr. SHAABAN (Egypt), after briefly reviewing UNITAR's situation and underscoring its gravity, said that no delegation had ever questioned the validity of UNITAR's mandate. It was therefore surprising to see a report by the Secretariat unabashedly accusing some delegations of Member States of not having properly understood the nature and priorities of UNITAR activities. It was totally unacceptable for the Secretariat to impugn or criticize informed decisions taken by sovereign Member States. He did not believe that the 23 traditional donors who had not contributed to UNITAR for the last two years were wrong, but they were certainly dissatisfied with what they perceived to be anomalies. Egypt, which was the fourth largest beneficiary of UNITAR training courses, had not made any pledge to UNITAR for 1988.

(Mr. Shaaban, Egypt)

9. It was regrettable to see that, despite warnings from several delegations, the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General was too scanty to allow Member States to make enlightened decisions. The bulk of the report dealt with the subsidiary issue of full-time Fellows, giving the impression that all other issues had been resolved. While highly appreciating the role that such Fellows played, and could play, his delegation was not in a position to approve the proposed change in the status of full-time Fellows at the present session. It had specific comments to make on the subject, but felt that, before dealing with amendments, it was necessary to be sure of the viability of the Institute, since the Secretary-General had pointed out that "delays beyond the first half of 1989 in the completion of the sale of the UNITAR headquarters building would have the most serious adverse consequences on the process of renewal set in motion in 1987".

10. In addition, he hoped that the Secretary-General would intervene to ensure that the UNITAR staff members whose contracts were due to expire on 31 December 1988 would be absorbed within the Secretariat as soon as possible, particularly since there was no provision in UNITAR's budget for separation costs in the event of a lay-off.

11. Noting from paragraph 16 of the report that no provision had been made in the 1988 budget of UNITAR for payment of the advance made by the United Nations, he pointed out that only the General Assembly could approve such a deferment and it had not given its approval.

12. While recognizing the efforts which the Secretary-General was making to monitor the implementation of the restructuring plan contained in resolution 42/197, he reiterated that his delegation stood by the proposal that it and other delegations had made in 1987 regarding the reallocation of UNITAR's functions (A/41/521). However, it would not oppose any other reasonable suggestions that met with the approval of all other delegations, provided that sufficient and convincing information was provided to the Second Committee on the financial situation of the Institute and on the sale of the UNITAR building.

13. With regard to the report of the Council of the United Nations University (A/43/31), he was pleased to see that most of the projects and programmes provided for in the first medium-term perspective had been completed, and he expressed appreciation for the very useful work in the field of economics done by the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), specifically on the themes of hunger and poverty, money, finance and trade, and energy and food. He expressed the hope that the publications of WIDER would be more widely circulated.

14. Finally, he expressed the hope that the University would quickly overcome its financial difficulties so that it could continue the vital work it was doing in the fields of research, training and dissemination.

15. Mr. VASILYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country had participated actively in UNITAR's activities for many years and would continue to do so, since the training and research programmes should, according to UNITAR's mandate, help in dealing with such questions as the cessation of the arms race, the promotion of co-operation among all States on a basis of equality and the search for ways of maintaining the effectiveness of the United Nations system. The round table on the future of the United Nations in an interdependent world, recently held in Moscow under the auspices of UNITAR, had been in keeping with those objectives.

16. His delegation believed that the work of restructuring UNITAR should continue on the basis of the Secretary-General's proposals, without any change to the Institute's mandate and solely with the aid of contributions already received or new extrabudgetary funds.

17. The measures adopted by UNITAR's Executive Director pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/197, with a view to reducing expenditures and mobilising additional resources, had thus far produced no significant results, particularly with regard to the sale of the UNITAR building.

18. The amendments to the statutes contained a set of rational proposals on UNITAR's activities and financing, and the work already begun should be continued. The statutes should continue to provide for functions as important as the implementation of training and research programmes which were designed to further the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, and should retain the provisions concerning the voluntary nature of UNITAR's financing. It was his delegation's hope that the administration of UNITAR would take specific and effective measures to overcome their problems.

