



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th 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 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)
(A/34/30 and Corr.1; A/C.5/34/CRP.8)

1. Mr. GOSS (Australia) said that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had been established in 1974 by resolution 3357 (XXIX) to perform a very important task: to develop a single unified international civil service, as set out in article 9 of its statute. His delegation strongly and unreservedly supported that provision and noted with pleasure the acceptance of the statute of the Commission by the International Atomic Energy Agency. His delegation was particularly pleased that ICSC had assumed responsibility under all the articles of its statute, although it still needed to develop detailed policies with regard to many of them. It should be recognized that the slowness in resolving some of the fundamental issues derived from the calls made on ICSC by various organizations and staff associations to rule on particular points relating to details of conditions of service. While questions relating to conditions of service were important, his delegation felt that the main function of ICSC was to establish the structure and career patterns for the whole of the United Nations system; it was thus to be hoped that ICSC would proceed as speedily as possible in developing that role. His delegation did not urge haste, for ICSC must build soundly, but it must take the necessary care to avoid delay and diversion. The work of ICSC must perforce involve the establishment of guidelines and policies to be applied by the United Nations and its agencies. His delegation expected those bodies to follow the policies and guidelines established by the Commission, which should prevail even in cases where they conflicted with current practices.

2. His delegation had therefore been most concerned to note in 1978 that first one, and subsequently two, of the specialized agencies had not implemented the decision taken by ICSC concerning the General Service staff in Geneva. His delegation firmly supported the request addressed to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in resolution 33/119 (part I, para. 2) to study the feasibility of establishing a single administrative tribunal for the entire common system and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. Indeed, as long as the final authority on administrative matters was divided, there was a possibility that the common system might be seriously compromised. His delegation therefore regretted that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination was apparently not going to submit a recommendation on the matter at the current session. His delegation strongly reiterated the request addressed to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination so that at the next session the General Assembly could adopt a final solution to the problem.

3. With regard to the repatriation grant, his delegation supported the proposal submitted by the United States delegation whereby in future the repatriation grant would be paid only to staff members who were indeed repatriated. That proposal, if adopted, would override the legal opinion referred to in paragraph 24 of the report of ICSC.

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(Mr. Goss, Australia)

4. As indicated in the note by the Secretariat (A/C.5/34/CRP.8), staff rule 109.5 had been reported to and noted by the General Assembly, which must accordingly have deemed the rule to be consistent with the intent and purpose of the staff regulation. His delegation noted, however, that nowhere in the document was it stated that the repatriation grant was payable whether or not the staff member was repatriated. Staff rule 109.5 (f) indeed gave the opposite impression, in that it gave the Secretary-General discretion to pay a grant to a staff member who at the time of separation resided in his home country. In effect, the rule appeared to permit the payment of travel costs of, for example, a United States staff member whose home was in Honolulu and who, after long service in Tokyo, had been transferred and served for a few years in New York prior to retirement. That in no way implied endorsement of the idea of paying a repatriation grant to a person who was not repatriated.

5. The legal opinion, in fact, appeared to assume that the repatriation grant was equivalent to something like the payment of travel costs on retirement. The term "repatriation", however, clearly signified a return to one's homeland. It was impossible to interpret the rule as meaning that the repatriation grant would be paid to any staff member who was entitled to be repatriated, irrespective of whether or not he was repatriated. For reasons of language, common sense and even law, the opinion given by the Office of Legal Affairs was wrong.

6. His delegation understood that ICSC must act on the basis of the legal advice given to it. However, the General Assembly could make its own law. It was important to follow common sense and restore the repatriation grant to its original function. The fact that in the past it had been incorrectly applied did not confer an unchangeable entitlement.

7. On the question of career and non-career service, his delegation supported the concept of a career service. It did not agree with the idea of an international civil service composed of people seconded to the United Nations or its agencies for short periods of time, since that would create an intergovernmental civil service. Moreover, such a step would destroy any possibility of continuity and eliminate any concept of a career international service dedicated to the wider tasks of the United Nations, since the loyalty of the staff would be to the country which was temporarily lending them to the United Nations. The concept of an international career service inevitably led to the concept of career development, not only for career staff but also for non-career staff, as indicated on pages 67 and 68 of the report of ICSC. However, in observing the operations of the United Nations and its agencies, one might wonder whether factors other than merit had come to acquire such weight in the appointment, in particular, of senior staff that it was very difficult for staff members joining the United Nations at the lower levels to make a career. Indeed, only in rare cases did someone joining the United Nations at the P-1 level rise to become Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General.

