

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRSON (Belgium)

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)
(A/34/6 and Add.1, A/34/7)

First reading (continued)

Section 27 - Public information

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was proposing that the Secretary-General's estimate for the Department of Public Information be reduced from \$43,894,800 to \$43,508,300 - a reduction of \$386,500.
2. He recalled that, in its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1978-1979, the Advisory Committee had requested the Secretary-General in future to provide information on the totality of requirements for public information activities within the United Nations. The Advisory Committee noted that the document submitted by the Secretary-General did not give that information, and it reiterated its request (para. 27.2) with regard to future budget submissions.
3. The Advisory Committee explained in several paragraphs of its report why it was recommending a reduction in the Secretary-General's estimate. In paragraph 27.4, ACABQ explained why it recommended against the reclassification of a General Service post to the P-1 level. In paragraph 27.8 of his proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General indicated that the responsibilities of the post to be reclassified would be redistributed among the other General Service staff. The fact that such a redistribution was considered possible therefore demonstrated that the post in question had not been essential. In addition, the Advisory Committee considered that the reasons given for the creation of a new P-1 post were not entirely convincing. It was therefore recommending against the request in paragraph 27.8.
4. As stated in paragraph 27.6, representatives of the Secretary-General had agreed with the Advisory Committee that the amount of \$20,300 for external printing under executive direction and management should have been included in the estimates for the Press and Publications Division. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the amount should be absorbed from within the appropriations for that Division.
5. In paragraphs 27.7 and 27.8 of its report, the Advisory Committee dealt with the estimates for staff travel and contractual services for the Radio and Visual Services Division. Since it believed that economies could be made if strict controls were exercised in those two areas, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$28,000 in the estimate for travel and a reduction of \$11,300 in the estimate for contractual services.
6. With regard to the replacement and acquisition of equipment, the Advisory Committee agreed with the Secretary-General and his representatives that, in order

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(Mr. Mselle)

to maintain a high standard of technical services in times of rapid technological change, the Department should have the necessary resources to modernize its equipment. It noted, however, that the resources requested for the biennium 1980-1981 were twice the amount appropriated for the current biennium. It therefore recommended that the estimate for the biennium 1980-1981 be reduced by \$150,400.

7. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the estimate for rental and maintenance of equipment required for the experimental phase of the computerized editing and typesetting of publications (para. 27.12). It noted the size of the estimate and, in view of the experimental nature of those operations, it was requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report on the computerization and word-processing experiments to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

8. Lastly, with regard to the Information Service, Geneva, ACABQ was recommending that the estimate for the acquisition of equipment be reduced slightly and that no additional General Service post be established.

9. Mr. AKASHI (Under-Secretary-General for Information) said that, having been a member of the Fifth Committee for five years, he had gained an insight into the problems facing the United Nations and into the vital work done by the Committee, which was not always fully appreciated. He would do his best to apply in practice the principles of management and administration which he had propounded in the Committee, however difficult that might prove to be.

10. The Committee might wish to consider the budget proposals for the Department of Public Information in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations public information policies and activities (A/34/574). There was growing recognition that the United Nations must enjoy greater public support and broader public understanding if it was to carry out the manifold tasks entrusted to it. The Secretariat was keenly aware of the emphasis placed by Member States on the need for more dynamic and stimulating information, without sacrificing objectivity and faithfulness to facts.

11. The Department of Public Information was currently reviewing its activities in the light of the debates in the Fifth Committee, the Special Political Committee, the Committee to Review United Nations Publication Information Policies and Activities and the latter's Ad Hoc Working Group. DPI was also implementing numerous information mandates given by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs and contained in the resolutions of the thirty-fourth session.

12. In order to do so, the Department must constantly be diligent in implementing its priority objectives, improving co-ordination among its activities and those of related parts of the Secretariat and systematically evaluating the effectiveness and impact of its activities. The Department intended to establish a more coherent system of planning, programming and evaluation of its activities, with full regard to the information activities of the rest of the Secretariat and those of agencies

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(Mr. Akashi)

in the United Nations system. It would then be better able to meet the request made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 27.2 of its report. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that much of DPI's information work did not lend itself to long-range planning and had to remain flexible to meet unforeseen and unanticipated demands.