19. His delegation supported, and recognized the usefulness of, the United Nations University. He noted that the University had attached greater attention to, among other things, management training and the dissemination of information in the interests of all countries, and that the number of research agencies associated with the University was increasing, particularly in developing countries. The creation of regional research centres for developing countries and research projects in the fields of data processing, energy and biotechnology were of high importance.

20. Within the framework of the medium-term perspective, the University should place greater emphasis on the preparation of themes and practical recommendations in such fields as peace and conflict resolution, the global economy, the rational use of natural resources and climate

21. Mr. ONONALYE (Nigeria) said that, despite the problems with which it was confronted, the Institute had played an essential role in the field of training and research aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations and had merited the confidence placed in it. For that reason, his Government would continue to support UNITAR and appealed to all Member States to extend generous and stable assistance to it.

(Mr. Ononaiye, Nigeria)

22. His delegation welcomed the efforts to implement, as far as possible, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 42/197. Some Member States, among them the traditional donors to UNITAR, had recognized those efforts, which was probably partly the reason for the resumption of contributions to the Institute. It would be desirable, however, for all donors to increase their assistance and to predicate their help on a yearly or multi-yearly cycle, thus enabling the Institute to plan its activities.

23. The most serious problem currently confronting UNITAR was that of financing. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the gradual and practical approach adopted to the reorganization and restructuring of the Institute. The survival of UNITAR was important for all Member States and it was therefore the responsibility of developed and developing countries alike to provide it with adequate support. Nigeria, for its part, convinced of the usefulness of the work being done by UNITAR, had established a \$1 million reserve fund which was being managed by the Nigerian Mission to the United Nations and the interest from which would be allocated on a yearly basis to the financing of UNITAR. He expressed the hope that other Member States would take similar measures.

24. At a time when the United Nations was proudly assuming an increasingly positive role in the settlement of global problems, it was the obligation of all Member States to strengthen UNITAR and similar institutions and enable them to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations.

25. Mr. LIU Zhaodong (China) said that his Government had always attached importance to the work of UNITAR and the services which it provided and hoped that, after the Committee's thorough consideration of the question, the General Assembly, at its forty-third session, would finally be able to reach a consensus on a viable solution for the future of UNITAR. His delegation proposed the retention of some useful training and research projects - the scale of which must be determined according to the resources available - the placing of greater emphasis on training activities designed to strengthen the functions of the United Nations and the avoidance of overlapping and duplication. His delegation would take a constructive and realistic attitude in the negotiations on that issue.

26. His delegation noted with appreciation the activities carried out and the results achieved by the United Nations University in the course of its first medium-term plan for 1982-1987. However, the Council of the University should endeavour to define the priorities for its second medium-term perspective on a more rational basis so as to achieve maximum effectiveness and, in particular, should attach primary importance to issues affecting the survival, development and well being of mankind (particularly, how to tackle the problem of hunger, poverty and backwardness). It should select a limited number of research activities which did not duplicate those being carried out by other organizations and should devote more of its resources to training projects.

27. China supported the idea of establishing a computer software training centre in Macao. It would continue to give its support to the activities of the United Nations University, with which it had signed a co-operation agreement and to which it had donated \$US 100,000.

28. Miss COURSON (France) said that the report submitted by the Secretary-General addressed only some of the concerns expressed by Member States at the forty-second session of the General Assembly. While many changes had admittedly been made, particularly in connection with staff, since 14 posts, 6 of them Professional, had been eliminated, the effort made was nevertheless inadequate in that the budget adopted by the Board of Trustees still showed a discrepancy between income and expenditures (of which staff costs accounted for 66 per cent). It was clear that, without an increase in UNITAR's resources, its operational capacity would be limited and its administrative costs too high in relation to the overall budget.