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(Mr. Goss, Australia)

8. For that reason, his delegation emphasized the need for ICSC to continue to study performance appraisal techniques. There were, admittedly, many problems in that area in a multicultural organization. However, if staff joining the United Nations were not offered adequate career opportunities, any incentive would disappear. His delegation therefore looked forward with great interest to the report on performance appraisal referred to in paragraph 228 of the report of ICSC. For that reason, too, his delegation viewed with concern the growing tendency to attach importance to irrelevant factors in promotion and the pressure exerted to secure particular jobs for nationals of particular countries. Such activities threatened the basis of an efficient international civil service in which the selection and promotion processes were based on merit.

9. His delegation also wished to stress that if a common system was to work it was essential that, as indicated in part I, paragraph 3, of resolution 33/119, the specialized agencies should not take, on matters of concern to the common system, positions conflicting with those which they took in the General Assembly. The prospect of avoiding a conflict between decisions taken in different areas would increase if the policy-making bodies concentrated on making policy and did not go into detail; that was the role of the Secretary-General or of bodies such as ICSC. The regrettable tendency to lay down precise detail was partly due to the lack of response to the more general policy guidelines laid down. Responsiveness to such guidelines was needed if legislative bodies were not to be tempted to lay down detailed guidelines which infringed on the role of other bodies. However, legislative bodies themselves must resist the temptation to go into too much detail because they were not in a position to take well-informed decisions and because it took them away from their proper task.

10. Lastly, it should be pointed out that the post adjustment system was working very badly. That was apparently due to the fact that it used exchange rates which exaggerated the amount of remuneration in countries whose currency had appreciated considerably in relation to the dollar. It also appeared that, as a result of the system, staff members in the United States and perhaps in some other areas were underpaid. A study of the post adjustment system showed that the net remuneration in Geneva was some 65 per cent higher than that in New York. For purposes of comparison, he had studied the difference in the remuneration of Australians working in New York and Geneva and, in round terms, he had found that in Geneva it was just over 12 per cent higher. There was therefore no doubt that the 65 per cent difference between the amounts paid by the United Nations in New York and Geneva overcompensated for the difference in the standard of living between the two duty stations.

11. It was for ICSC to determine the correct figure for the post adjustment, but it was clear that the current system was deficient and should be rectified. That was an urgent task, particularly if pension schemes involving the post adjustment system were being considered. At present, the post adjustment system was indeed part of the pension system since it included the weighted average of post adjustment (WAPA). The present system was full of anomalies and needed a thorough and urgent overhaul. His delegation urged ICSC to take the question up as a matter of priority.

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12. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation believed that the question of the international civil service had to be considered on the basis of the principle that an international organization was not a profit-making business enterprise. The United Nations had been created for the purpose of achieving the altruistic ideas to which all Member States aspired. His delegation accordingly attached very great importance to the work of ICSC and to its efforts to establish a unified system that would enable uniform criteria and methods to be applied to all staff members with due regard to any changes required for reasons of time and place.

13. With regard to pensionable remuneration and pension entitlements as elements of total remuneration (A/34/30, chap. III), his delegation supported the proposals in paragraph 46 of the report. In equity in the pension system was the product of fluctuations in the value of currencies, particularly the depreciation of the United States dollar, and of the inflation factor. In those circumstances the existing system did not provide an adequate degree of equity.

14. On the subject of the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories (A/34/30, chap. IV), his delegation supported the recommendation on grading equivalencies in paragraph 119.

15. His delegation supported the view of a number of delegations that the repatriation grant should be paid only to staff members who returned to their country of origin. It was inequitable for the United Nations to be paying huge sums to staff members who were not repatriated. The Organization was not a business enterprise.

16. With regard to post-secondary education, his delegation believed that any expenditure by expatriate staff members on post-secondary education for their children in the country of assignment should be borne by the parents or the students themselves. There were many people who worked and studied at the same time. The claim that the United Nations should subsidize such education was therefore surprising.

17. In considering the post adjustment account should be taken of all the factors to be used in classifying conditions of life and work in field duty station, as outlined in paragraph 117 of the ICSC report.

