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Chairman: Mr. David SILVEIRA DA MOTA
 (Brazil).

AGENDA ITEMS 73 AND 74

**Supplementary estimates for the financial year 1969
 (*continued*)* (A/7673, A/7698, A/7770, A/C.5/1253)**

**Budget estimates for the financial year 1970 (*continued*)
 (A/7606, A/7608, A/7710, A/7726, A/7749, A/7767,
 A/7769, A/7770, A/C.5/1230, A/C.5/1231, and Corr.1
 and 2, A/C.5/1233, A/C.5/1234, A/C.5/1245, A/C.5/
 1248, A/C.5/1249, A/C.5/1253, A/C.5/1254/Rev.1,
 A/C.5/L.990, A/C.5/L.993, A/C.5/L.1002)**

***Assistance in cases of natural disaster
 (A/7770, A/C.5/1253)***

1. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report (A/7770) of the Advisory Committee on assistance in cases of natural disaster said that, as could be seen from the note by the Secretary-General on that subject (A/C.5/1253), the Secretary-General, acting in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 2435 (XXIII), had since January 1969 drawn on the Working Capital Fund to the extent of \$87,500. Since additional requests for assistance had been received and others were expected and since he had hoped to reserve at least \$10,000 to provide pre-planning assistance in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 2435 (XXIII), the Secretary-General had proposed that the amount which he was authorized to draw from the Working Capital Fund should be increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000 for 1969 and should be fixed at \$150,000 also for 1970. The

* Resumed from the 1304th meeting.

Advisory Committee concurred in the proposal that the amount should be increased to \$150,000 for 1969. With regard to the provision for 1970, the Advisory Committee recommended that the total provision of \$150,000 should be made under the General Assembly resolution relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the financial year 1970, although it had some reservations as to the desirability of including provision for pre-disaster planning arrangements under that resolution and intended to give further attention to that matter in 1970. A suggested text for inclusion in the draft resolution on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the financial year 1970 appeared in paragraph 7 of the Advisory Committee's report. Lastly, in order to enable the United Nations to respond to as many requests for assistance as possible, the Advisory Committee had suggested that the General Assembly might wish to reduce from \$20,000 to \$15,000 the normal ceiling per country in the case of any one disaster, on the understanding that the Secretary-General would have discretionary authority to grant up to a maximum of \$20,000

2. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should approve: first, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/7770, para. 5) that the maximum amount the Secretary-General might draw from the Working Capital Fund in 1969 for emergency aid in connexion with natural disasters be increased to \$150,000; secondly, the recommendations (*ibid.*, paras. 6 and 7) which would in effect increase to \$150,000 the amount which the Secretary-General was authorized to use and change the method of financing for 1970; and thirdly, the suggestion (*ibid.*, para 8) that the normal ceiling per country in the case of any one disaster should be reduced to \$15,000, subject to the discretionary authority of the Secretary-General to grant up to a maximum of \$20,000.

It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Rapporteur should be asked to include appropriate texts in the reports of the Committee on items 73 and 74, including draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly in order to change the authority given to the Secretary-General under resolution 2435 (XXIII).

It was so decided.

4. Mr. ZIEHL (United States of America) said that his delegation had always been keenly interested in the question of assistance in cases of natural disaster, and had not in the Second Committee or elsewhere, questioned the desirability of ensuring that some such assistance could be made available to any country that needed it. He intervened to explain the basis for the United States concurring with the Advisory Committee's recommendations. As was clear

from the Advisory Committee's report, assistance in cases of natural disaster was of two kinds: small amounts for emergency aid following a disaster, and assistance to Governments in pre-disaster planning, a subject which was dealt with at length in General Assembly resolution 2435 (XXIII). He noted that the Advisory Committee intended to give further consideration to the financing of the latter at its autumn session in 1970.

5. His delegation wished to place on record its opinion that, although grants of assistance in cases of natural disaster were in a sense unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, there could be little justification in the long term for financing either assistance after a natural disaster had struck, or assistance in the preparation of plans to meet disasters, from the Working Capital Fund. It could therefore support the Advisory Committee's recommendation on that point only as a temporary measure in the spirit of resolution 2435 (XXIII) for 1969, 1970 and 1971. In addition, his delegation noted that many Governments including that of the United States of America, provided assistance through other organizations, such as Red Cross Societies, and drew attention to the emphasis in paragraphs 3, 5 and 8 of resolution 2435 (XXIII) on the need to seek financing for both post-disaster and pre-disaster assistance from other sources. His delegation agreed that all possible alternative ways of financing and organizing such activities should be fully explored.