29. It was regrettable that it had not been possible to complete the second phase of the financial reorganization, namely the acquisition of the land and the subsequent sale of the UNITAR property. The creation of the reserve fund provided for by the General Assembly would enable the Institute to repay its debt to the United Nations and to carry out its mandate more effectively. Her delegation attached great importance to UNITAR's training activities and therefore found it regrettable that that aspect of the programme had had to be considerably reduced for lack of resources. She expressed the hope, however, that UNITAR could develop in parallel the functions assigned to it as soon as financial resources permitted.

30. While Government contributions for 1988 had been more substantial than expected, they did not permit UNITAR to operate on a sound and predictable basis. In paragraph 35 of his report (A/43/697), the Secretary-General stated that if the reduction in the level of contributions was to continue, the work of the Institute which was financed by General Fund resources would come to a virtual standstill. France had always supported UNITAR and wished to continue to do so, as would be shown by the announcement of its next contribution which would be substantially increased, but at the same time could not help noticing the growing disaffection among other donor countries. She therefore expressed the hope that the negotiations between the United Nations Secretariat with the owners of the Institute's site would be rapidly concluded so as to enable UNITAR to resume its activities on a more sound basis more in keeping with its mandate. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would continue to follow the situation and keep the donor countries, and those which might again become donors, regularly informed.

31. Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia) took the Chair.

32. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) said that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) had been established in response to an urgent and undeniable need, in other words, to familiarize officials of Member States, particularly from developing countries, with modern negotiating techniques, and to offer training programmes on, for example, the maintenance of international peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the promotion of, and respect for, international law and human rights, and economic and social development. Its mandate and relevance were unquestionable.

33. Significant progress had been made in the restructuring requested by the General Assembly in resolution 42/197: 14 posts had been abolished, research activities had been curtailed, efforts had been made to improve co-ordination

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

between the Institute and other research bodies of the United Nations system, and, lastly, training activities had been reorganized and given priority. The 1988 budget had been scaled down to reflect staff and programme reductions. The financial situation should improve slightly in the short term, particularly when the fund set up by Nigeria became operational. The long-term position was discouraging, however. In July 1988, the debt owed to the United Nations (approximately \$2.5 million) had still been alarmingly high, and it would become even more onerous because, until personnel restructuring had been completed, the United Nations would have to bear the cost of the salaries and entitlements of staff members whose posts had not yet been transferred to other sources of funding. According to the Secretary-General's report, the costs would rise to a total of approximately \$525,000 by the end of 1988. Resolution 42/197 clearly provided that steps should be taken to sell the UNITAR building and that the proceeds of the sale should be used to set up a reserve fund. It was essential that that should be done as soon as possible so that UNITAR could quickly repay its debt to the United Nations and develop its research and training programmes.

34. Accordingly, serious and sincere efforts had been made to restructure UNITAR. It was disappointing, therefore, to note that only 29 Governments had made pledges to the General Fund of UNITAR in 1988, as compared with 47 in 1987 and 52 in 1986. He agreed with the Secretary-General that, if the number continued to decrease, the work financed through the General Fund would come to a virtual standstill, and joined in his appeal to all Governments, in particular the traditional donors, not to let UNITAR down at that current juncture. He also supported unreservedly the recommendations set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of the Secretary-General's report. Pakistan was deeply committed to the objectives of UNITAR, to which it accorded moral support and financial assistance; the Institute had a vital role to play. It was an obligation of the General Assembly to help the Secretary-General restore its viability.

35. Mr. SADIO (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country set great store by the objectives laid down in the statute of UNITAR, whose activities were certainly beneficial as far as the developing countries were concerned. It also fully appreciated the efforts of the Institute, such as training programmes, lectures and courses, to promote Libyan development. Determined to continue its support of UNITAR, it appreciated the assistance provided by certain countries, and called upon all countries to help reinforce the Institute, thereby, enabling it to play its proper role for economic and social development.