13. He was a firm believer in the maximum utilization of available resources, and more particularly in staff redeployment. He intended to change the practice of over-specialization and to encourage lateral transfers and temporary reassignments. Intensive work was often better for staff morale and career prospects than under-employment. At the same time, when a certain threshold was exceeded in the volume of work, the quality of work was inevitably affected and neither absorption nor redeployment could provide a magic solution. That threshold had been reached in several areas of the Department, including press coverage. It was also true that many staff could be transferred only if there was a major, Secretariat-wide retraining effort.

14. The difficulty of assessing the effectiveness of information activities was often related to the absence of a quantifiable basis for determining resource needs. He hoped that DPI would soon be able to establish a more objective basis for its resource requests, for the information needs of special conferences, special years or public events called for by the General Assembly demanded an increasing proportion of DPI staff. The workload then became excessive in the press coverage, radio and visual services and in the services responsible for preparing background information and servicing the world-wide network of 60 United Nations Information Centres. In that connexion, the Committee would note the important report on the United Nations Information Centres just issued by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/379), on which the Secretary-General had submitted extensive comments (A/34/379/Add.1). The bodies dealing with United Nations information activities would study those documents in depth; the Fifth Committee would undoubtedly discuss the resource utilization aspect at its next session.

15. The budget request before the Committee represented the minimum required to carry out the programme of work entrusted to the Department. In the preparation of its budget, DPI had been faced with the dilemma of reconciling the Secretary-General's policy of a zero growth budget and the CPC's guidelines for "well below average" growth with the increasing workload created by the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-third session.

16. The Department's programme managers had in fact been unhappy with the cuts made by the Budget Division and felt uneasy at the further reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee. DPI would, however, try to use the resources placed at its disposal as economically as possible. It was faced with a challenge to its effectiveness, dedication and ingenuity.

(Mr. Akashi)

17. The Special Political Committee would soon commence its consideration of item 53 on questions relating to information. If it adopted resolutions which had financial implications, DPI would have to return to the Fifth Committee, through the Advisory Committee, with a request for a supplementary appropriation.

18. In his most recent annual report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General had expressed concern at the apparent inability of the United Nations to generate the kind of broad public support, confidence and understanding without which it could not achieve its objectives, and had called for renewed efforts to gain widespread support among the peoples of the world. He was sure that the Secretary-General's concerns were shared by the Member States. The Department of Information was mindful of its responsibilities in that area and would persist in its endeavours.

19. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) said that, after hearing the statements by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the Under-Secretary-General for Information, his delegation was fully convinced that the Committee should not begin debate on section 27 of the budget at that juncture. As a general rule, the Fifth Committee should consider the sections of the proposed programme budget only after the other Main Committees had completed their consideration of questions relating to those sections because those Committees often adopted resolutions with financial implications. In view of the drastic reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 27, and bearing in mind that the Special Political Committee was soon to consider the item on that question, his delegation proposed that the debate should be held over for the time being or at least left open. His delegation reserved the right to express its views after the Special Political Committee had completed its consideration of that item.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that he had made a rapid review of the progress of the Fifth Committee's work. The Committee had examined barely half the programme budget. It still had to consider a large number of documents, which would be issued shortly and would have to be commented on by the Advisory Committee. He therefore considered that the Committee could not finish its work in time if it continued to defer the discussion or the vote on the various sections of the programme budget. Of course he recognized that the Special Political Committee was shortly to consider agenda item 53, and that any resolutions it might prepare on the subject would not emerge for several days, or even several weeks. If the Fifth Committee postponed consideration of section 27 of the proposed programme budget, on which it already had the views of the Advisory Committee, it might well be unable to resume discussion of that section before the end of November. He therefore proposed that delegations should consider section 27 immediately, make comments on the section as a whole and on the three parts it contained, vote on the proposed programme budget for the section and then, if it wanted to, leave the item pending. In fact it was not even necessary to leave the item pending, since the sections of the budget as a whole were examined in other General Assembly

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(The Chairman)

Committees, and at the end of the financial year, the Fifth Committee had to consider a very large number of statements of financial implications. The Committee should therefore examine the proposed programme budget under section 27, together with the comments of the Advisory Committee, and take the necessary decisions. It could decide on any statements of financial implications concerning the section when they came before it.

21. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) said that his delegation was quite ready to co-operate in expediting the work, but in the present case it was not a question of procedure but of substance. Many delegations were not satisfied with the proposals submitted by the Secretary-General in section 27 because they were too faithful a reflection of the proposals made in 1978 by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). The Advisory Committee's recommendations only strengthened the misgivings of those delegations. His delegation was convinced that if the Committee waited for the Special Political Committee to finish its work on that section, it would be better able to take a decision on the comments of the Advisory Committee. That applied in particular to paragraph 27.5 of the Advisory Committee's report, which stated that in conformity with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 33/115 C, of 18 December 1978, the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities should submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the policies and activities of the public information services of the United Nations system. Since the future mandate and work programme of that Committee would depend on the decision that the Assembly took at the thirty-fourth session, it was not possible to decide yet what staff the Committee might eventually need. Consequently the Advisory Committee recommended that the decision to convert the two posts in question should be deferred. The Tunisian delegation considered that it was difficult to take a decision on such a hypothetical proposal, and therefore proposed that the Committee should consider section 27 without, however, taking a vote at the present stage, so that when the time came the decision could be taken with full knowledge of the facts.

22. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that at the thirty-third session, the Committee had not been able to finish its work in time, which had led to a wholly abnormal situation. Now, while some sections of the proposed programme budget had been examined, it had not been possible to conclude that examination because of the attitude of some delegations. Any delegation was free to express its doubts or misgivings about particular items of the agenda, but the work must proceed nevertheless. Otherwise there would be no need for the Fifth Committee until all the other Committees had completed their work. The Soviet delegation therefore supported the Chairman's proposal, provided that the Committee could revert if necessary to the items still pending.

23. Mr. SWEGER (Sweden) supported the stand taken by the Tunisian delegation and considered that the Fifth Committee could not take a decision on section 27 until the Special Political Committee had concluded its consideration of the relevant item.

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24. Mr. PAL (India) thought that any decision on section 27 should be postponed. The question of information was a very controversial matter even in the Special Political Committee, where even the negotiating group to consider the question had not been able to reach agreement. He therefore proposed that the Fifth Committee should wait until positions crystallized, and added that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, the views expressed in the Special Political Committee, the comments of the Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget were all in disagreement on the information problem.

25. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) said that he was inclined to support the position taken by the Chairman, since he considered that it would always be possible to return to the question if and when the Secretary-General submitted revised estimates on that section.

26. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that the Committee should continue consideration of section 27, since in fact all the sections in the proposed programme budget related to questions that were also before other main Committees of the General Assembly. With respect to paragraph 27.5 of the Advisory Committee's report, in which it recommended deferring the decision to convert two temporary posts in the Department of Information (New York) into established posts, he thought that the Advisory Committee could take a more clear-cut decision when it examined either the revised estimates or any eventual requests for additional appropriations, or even when it considered the proposed programme budget on second reading.

27. Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) said that the question before the Committee was not simply a procedural point but, as the representative of Tunisia had said, a substantive question involving the interests of a group of States belonging to the Group of 77. It was impossible to take a decision on the section without knowing what decision the Special Political Committee was going to take. Even the question of the building of a new cafeteria had been postponed three times at the thirty-third session. The problem of information, which concerned 95 countries, deserved at least as much attention.

28. Referring to subparagraph (c) of rule 119 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, he formally proposed the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion.

29. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that he opposed the motion by Guinea. However, he added that the section under consideration was the only one on which it might be appropriate to postpone the vote. Experience showed that revised estimates were only additions to the budget, whereas any redeployment of resources or any question of economy could be considered only in the context of the programme budget as a whole.

30. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) and Mr. MARTORELL (Peru) supported the motion by Guinea and said that it was pointless to take a decision that might have to be drastically revised.