AGENDA ITEM 83

Personnel questions (*continued*):*

(a) Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (A/7745, A/C.5/L.992 and Add.1)

6. Mr. GHERAB (Director of Personnel) said he wished to discuss with the Committee some of the problems which the Office of Personnel had to face in implementing General Assembly resolution 2480 A (XXIII). The resolutions of the General Assembly and the recommendations of the Fifth Committee called for an improvement in the geographical distribution of the Secretariat staff under three headings: between States, between regions, and within each region. The Office of Personnel was making every effort to slow down recruitment from over-represented countries and to increase the number of staff from under-represented countries. The closest attention was paid to any circumstance which might tend to increase the over-representation of one particular Member State, and all units involved in recruitment had been asked to take into account in all cases the need to avoid increasing over-representation without good and sufficient reason. Constant efforts had also been made to attract candidates from the under-represented countries; in that connexion he wished to appeal once again for the full co-operation of Member States, without which the Office of Personnel could not hope to succeed in achieving equitable geographical representation within the Secretariat.

7. In dealing with both under-representation and over-representation, however, certain problems arose and certain choices had to be made; the Office of Personnel tried to approach them in the spirit of the relevant General

Assembly resolutions. One difficulty was the need to enable the Secretariat services to maintain or improve the quality of their work, which meant that certain posts could not be left vacant for too long. At the same time, the Secretariat had to be renewed by the recruitment of young and well-qualified staff, and where very difficult or responsible posts had to be filled quickly, qualifications were sometimes the main criterion in the selection of candidates. All those factors had to be considered in conjunction with the need for equitable geographical distribution, even if they did not actually conflict with the principle.

8. Another problem was that of competition, which made recruitment for certain posts difficult. That problem was affecting the flow and quality of recruitment to an increasing extent and was particularly acute in the economic sector.

9. Finally, the policy defined by the Fifth Committee and adopted by the General Assembly compelled the Office of Personnel to make certain choices every day, for example between inter-State and interregional distribution. Sometimes, for a particular post, the only way of improving the interregional balance was to upset the inter-State balance. A similar choice might have to be made between distribution within a region or a regional organization and over-all distribution among all Member States. An improvement in the balance within a regional economic commission, for example, could affect the world balance and thus necessitate adjustments elsewhere. Furthermore, the often urgent need of a regional organization for staff with a knowledge of the region could tend to delay the restoration of the balance within that organization.

10. The General Assembly had emphasized the importance of the equitable geographical distribution of high-level posts, but the balance within one particular area could not be adjusted without affecting the over-all balance, and conversely. The Office of Personnel therefore had to try to harmonize the whole and constantly check the tendencies towards imbalance which arose naturally from progress towards a balance.

11. Another related problem was that of the choice between permanent and temporary appointments. It was sometimes necessary to increase the number of temporary staff, either because it was impossible for the time being to avoid recruiting a national of an over-represented country, or because a national of an under-represented country could not be recruited in any other way. The need for equitable geographical distribution thus had to be considered in conjunction with the need for distribution of temporary and permanent contracts.

12. If the Secretariat was to have the best possible staff and to retain the confidence of the Member States, and if the limited resources available for international co-operation were to be used to the best advantage, an effective recruitment programme must be devised. He himself would make every effort to establish a long-term recruitment plan which would result in the best possible distribution of staff as soon as possible, but the direction and results of his efforts would depend largely on the recommendations of the Fifth Committee. In order to obtain first-hand information about the needs of the main services and organs of the

* Resumed from the 1325th meeting.

Secretariat, and to benefit by any suggestions which they might have to offer, he proposed to visit some of them in person in the course of the coming year. Plans for any changes or improvements in its methods which the Office of Personnel might consider necessary would be submitted to the General Assembly for its approval in 1970. He added that his Office would be glad to receive proposals and suggestions from members of the Fifth Committee, and would give them the closest attention.