36. His delegation approved of the restructuring measures for improving the Institute's future prospects, and for establishing a reserve fund, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 37/142 and 42/197. It was important to ensure that the Institute survived and that it could continue to be instrumental in improving the efficiency of the Organization, especially in the maintenance of peace, economic and social development and the reinforcement of international law and human rights. Equally important was the role it played in mobilizing research workers and motivating research establishments in the developing countries to seek

(Mr. Sadio, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

solutions to challenging development problems. The role that UNITAR had played since the 1970s in research on energy and natural resources was particularly noteworthy.

37. His delegation urged all countries to contribute to the General Fund to enable the Institute to continue its various activities. Libya was convinced that, given the importance of the objectives laid down in its statute, UNITAR must be able to continue its activities for the developing countries, in particular, and for the international community, in general.

38. Mr. KENDECK MANDENG (Cameroon) noted that, in resolution 42/197, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the validity and relevance of UNITAR's mandate, and urged Member States to increase their voluntary contributions and provide special-purpose grants, in order to give the Institute an adequate financial basis. He noted with satisfaction that much had been done to implement the resolution, with respect to the work programme, which laid greater emphasis on training, the budget, the sensitive issue of cuts in full-time staff, and amendments to the statute. Nevertheless, the restructuring had not been completed, and it was regrettable that the acquisition of the land and the sale of the UNITAR property, planned for 1988, had not taken place.

39. While supporting the proposal that the privileges and immunities accorded to United Nations staff members should be granted to UNITAR full-time Fellows, he emphasized that the criteria and conditions governing the selection of those staff members should be carefully worked out in advance, possibly by the Board of Trustees.

40. He welcomed the fact that, in spite of its financial difficulties, UNITAR had successfully restructured its training sector and that the amount of contributions paid into the General Fund in 1988 had exceeded the initial budget estimates. In that connection, he thanked Nigeria for having set up a special trust fund for UNITAR. Lastly, he did not think that it would be possible to complete the reforms already initiated unless there was a substantial increase in voluntary contributions to the General Fund and in the special-purpose grants. Accordingly, Cameroon would continue to make its modest contribution to the Institute.

41. Mr. WILLIS (United Kingdom) said that the debate on UNITAR in 1987 had clearly demonstrated the importance that Member States attached to its activities and their concern that those activities should be on a viable and effective financial footing. The resolution adopted by consensus in 1987 had provided the basis for restructuring the Institute as a first step towards establishing the climate of confidence required to attract financial support. The initial measures taken were encouraging.

42. Although resolution 42/197 clearly indicated that the Institute should operate on the basis of paid voluntary contributions only, whereas the budget estimates took account also of commitments. Furthermore, while it had been possible to reduce the debt owed to the United Nations, it was a matter for concern that the

(Mr. Willis, United Kingdom)

annual repayment of \$100,000, authorized by resolution 38/177, had not been included in the 1988 budget, and that certain costs were being temporarily charged against the reserve fund, the creation of which depended upon the sale of the property. The acquisition of the land and the sale had not yet taken place and it was vital that the Secretariat should pursue the question as a matter of priority.

43. It was proposed in the report that the UNITAR statute should be amended to enable the Secretary-General to appoint full-time Fellows. Even if they did not receive salaries, their recruitment would entail administrative costs and additional travel expenses; he suggested, therefore, that consideration of the proposal should be postponed until a clearer picture had emerged of the Institute's financial situation. The Secretary-General should continue to monitor closely the income and expenditure of the Institute which, in spite of some progress, had not yet overcome its difficulties.

44. Mr. KIURU (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, referred briefly to the aims and operating procedures of the United Nations University. Its new Rector had lost no time in determining the future orientation of its work. For the time being, the University was mainly involved in research. As its resources were extremely limited, it should avoid dispersing them, as it had done, among an unrealistically high number of small projects whose practical impact had remained limited. Since those areas of research were already covered by other organizations which were better-funded or belonged to the United Nations system, it would appear that more effective methods of programme preparation could be used. Moreover, post-graduate training had declined somewhat and must be restored, and the number of training fellowships must be gradually increased. Finally, the University's impact in the area of dissemination of knowledge was weak and yet, in line with its mandate, it did not necessarily have to limit itself to disseminating knowledge that it produced but could also pass on knowledge and know-how, whatever the source.