31. The motion by the representative of Guinea was adopted by 55 votes to 19, with 23 abstentions.

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Income section 2. General income (continued)

32. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to a question by the Tunisian delegation, said that he would explain certain reductions shown in table 2.4 of the proposed programme budget (A/34/6, vol. II, p. 488). The amount approved for 1978-1979 under the heading of telecommunication services appeared high in comparison with the estimates for 1980-1981 because it included sums that represented internal transfers between sections. In the interest of sound practice, the accounting presentation had been changed. Secondly, the reduction of \$114,000 in income under the heading of services rendered by the New York Computing Centre was attributable to the fact that in the initial forecasts for 1978-1979, the income of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund had been overestimated and amounted to \$413,000 instead of \$680,000. Lastly, the reduction in income from reimbursement of reproduction and distribution of documents by the United Nations Office at Geneva was due to the fact that GATT had left the premises that it had occupied at the Geneva headquarters. The Advisory Committee, in paragraph IS2.10 of its report, gave detailed data on the reduced production of documents that could be expected as a result of GATT's transfer.

33. Replying to a question from the representative of Tunisia concerning the possibility of establishing a special account for sums received by the United Nations from other organizations within the United Nations system, he recalled that under financial rule 106.3 it was the Secretary-General who was responsible for taking that kind of decision. It was true that a special account had long existed for payments from UNDP, the most important partner of the United Nations. It was used for payments for services rendered by the United Nations, such as those relating to telegrams, the diplomatic pouch, medical services and the processing of salary statements on behalf of UNDP.

34. With regard to the sale of television programmes, which it was estimated would yield the Organization \$1,100,000 in 1980-1981, he recalled that the figures for such sales had been \$929,000 in 1976-1977 and \$544,000 in 1978, while for the current year they were estimated at only \$425,000.

35. In reply to the representative of Belgium, who had noted that the International Trade Centre budget under section 16 showed a reduction in resources, though income section 2 did not show any amount offsetting the reduction, he explained the provision governing the financing of the Centre by UNCTAD and GATT. The proposed programme budget of the Secretary-General mentioned only amounts provided by the United Nations to help cover the Centre's budgetary deficit. Those amounts did not include funds for payment of salaries to staff members or rents for the Centre, and there was no reason for a reduction in the resources allocated to the Centre to be indicated under the income figures.

36. He agreed with the representative of Belgium that the deficit from the operation of the car park of the International Trade Centre was anomalous, as the Advisory Committee had noted in paragraph 16.10 of its report. It was probably due to an under-assessment in the amount traditionally charged to those using the facility.

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(Mr. Begin)

37. As the representative of New Zealand had observed, a factual error in income section 2, in table 2.3 of the English version of the proposed programme budget, should be corrected to bring the figures given for the Economic Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa) into line with the other versions, which gave the right figures. In reply to the representative of the Philippines, who had asked what procedures were followed in selling used equipment, he explained that there was in the Secretariat a Property Survey Board consisting of one representative of the Office of General Services, one representative of the Office of Legal Affairs and one representative of the Office of Financial Services. The Board was responsible for writing off equipment and for procedures for selling it. The Office of General Services was responsible for actual sales, calling for bids and considering the offers made.

38. As the representative of Tunisia had noted, miscellaneous income estimates were less than half of those approved for 1978-1979; that was because during the previous biennium the Secretariat had advanced \$294,000 to the International Fund for Agricultural Development at the time of its establishment. That amount had been appropriated under expenditure section 1 for the World Food Council and as it should be refunded before the end of the biennium under consideration, it was offset by entering an equivalent sum under the income heading. Thus, to assess the real trend in "Miscellaneous Income", the sum should be deducted from the amount approved in 1978-1979.

39. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services), replying to the question by the delegation of Pakistan as to what bank interest the Organization might hope to receive if all Member States paid their contributions at the beginning of the year, said that he could only indicate an order of magnitude by using different hypotheses. If it was assumed that the budget amounted to \$500,000 per annum, and that one twelfth of contributions were made in the month of January, one twelfth in the month of February and the balance on the first of March, that the Organization's expenditures were spread out regularly over the year, and finally that the rate of interest paid by the banks remained at a constant 14 per cent, then the interest yielded by contributions might amount to some \$22 million per year, or \$44 million per biennium.

40. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked whether the number of users of the New York Computing Service was expected to increase or decrease.

41. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) said that a slight increase might be expected.

42. The estimate of \$17,148,700 recommended by the Advisory Committee under income section 2 was approved in first reading without a vote.

43. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that it was the first time the Advisory Committee had recommended an increase.

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44. Mr. SERBANESCU (Romania), noting a stagnation if not a falling off in certain revenue-producing activities, considered that, as in the past, the Secretariat and the Joint Inspection Unit should investigate ways and means of extending such activities and improving their effectiveness.
45. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said he shared the concern of the representative of Romania. Two considerations should be borne in mind, however: on the one hand, the need to increase the revenue of the United Nations and on the other, respect for the latter's image and dignity. An acceptable compromise appeared to have been reached, but within that compromise the search for ways of increasing income would be continued.
46. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said he would like to know if the reduced income under garage operations estimated for 1980-1981 was a result of the work currently being carried out in that part of the United Nations complex and if so, whether it would be temporary.
47. Mr. DE FACQ (Belgium) noted that there was no established post given in table 3.3 for the souvenir shop and the Gift Centre. He asked whether the staff were on the United Nations payroll and whether the income indicated was net of staff costs.
48. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to one question from the representative of Italy, said that the reduction in income from the operation of the garage was temporary and would last as long as the construction work was going on.
49. With regard to the staff of the souvenir shop and the Gift Centre, about whom the representative of Belgium asked a question, the Gift Centre had been operated until 1978 by the United Nations Co-operative. Since it had run at a deficit, the Gift Centre had been leased to the contractor operating the souvenir shop and the results since then had been positive.
50. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) asked what basis was used to calculate the commission paid to the contractor operating the catering services, the operation of which was entirely satisfactory.
51. Mr. de ANGELIS (Chief, Commercial Management Service), replying to the question from the representative of Tunisia, said that the contractor operating the catering services received a commission of 1 per cent of the gross revenue, with a minimum of \$23,000 and a maximum of \$27,000. Thus, on a total annual revenue of about \$4,000,000, his commission was \$18,000 for the catering services and \$9,000 for the souvenir shop, whose revenue was about \$1.2 million.
52. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) said he found it surprising that the revenue for the services to visitors in New York, indicated in the table on page 182 of the Advisory Committee's report, was lower in 1978-1979 than in 1976-1977, while at the same time in paragraph IS3.19 of that report more visitors were forecast for 1978-1979 than there had been during the preceding biennium.

53. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) pointed out that in the performance report on the budget, there would be an appreciable increase in the amount of income initially estimated under that heading since the results had exceeded expectations.

The estimate \$11,785,900 recommended by the Advisory Committee under income section 3 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 23. Human rights

54. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee, recognizing the importance that Member States attached to the question of human rights, had recommended approval of the total amount requested by the Secretary-General in section 23.

55. Mr. DENIS (France) felt that the general presentation of the budget was quite misleading, in that, under each section, the estimate was compared with the revised appropriation for the preceding biennium, which in certain cases made for an apparent reduction in the resources requested. It would therefore be preferable to compare the estimate with the initial appropriation for the preceding biennium.

56. Mr. SVEGER (Sweden) said that the Division of Human Rights had a complex and vital role to play in monitoring the implementation of the various Conventions adopted in that field. In the belief that strengthening the resources of the Division was a matter of importance, his delegation, which gave priority to the question of human rights, would have been ready to approve a larger appropriation than the one requested by the Secretary-General in section 23.

57. Mr. LÖSCHNER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the task of the United Nations in the field of human rights went beyond the protection of minorities and the struggle against racism and racial discrimination to encompass the free circulation of ideas on a global scale. Despite the increased workload of the Division of Human Rights, the Secretary-General had succeeded in submitting a modest estimate whose approval was recommended by the Advisory Committee. His delegation therefore accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

58. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said he shared the views expressed by the representatives of Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany. The human rights field indeed, deserved the greatest attention and his delegation consequently approved of the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General under section 23.

59. On another matter, he believed, like the representative of France, that from a strictly budgetary point of view the presentation of the budget left something to be desired.

60. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said his delegation had indicated on other occasions the importance that it attached to the question of human rights. With regard to the submission of the budget, paragraph 23.14 of the proposed programme budget stated that all the professional work-months requested for 1980-1981 would be

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(Mr. Abraszevski, Poland)

deployed to programme elements which had been in progress in 1978-1979 and which would continue in 1980-1981. At the same time a considerable redeployment of those resources among the subprogrammes was envisaged. He would like to know how many professional posts or work-months would be redeployed among the subprogrammes. In the future, he would appreciate more details on the redeployment of resources, a question to which his delegation, like the Secretary-General, attached great importance.

61. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) requested clarification concerning the feasibility study mentioned in paragraph 23.22. The study had been carried out in 1979 with a view to providing computer services to the Communications Unit of the Division of Human Rights. The paragraph he had mentioned indicated that the review of the results of the study had not yet been completed. Might the study show that the workload of the Communications Unit could be reduced?

62. Mr. VAN BOVEN (Director, Division of Human Rights), replying to the question from the representative of Poland, explained that during the current biennium, as a result of on-the-spot fact-finding missions which the Division had had to carry out, the Division had temporarily redeployed the services of two staff members under subprogramme 3 to the advisory services it had provided under subprogramme 1 (Implementation of international instruments and established United Nations procedures in the field of human rights). Quite recently, again, the Division had been called upon to undertake a mission in an African country for which it had also had to transfer temporarily to subprogramme 2 for four months the services of two staff members normally deployed under subprogramme 1. Moreover, the Division intended in the future, whenever there was a call for concentrated efforts to carry out certain investigations or missions of that type, to redeploy staff temporarily from one service to another.

63. Regarding the clarification requested by the representative of Japan, he said that a first feasibility study had been carried out and had led to the conclusion that the use of a computer, especially to handle the 40,000 to 50,000 communications received by the Division each year, was, indeed, feasible. There would naturally be certain specific requirements to be observed to protect the confidentiality of those communications, and provision would therefore have to be made for safeguards of that kind. Furthermore, there was no doubt that initially, when all the data to be fed into the computer memory were being gathered, there would be a resultant increase in the workload. However, the use of a computer would in the long run allow the Division to carry out the tasks entrusted to it more efficiently and to perform activities it had not previously been able to undertake for lack of sufficient staff.

64. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), responding to the concern expressed by the French delegation, said that after a comparison was made between the appropriations for 1978-1979 and those requested for 1980-1981, the proposed programme budget clearly indicated the rate of real growth so as to avoid the risk of drawing hasty and erroneous conclusions from a simple comparison between the appropriations requested for the coming biennium and those for the previous financial year. The greatest care had thus been taken to give delegations as accurate an idea as possible of the real increase in resources requested by the Secretariat for each section of the proposed programme budget.

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65. Mr. KHAMIS (Algeria) said he was somewhat disappointed to find that the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General for subprogramme 4 on implementation of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination represented only 8.5 per cent of total programme resources. He attached a great deal of importance to all the activities relating to the Decade and would have liked to see more resources allocated to that subprogramme, for the question of racism and racial discrimination lay at the heart of most of the debates held at the United Nations. At all events, it was to be hoped that the next World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination would be prepared with sufficient care to ensure its success. Reference was made in programme element 4.1 to the organization in 1980 and 1981 of a regional seminar on action against racism and racial discrimination. His delegation wished to know whether that meant that there would be a single regional seminar for the two years of the biennium or that there would be a number of different seminars, i.e. one for each region.

66. Mr. VAN BOVEN (Director, Human Rights Division), replying to the observations by the Algerian delegation, said that the figure of 8.5 per cent that had been cited represented only part of the activities carried out by the Human Rights Division in combating racism and racial discrimination, since that campaign could not be dissociated from the rest of the Division's programme. With regard to the organization of seminars on action against racism and racial discrimination, he stated that a seminar had already been held in Geneva for the region of the Economic Commission for Europe and that arrangements were being made to organize a similar seminar in Africa for the ECA region in 1980 and another for the ECLA region in 1981. It was also expected that other seminars for the ESCAP and ECWA regions would be organized before the end of the Decade.

67. Mr. KHAMIS (Algeria) said that his delegation, while aware of the considerable efforts being made by the Director of the Human Rights Division to combat racial discrimination, wished to stress that, in view of the very great importance of the Decade, the Secretariat should spare no effort to implement the resolutions that had been adopted by the Conference held in Geneva on that matter in 1978. It was for that reason that his delegation continued to believe that the percentage of resources requested for the implementation of those resolutions could have been higher, and it therefore hoped that that percentage would in fact be increased in the next proposed programme budget.