18. His delegation fully agreed with the stand taken by ICSC in paragraphs 219-227 of its report on the interrelationship of career development and job classification. The important thing in any organization was to carry out the programmed work, and competent staff were required to that end. Suitability was the main objective in job classification. In many cases, however, it was difficult to find competent staff members, and it was therefore necessary for the United Nations to offer attractive career prospects, particularly in the most important fields.

19. If, therefore, job classification was to fulfil its purpose, it had to be carried out in such a way that posts that were difficult to fill were made attractive. For that reason his delegation unreservedly supported paragraph 219 of

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(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

the report in which the Commission stated that the effect of classification would be negative in personnel management systems in which its purpose was misunderstood. One of those negative effects, as was stated in paragraph 225 of the report, was that job classification could lead to results which might impede career development. It was worth mentioning, as an example of such negative effects, that in 1978 a job classification exercise had led to a reduction of the number of posts in conference services; the sector worst affected had been the language services' staff, despite the fact that their work demanded very specialized knowledge and that the languages services were of paramount importance to the United Nations. His delegation, therefore, also supported paragraph 226 of the ICSC report, which stated that any decision to modify grade relativities in order to promote career development might be guided by a number of considerations, the first of which was that "any reclassifications made should be justified on the basis of job structure rather than on individual considerations". That meant that the object should be to improve career prospects for an entire occupational group and not for specific individuals.

20. There were astonishing disparities within the United Nations in that sphere. In the report of the Joint Inspection Unit known as the "Bertrand report", which, as the Assistant Secretary-General for personnel services had pointed out, continued to be valid, it was stated that administrative staff and the staff of the language services were two major occupational groups. It was also stated in that report that 78 per cent of administrative professionals had no university degree, despite which such staff members occupied most of the posts at the P-5, D-1 and D-2 levels, whereas staff members of the language services, although they all had a university degree, and in many cases more than one, had no such opportunities since in practice the highest level they could reach was P-4; the D-1 level was only a dream and the D-2 level was completely inaccessible to them.

21. The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments had drawn attention at an earlier meeting to the lack of career prospects for the staff of the language services; his delegation believed that justice required that better career prospects should be available to those who had a higher educational level and it accordingly wanted ICSC to take those comments into account in its further efforts to establish a unified system that would serve the general interests of the Organization and staff members equally and would guarantee justice and equity for all.

22. Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany) said that he found it surprising that in the voluminous report of ICSC, leaving aside pensionable remuneration, there was only one minor proposal. He therefore suggested that ICSC should try to make its reports shorter and thereby more practical.

23. He wondered why the report of ICSC took as the base for its comparisons the highest-paid national civil service; although that was how the Noblemaire principle was traditionally applied, it had to be borne in mind that the contemporary situation was different from that prevailing at the time when that principle had been laid down, inasmuch as there were international civil service systems, such as the European Communities, that had large staffs and were competing with the United Nations for highly qualified staff. The Commission, if it wanted to preserve the

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(Mr. Schmidt, Federal
Republic of Germany)

traditional application of the Noblemaire principle, should adduce better reasons for excluding other international organizations from the comparison.

24. In the same context he asked what the relationship was between the study on "total compensation" mentioned in paragraph 99 of the ICSC report and the studies referred to in paragraph 130 on "a methodology permitting comparison of total remuneration".

25. On the subject of the post adjustment system, in general ICSC should have, in pursuance of section II, paragraph 2, of General Assembly resolution 33/119, examined the anomalies in that system, but that issue was not referred to in paragraphs 131 and 132 of the report, concerning the operation of the post adjustment system. Although pressure of time had been given as a reason for that, his delegation hoped that ICSC would undertake to deal with it as a matter of urgency. He found it surprising that the Commission had not mentioned the distortions that had emerged in the calculation of post adjustment as a result of the replacement of the fixed exchange rate system by fluctuating major currencies. That omission was all the more surprising in view of the fact that the approach to the question of income replacement was predicated upon the underlying idea that the post adjustment system reflected differences in purchasing power.

26. Another question that worried his delegation was the failure of ICSC to deal in its report with the issue of the consolidation of the post adjustment system; there might be arguments against that step but ICSC should at least describe them.