45. Hence, the elaboration of the research programme should be based on a number of principles. The University should: define priorities in areas which were not already dealt with by other organizations and where the prospects for genuinely new achievements were realistic; strengthen its co-operation with other international organizations in general; reduce the number of research projects in the second medium-term perspective; strengthen post-graduate training; increase the number of University fellowships and balance its activities against its actual financial resources.

46. Before establishing new research and training centres, it should resolve fund-raising problems so that the centres would not have to engage in international competition for funds, which would be contrary to the very principles on which the University was based.

47. The Nordic countries recognized the importance and innovative nature of the work done at the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) on global economic problems, most recently on the international debt. The findings should be disseminated to Member States not merely the academic community.

(Mr. Kiuru, Finland)

Finland, as a host country of the Institute, had made a substantial contribution to WIDER, and Sweden and India had paid or pledged contributions. It would be desirable for other countries to do likewise. In general, a more balanced distribution of contributors to the University would be beneficial.

48. It was regrettable that no viable solution had been found to the question of the future role and restructuring of UNITAR, despite several consecutive years of discussions. The Nordic countries concurred with the proposal that the Secretary-General should appoint full-time Fellows. Research activities were an essential factor in enabling the United Nations to respond to the future needs of Member States. The Nordic countries believed that the United Nations University, with its research and training centres, could play a useful role in that connection. It would therefore be important to study the best means of reassigning research activities affected by the restructuring of UNITAR to the specialized agencies. As it was urgent to implement resolution 42/197, he would appreciate more information on the "unexpected complications" mentioned in paragraph 32 of the Secretary-General's report with respect to negotiations with property owners, as the sale was an essential condition for obtaining additional financial resources. Another alarming element was UNITAR's mounting debts. The funds advanced by the United Nations to UNITAR must be kept to a minimum, within the letter and spirit of resolution 42/197. None the less, the absorption of the General Service staff released from UNITAR could be regarded as positive: it was to be hoped that a similar solution would be found for the Professional staff.

49. In the end, the question, once again, was whether, in its current situation, the Institute really served the needs of the United Nations in the field of training and research. Its financial situation was not sound enough to ensure its viability, and the confidence of donor countries had not been restored. A reserve fund had not yet been set up, as the sale of the entire property had been delayed: it would only make future financing of the activities of the Institute more difficult.

50. Mr. PAXTON (New Zealand), referring to the lengthy discussions to which UNITAR had given rise at the forty-second session, said that he was approaching the current debate with a degree of apprehension. Given the amount of time many delegations had already devoted to the question, it would be necessary to grasp the nettle and give the Executive Director of UNITAR the guidelines he had so eloquently requested. Resolution 42/197 had been an adequate compromise and the instructions it provided should have been sufficient to permit substantial progress. A number of expected actions related to the resolution had not been taken and the staff cuts had not been as extensive as they should have been. On the contrary, the addition of a new category of full-time Fellow was planned. Regardless of their levels of remuneration, their recruitment would entail significant administrative costs. Their terms of service should be carefully assessed. He looked forward to receiving further information during the informal consultations. Another cause for considerable concern was that UNITAR was heavily indebted to the United Nations, which was hardly in a position to shoulder that additional burden. As the UNITAR building had not yet been sold, UNITAR could not

(Mr. Payton, New Zealand)

clear its debt and gain the firm financial base it so desperately needed. If the sale were delayed for too long, UNITAR would have no future. The Institute had been established as a voluntarily funded entity. That meant its viability had always been linked to the confidence which Member States had in it; yet, there was little evidence that the confidence of the major donors was returning.

51. Mr. FAIVET (Observer for Switzerland) said that his delegation remained convinced of the need to maintain a separate entity for training within the United Nations system. He noted with satisfaction the efforts and progress made to restructure UNITAR according to the plan set forth in General Assembly resolution 42/197. The Institute offered staff members, diplomats and representatives of developing countries unique opportunities to receive training in a great many fields related to the activity of the United Nations. It had been possible to carry on, and even expand, the Institute's work, which was financed from the regular budget (General Fund) and by Special Purpose Grants. Future presentations of the UNITAR programme must distinguish between the two.