13. Mr. BEAULNE (Canada) drew attention to the statement made by his delegation at the previous session (1281st meeting) that to recognize the principle of official languages was to accept their use in practice and the consequences that involved and that, while taking a pragmatic attitude towards the problems to be solved, it was necessary to accept the costs their solution entailed and to seek machinery capable of preserving the efficiency of the body being managed. His delegation attached great importance to that principle and had therefore taken an active part in the drafting of General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII). The language training programme was the most effective tool available to the Secretary-General for the implementation of that resolution. The delegations of French-speaking Member States had asked his delegation to express the hope that further progress would be made towards ensuring a more equitable use of French in the United Nations. He understood the difficulties in recruitment and staff training, however, and commended the Secretariat on its efforts to correct the imbalance. However, those efforts must be maintained in order to attain the desired objective as quickly as possible. The implementation of resolution 2480 B (XXIII) was a question of the highest priority and his delegation would be interested to hear the views of the Secretary-General concerning the adequacy of resources, both in personnel and equipment, available for the training programme.

14. Mr. BERGAOUI (Tunisia) asked the Director of Personnel to convey to the Secretary-General his delegation's satisfaction at the efforts made to implement resolution 2480 A (XXIII). There appeared to have been some progress towards a better geographical distribution of staff and he hoped that the Secretariat would continue its efforts to improve the balance between the various geographical and linguistic groups.

15. Mr. YUNUS (Pakistan) asked for clarification as to how the degree of over-representation of a country was calculated. He noted that normally it was calculated by multiplying the mid-point of the desirable range by 2. According to paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report (A/7745), the system of desirable ranges for each country and region was a function of three variables: membership in the Organization, population and contribution to the budget; yet in the annexes to that report the mid-point of the desirable ranges related only to membership in the Organization and contribution to the budget, while the population reserve was shown separately. He wondered how the population factor was reflected in the calculation of the over-representation of a country. Furthermore, his delegation believed that it was not the representation of a country which was in question, but the representation of a nationality.

AGENDA ITEM 74

Budget estimates for the financial year 1970 (continued)
(A/7606, A/7608, A/7710, A/7726, A/7749, A/7767, A/7769, A/7770, A/C.5/1230, A/C.5/1231 and Corr.1 and 2, A/C.5/1233, A/C.5/1234, A/C.5/1245, A/C.5/1248, A/C.5/1249, A/C.5/1253, A/C.5/1254/Rev.1, A/C.5/L.990, A/C.5/L.993, A/C.5/L.1002)

*Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses (continued)** (A/7726)

16. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the statements that he and the Controller had made at the Committee's 1326th and 1325th meetings, respectively, said that discussions had now taken place between the Controller and the Advisory Committee and he was in a position to explain to the Committee how the proposed inquiry could be conducted in the manner in which the system for meeting unforeseen and extraordinary expenses proposed by the Advisory Committee would have worked, had it been in force. He stressed, however, that requests relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses in 1970 would continue to be governed by the existing procedure.

17. For the purposes of the proposed inquiry, it would be assumed that the budget would include a contingency line of \$300,000. Each time the Secretary-General sought the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to enter into commitments initially under the terms of the General Assembly resolution on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, he would indicate, for purposes of information only, first, whether he would have been able, had the proposed new procedure been in force, to certify that the proposed expenditure was in the nature of an emergency and therefore could not be deferred without serious detriment to the United Nations; and, secondly, whether the necessary finance could be obtained by transfers within existing appropriations. That would cover all cases of "unforeseen new expenses" and some of the "unforeseen related expenses", to use the proposed new definitions. Furthermore, to deal with the balance of unforeseen related expenses, the Secretary-General would be requested to inform the Advisory Committee, at the earliest possible opportunity, of all cases of anticipated over-expenditure, for reasons such as unexpected increases in costs (including wages and post adjustment), or a higher level of activity; in each case the Secretary-General would indicate whether the extra funds could be obtained by transfers between budget sections. At the end of the ten-month period the total picture would be compared with the Secretary-General's report on supplementary estimates and that comparison would show to what extent the proposed procedure differed in its effect from the one currently in use.

18. It had been suggested that one year was too short a period to allow for a meaningful comparison; he would prefer not to take a definite position on that point until the results for 1970 had become known and hoped that such a course would find support.

19. Mr. YUNUS (Pakistan) said that with regard to the procedures proposed by the Advisory Committee, his

* Resumed from the 1326th meeting.

delegation had taken the view that the certification by the Secretary-General that deferment of any expenditure would be a serious detriment to the United Nations, involved the principle of the sovereign capacity of Member States. What was envisaged now, however, was an inquiry rather than the proposed procedures themselves. He asked that the text of the statement which had just been made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be made available to

members of the Committee and that they should be allowed time for consultations.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the text would be made available to those delegations which were interested.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.