27. On the subject of grade equivalencies, his delegation was inclined to support the recommendation in paragraph 119 of the report. With regard to the repatriation grant, the major question in that connexion appeared to be acquired rights, because in order to protect acquired rights to the repatriation grant the interpretation that had been used in the past would have to be maintained. However, in the event that an unduly liberal interpretation had prevailed, to continue to use the same criterion would be tantamount to carrying the principle of the protection of acquired rights too far; his delegation therefore supported the view of the representative of the United States that the repatriation grant should be given only to those who really were repatriated.

28. His delegation commended the valuable work of ICSC on the subject of general service salaries. It was regrettable however that the survey for New York had not been finalized, even if that was due to factors outside the control of the Commission, and he hoped that it would be concluded in the very near future with the co-operation of the parties and within the framework of established procedures.

29. His delegation was also impressed by the work of ICSC under articles 13 and 14 of its Statute; it understood that priorities had to be established in order to give preference to the more urgent problems.

30. Mr. DOWSE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the action taken by ICSC under articles 13 and 14 of its Statute and its work on conditions of service in the field.

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(Mr. Dowse, United Kingdom)

31. With regard to the comparison to be made in application of the Noblemaire principle, he observed that the margin between United Nations remuneration and the remuneration of the comparator civil service had increased from 9.3 per cent in the preceding 12-month period to 13.9 per cent in the latest period (A/34/30, para. 103); his delegation agreed with the implicit opinion of ICSC that that fact did not call for any special action. It had also noted the conclusions of the grade-equivalency studies on the three highest United Nations grades which had been carried out by ICSC in response to the General Assembly's request in its resolution 33/119. In that connexion, his delegation shared the view that the United Nations salary system should not fluctuate according to factors resulting from domestic political considerations within the comparator country.

32. His delegation had further noted - generally with approval - the action taken by ICSC under article 12 of its Statute, in connexion with the adjustment of the salaries of General Service staff, and had recognized that the question of General Service salaries at London was the primary responsibility of the IMCO Council, and at Montreal that of the ICAO Council. Nevertheless, since the General Assembly had a co-ordinating role in the system, his delegation thought it appropriate to ask some questions concerning the ICSC recommendations relating to adjustments between the London and Montreal surveys.

33. With regard to London, the Commission had recommended that the United Kingdom Retail Price Index should be read every month and net salaries should be increased as of the first day of the month following the month during which it had reached or overtaken a level of 5 per cent above its level at the time of the preceding salary increase (A/34/30, para. 143). The IMCO Council had accepted that recommendation. The Commission had made a similar recommendation with regard to Montreal, which had not yet been examined by the ICAO Council. He wondered whether that principle of increasing General Service salaries every time the relevant price index rose by 5 per cent was universally applied throughout the United Nations system, and if so, what was the justification for such application, in the light of the fact that General Service salaries were based on a study of the best prevailing conditions at the duty station, whereas at London, for example, external employers did not employ such principles. If that principle was not used in all the organizations of the system, the rationale behind the non-uniformity should be explained.

34. With regard to the repatriation grant, his delegation, like that of the United States, did not agree with the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs. Although the wording of the Staff Regulation was somewhat ambiguous, it should be recognized that the grant in question was a repatriation grant, not a resettlement grant or an extra lump sum received on retirement. It could not be claimed that the repatriation grant should be paid in all cases, irrespective of whether or not the staff member in question returned to his country of origin. The grant should be given only to those who actually made use of their travel entitlement in order to return to their own country. His delegation would support the draft resolution to be submitted by the United States delegation, since it believed that that draft resolution reflected the correct interpretation of the Staff Rules and Regulations and that no acquired rights could be deemed to exist.

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(Mr. Dowse, United Kingdom)

35. In conclusion, he emphasized the importance his delegation attached to the work of ICSC as a major factor in the vital task of preserving and strengthening the United Nations system.

36. Mr. FERNANDEZ MAROTO (Spain) said that his delegation greatly appreciated the work done by the International Civil Service Commission, particularly in helping to achieve the desirable uniformity and equity in the system governing remuneration, regulation and career development for international civil servants.