52. Restructuring and economy measures provided for by the Board of Trustees had not been fully implemented. It was unfortunate that a series of expenditures had been withdrawn from the budget approved by the Board. While the Institute's debt continued to mount, the building had not been sold, nor the reserve fund set up, within the prescribed time. The situation of the staff was evidence of the Institute's precarious position.

53. As the restructuring of UNITAR had not been completed, it would be preferable if the Board of Trustees could examine in depth the proposals related to the status of the Fellows before the Assembly adopted the amended statute of the Institute. Switzerland would take an active part in seeking solutions within the meaning of resolution 42/197 and was prepared to furnish adequate financial support to UNITAR, on a voluntary basis.

54. Mr. AHMED (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the land on which UNITAR was located had not yet been purchased because the two co-owners had not reached an agreement, not even on the conditions of the sale. It seemed, however, that an offer was about to be made and that if the offer was acceptable, the question could be settled rapidly. Once the land was acquired the UNITAR building would immediately be sold and the Institute would be able to repay its debts to the United Nations.

55. With regard to personnel questions, the Secretary-General had done his best to redeploy, within the United Nations system, General Service staff whose posts had been abolished at the Institute. He would continue to make such efforts on behalf of certain Professionals affected by the restructuring, who had not yet been reassigned.

56. In keeping with UNITAR's statute and at the request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General had approved the amendments to the Institute's statute in consultation with the Board of Trustees. Those amendments, which should reflect

(Mr. Ahmed)

the restructuring of the Institute, had been brought to the attention of the Assembly so that it could take note of them.

57. Mr. DOO KINGUE (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research) specified that the number of Governments which had paid contributions to the UNITAR General Fund, in 1988 was 37, not 29; that was five fewer than in 1987.

58. Referring to the postponement of repayment of the advance granted in 1983, he said that it had been agreed in General Assembly resolution 38/177 that the Institute would be given an advance of \$886,000. That advance was to be repaid in annual instalments of approximately \$100,000 after a two-year grace period. When UNITAR had found that it could not fulfil its obligations, it had proposed that if, in any given year, it could not pay by the due dates, the repayment period of approximately 10 years should remain unchanged and the amount due annually should simply be increased in the following years. Hence, the fact that it had not made its 1988 payments did not mean that the due date for repayment would not be respected. In any case, UNITAR would do everything possible to repay all of its debts from the proceeds of the sale of its headquarters property.

59. With regard to the concern which the representative of France had expressed about high staff costs (64 per cent), it should be noted that, unlike the staff in other bodies, the UNITAR staff was not administrative; rather, it was responsible for originating and executing research and training programmes, and it would therefore be wrong to consider the Institute's expenses as administrative.

60. With regard to the observations of the delegations of the United States and of Switzerland on the respective roles of the Board of Trustees and the General Assembly regarding the Fellows, he said that the Board of Trustees had intended to take a decision on that issue at its regular session of April 1988. However, the Board had been advised that it could not take a decision on an issue which the General Assembly had not entrusted to the Secretary-General. In other words, it was only after the Secretary-General had received the General Assembly's agreement in principle and had reported to the Board of Directors that the Board would be able to take all the necessary arrangements to change the status of the UNITAR Fellows.

61. Replying to the questions of the United Kingdom representative, he said that the travel expenses of the Fellows were an integral part of the programmes whose financing had been approved and which would come either from the General Fund or from extrabudgetary funds. The assignment of full-time Fellows to teach a certain course did not entail additional travel expenses; on the contrary, that made it possible to realize savings since there was no need to resort to outside consultants, who would have to be paid a fee.