68. An appropriation in the amount of \$8,739,500 under section 23 was approved in first reading without a vote.

69. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, although his delegation had not opposed the approval by the Committee in first reading of the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 23, it nevertheless wished to reaffirm that, as a matter of principle, it was against the systematic tendency of the Secretariat to increase its permanent staff, thus causing an unjustified and unreasonable growth of the Organization's budget.

Section 16. International Trade Centre

70. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) read out a letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Director-General of GATT on

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(Mr. Ruedas)

24 October 1979 in which it was stated that the GATT Committee on Budget Finance and Administration had approved the proposal to reclassify the post of Director of the Centre to Assistant Secretary-General, whereas, in paragraph 16.7 of its report (A/34/7), the Advisory Committee had stated that it was unable to support that proposal. The letter called for two observations: firstly, with regard to the final paragraph in which the Director-General of GATT expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would feel able to continue to support his own proposal before the Fifth Committee, he (the Assistant Secretary-General) could confirm that once the Secretary-General made a proposal, it was his custom to stand by it. Secondly, it would inevitably be asked what would happen if the Fifth Committee did not go along with the GATT Committee's decision to approve the reclassification. In his view, the approval of both of those deliberative bodies had to be obtained before the reclassification could be implemented, and therefore, if either body failed to approve the reclassification, the grade of the post of Director of the Centre would remain unchanged.

71. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) said that like many other delegations, especially those from developing countries, his delegation attached the greatest importance to the extremely useful services which the Centre had rendered over the years to many developing countries, particularly in connexion with the training of experts and related activities. In view of the rapid expansion of the Centre's activities, his delegation was officially proposing to the Fifth Committee that the post of Director of the Centre should be reclassified from D-2 to Assistant Secretary-General. He was convinced that that reclassification would facilitate the task of the Director, whose functions required him to deal with many high officials within the United Nations system.

72. Mr. DENIS (France) said that, with all due respect for the Director-General of GATT, he was somewhat surprised to note the pressure to which the latter was endeavouring to subject the Fifth Committee, and he wished to point out that each was master in his own house. His delegation fully supported the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee.

73. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) observed that the request to reclassify the post of Director of the Centre to Assistant Secretary-General was a result of the joint efforts of two bodies, namely the Centre itself and GATT. It was partly for that reason that his delegation was inclined to support the proposal that the representative of Egypt had just made. The special session to be held by the General Assembly in 1980 was close at hand and would unquestionably increase further the responsibilities of the Director of the Centre; it would be logical to recognize that fact and grant the Director the rank to which he was entitled.

74. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) said that his delegation fully appreciated the services provided by the Centre, especially in connexion with trade and assistance to the developing countries. His delegation had welcomed the joint initiative taken by the United Nations and GATT in establishing the Centre, in which his country saw the prospect of a merger that would make it possible to extend the functions of the United Nations into the sphere of trade in a much more effective manner.

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(Mr. Ayadhi, Tunisia)

75. His delegation was therefore in favour of the bonds of co-operation that had been established between the Organization and GATT through the Centre, which was carrying out extremely useful programmes. With regard to the request of the Secretary-General and the Director-General of GATT to reclassify the post of Director of the Centre to Assistant Secretary-General, the immediate reaction of his delegation was to turn to the Advisory Committee, which, in that particular case, had taken a decision which, in his letter to the Secretary-General, the Director-General of GATT had described as having been made "without giving reasons." The Chairman of the Advisory Committee should therefore acquaint the Fifth Committee with the reasons that had led the Advisory Committee to oppose the reclassification, since it was unthinkable that the Advisory Committee could have taken such a serious decision without first objectively evaluating all the facts of the case. As had been rightly emphasized by the representative of France, there could be no question of the Fifth Committee being subjected to any form of outside influence and his delegation therefore could not express an opinion on the matter before hearing the point of view of the Advisory Committee.

76. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) associated himself with the observations made by the representative of Tunisia and said that, while the Committee should indeed study the matter, it would need explanations from the Advisory Committee before being able to take an impartial decision.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.