37. With regard to the subject of pensionable remuneration, his delegation, while recognizing the great difficulty of the study of the problem and the consequent formulation of a recommendation, thought it regrettable that the work had not been done in the manner requested in General Assembly resolution 33/119, section II, paragraph 3. He hoped that efforts in that direction would be continued, co-ordinated with the work of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, so that a solution might be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

38. In chapter II of its report ICSC discussed the question of the repatriation grant; that question was referred to in General Assembly resolution 33/119, section IV, paragraph 4, which provided that the payment of the grant should be made conditional upon the presentation by the staff member of evidence of actual relocation, subject to the terms to be established by the Commission. On 6 April 1979, the Commission had promulgated those terms in a document issued under the symbol CIRC/GEN/39. In addition to measures in conformity with the mandate given in General Assembly resolution 33/119, that document also provided that "staff members already in service before 1 July 1979 shall retain the entitlement to repatriation grant ...". In connexion with that striking exception to the provisions of the rest of the document, his delegation wished to make it quite clear that the relevant Spanish word "repatria" was defined by the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy as "to return one to his homeland". Therefore his delegation shared the view of the ICSC members who, as stated in paragraph 24 of the Commission's report, had "questioned whether any acquired right could be said to exist to payment of the repatriation grant to a staff member who did not repatriate or relocate himself". His delegation did not understand the motivation for what was stated in the quoted paragraph concerning the conditions fixed by ICSC for the repatriation grant, regarding it as a partial distortion of the clear mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 33/119, section IV, paragraph 4, which required evidence of actual relocation, and believing that in the face of that unequivocal requirement there could be no distinction of retroactivity. It would therefore be grateful for an explanation, with all necessary details of the cases or circumstances that had, in the judgement of ICSC, necessitated an exception to the principle of General Assembly resolution 33/119, in order that it could judge the matter for itself and act accordingly.

39. In chapter VI of its report, ICSC described its work concerning the conditions of service of the Professional and higher grades; it was stated that the Commission had not been able to make progress in preparing a method for total remuneration and that therefore the comparison continued to be made on the basis previously approved by the General Assembly. His delegation believed that the problems of comparison

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(Mr. Fernandez Maroto, Spain)

in the remuneration of international civil servants were extraordinarily important for fixing equitable remunerations, and it therefore considered essential the conceptual fixing of a comparative base established as rigorously as possible, a goal towards whose speedy attainment the efforts of ICSC should be directed. The comparative base should be established according to a method that would make it possible to compare total remuneration, including such elements as pensions, insurance and other pecuniary benefits, as was correctly stated in paragraph 130 of the ICSC report. Furthermore, the comparative principles which implied an increase in remuneration should be applied with great care and caution, in order to avoid unjustifiable increases that might well be called inflationary. The increases decided upon should be consistent with the norms of distributive justice that must be met by a correct salary policy, without favouring or prejudicing the interests of the recipients, irrespective of their level of remuneration.

40. In paragraph 228 of its report, the Commission dealt with performance appraisal, a question which was of great importance, for although it was desirable to consider rights, benefits, career prospects and, in general, all questions relating to the obligations of international administrations towards their staff members, it was also proper to consider the other side, that of the services rendered by those civil servants to their organizations. Such appraisal had to be carried out through the establishment of qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques, which should be studied carefully and then applied in a coherent and effective manner. It would therefore be desirable to give the Fifth Committee a brief and concise account of the general lines of the plan mentioned in paragraph 228 of the ICSC report.

41. The Advisory Committee, in paragraphs 28.114 and 28.121 of its report (A/34/7), dealt with the budget appropriations for ICSC and recommended reductions amounting to \$153,800, which his delegation supported. Even with those reductions, ICSC funds would be increased by \$799,700, that is to say, by about 25 per cent over the revised appropriations for the current biennium. He hoped that that increase would be reflected in 1980 in the results of the Commission's work, which were to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

42. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the debate on agenda item 105 should be resumed on Wednesday, 21 November, since the Acting Chairman of ICSC would have to be absent, and he recommended that delegations should hold all the consultations necessary for the submission of proposals at that time.

43. The document circulated by the Australian delegation, comparing the salaries of the Professional staff at New York and at Geneva, was particularly impressive. The Secretariat had verified that the figures contained in the document were basically correct. Thus, it was found that the remuneration paid at Geneva was 64 to 67 per cent higher than that paid at New York and that the post adjustment paid at Geneva might be three times as high as that paid at New York to staff members of the same grade. The Fifth Committee had drawn the attention of ICSC many years earlier to that problem, which probably was the cause of various difficulties and claims.