62. The representative of Japan had stated that UNITAR should make its activities much more widely known, and that the report on the Moscow round table should be circulated. Replying to the first point, he said that the Institute would indeed like to ensure a wider dissemination of its work, for example through a bulletin

(Mr. Doo Kingue)

which would be regularly distributed to all Member States. Unfortunately, that would not be possible as long as resources were not made available to the General Fund for that purpose and as long as the Institute continued to be confronted with financial constraints. Moreover, the report of the Moscow round table had been sent to all Permanent Missions on 12 October 1988 and additional copies would be supplied on request.

63. Finally, as a member of the committee which the Secretary-General had appointed to sell the UNITAR headquarters building, he would spare no effort to ensure that that matter was settled as soon as possible.

64. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said that his delegation was very concerned about the slowness of the measures taken to purchase the land on which the Institute's headquarters was situated and to sell the UNITAR building. In his report (A/43/697), the Secretary-General had merely given a vague account of the legislation, market conditions and other unexpected complications, and Australia requested clarification as to the precise nature of those problems.

65. Moreover, since delegations had been informed at the previous session that the proposed loan to UNITAR would not have financial implications for the regular budget because the purchase and resale of the property would occur within a year, his delegation wished to know if a more precise purchase date could be provided to the Committee.

66. As indicated in section V of the aforementioned report, a decision had been taken to abolish 14 posts beginning in June 1988. While the efforts made to redeploy the staff affected by that measure were commendable, the slowness in redeploying four of the six Professionals whose posts had been abolished was a source of concern. Further, paragraph 10 of the same report indicated that two additional General Service posts had been included in the draft budget; it was quite surprising that the number of UNITAR staff was greater than that proposed in the annex to General Assembly resolution 42/197.

67. Staff costs represented almost 60 per cent of the Institute's total expenditure, and more than 11 per cent of its budget represented costs relating to the post of Executive Director. While the question of the appropriate level of the Executive Director's post had been discussed at length at the forty-second session, his delegation would none the less be interested to know whether, in the light of those discussions, that issue had been further considered.

68. Finally, his delegation was opposed to the proposal to amend the UNITAR statute to extend United Nations privileges and immunities to the UNITAR Fellows. Australia did not see a pressing need for such a decision and believed that, in any case, privileges and immunities should be granted only to a limited number of persons after a very careful examination of each case.

69. Mr. CHIDAMBARANATHAN (United Nations University) said that the new Rector gave particular attention to the need for concentrating the activities of the United Nations University. During the 1988-1989 biennium, the number of projects had been reduced by more than one third; and the second medium-term prospective, which would be adopted in December 1988 and which would be based on continuity and change, would include no more than five programmes. Thus, the University was endeavouring to reduce the field of its research activities in order to ensure that such research was better targeted.

70. Training continued to be one of the University's three main activities, the other two being research and dissemination of information. The total number of University Fellows trained under the fellowship programme was currently 988. The University's financial problems had naturally been felt in the training programme. However, new cost-sharing arrangements were being negotiated or planned with a number of countries, including Brazil, China and India in order to overcome those difficulties.

71. The University's dissemination programme was a broad one designed to respond to various end users. Besides publications, the programme included symposia, seminars and workshops whose purpose was to make the research of the University more widely known; the university had also built up its capacity in such areas as audio-visual materials and computerised data bases. Its publications were sent to 73 depository libraries and sold in United Nations bookshops.

72. In accordance with the mandate contained in its Charter, the University would establish research and training centres and programmes to fulfil well-defined long-term needs which could not be met in any other way, provided that the necessary capital and facilities were ensured.

73. A special effort would be made to explore ways in which the University could support the action of United Nations bodies and enrich the debate in their intergovernmental organs. To that end, the University had been in close touch with specialized agencies, research institutions, scientific establishments and non-governmental organizations in areas of mutual interest.

74. In view of the nature of the University's activities, a certain degree of overlapping with the activities of other United Nations bodies seemed inevitable. However, the Rector was endeavouring to eliminate duplication as far as possible, and he perceived the future role of the University as being that of an institution working upstream of other United Nations agencies in anticipating trends and forces which affected global change and the international responses required to cope with them.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.