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(The Chairman)

44. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the representatives of a certain trade union at Geneva had sent him some arrogant circulars declaring that if the post adjustment for Geneva was reduced, they would recommend a strike. It was essential to consider the matter seriously and to bear in mind that there was no lack of candidates for the posts at Geneva.

45. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) noted that, since the discussion on item 105 was to be interrupted for a week, the Acting Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission would have time to deal more thoroughly and in greater detail with the question of post adjustment.

AGENDA ITEM 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)
(A/34/6, A/34/7, A/34/38)

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of document A/34/618 concerning agenda item 73 (A/34/7/Add.6 and A/C.5/34/22)

46. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report (A/34/7/Add.6) on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of document A/34/618, noted that the Secretary-General's statement concerning the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution A/C.5/34/22 and Corr.1 and 2) estimated conference servicing costs at \$708,500 and the cost of other services at \$393,700. A detailed breakdown of non-conference costs was given in paragraph 4 of the Advisory Committee's report.

47. In paragraph 3 (e) and (f) of his statement, the Secretary-General indicated that, for the reasons given there, he was not requesting an additional appropriation estimated at \$39,400. Thus, the net additional resources being requested by the Secretary-General for non-conference costs amounted to \$354,300. The Advisory Committee had considered that request and submitted its comments in paragraphs 3 and 6 of its report, which also explained the reasons why it was recommending that the estimate be reduced to \$325,000, which should be included in section 23 of the proposed programme budget. Conference servicing requirements would be considered subsequently, in the context of the consolidated statement to be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session.

48. Mr. KHAMIS (Algeria) said that his delegation favoured approval of the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee. It was surprised to note, however, that, although the holding of the regional seminars and the relevant financial implications had been approved the preceding year, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 did not include estimates for those regional seminars. He asked the Secretariat to explain the reasons for that omission.

49. Nevertheless, since the Secretariat representatives were not able to reply to that question immediately, because they needed to assemble a series of data, his delegation agreed that the Secretariat could postpone its explanation until the following meeting and that the Fifth Committee could proceed to take a decision on the item under consideration, so as not to delay the work of the Third Committee.

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50. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked where it was planned to hold the seminar on effective measures to prevent transnational corporations and other established interests from collaborating with racist régimes in southern Africa.

51. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) replied that the seminar would be held in Geneva.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to report to the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee (A/34/618, para. 18), an appropriation in the amount of \$325,000 would be required under section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 and that the requirements under section 29 would be included in the consolidated statement of conference servicing requirements which was to be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of the current session.

53. It was so decided.

54. Mr. McMAHON (Ireland) said that the members of the European Economic Community had no objection to the consensus reached, which reflected their position as already stated in the Third Committee.

55. Miss MILGROM (Israel) said that, although her delegation realized the importance of the programme of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, it had in the Third Committee voted against the draft resolution referred to in documents A/C.3/34/L.9 and A/C.3/34/L.10. She also recalled that many delegations had objected to the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/3, which had recommended the draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly. Consequently, the Israeli delegation wished to place on record its serious reservations regarding the financial implications of the draft resolution.

56. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that his delegation had not participated in the vote on the draft resolution in the Third Committee for reasons which were well known and which had been explained in that Committee. If the proposal just adopted concerning the administrative and financial implications had been put to a vote, the United States delegation would not have participated in the vote.

First reading (continued)

Section 28 - Administration, Management and General Services (continued)

Subsection 28J - Staff training activities (Headquarters, Geneva and the regional commissions) (continued)

57. Mr. JASABE (Sierra Leone) expressed his delegation's complete confidence in the technical ability of the Advisory Committee and acknowledged the contribution made by that Committee but added that it was sometimes necessary to take political decisions, which required the co-operation and understanding of the members

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(Mr. Jasabe, Sierra Leone)

present. He referred to the clarifications provided at the preceding meeting by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services and recalled that, in connexion with paragraph 28J.15 of the proposed programme budget concerning professional studies and fellowships, it had been indicated that in the preceding biennium the funds provided under that heading had been used up by April 1979. The scope of activities in that field would be limited by a shortage of funds. In addition, the proposed programme budget did not take into account, under that heading, the effects of inflation in 1980 and 1981. With regard to paragraph 28J.25 of the proposed programme budget concerning consultants, it was necessary to bear in mind, in addition to the lack of staff with specialized knowledge in the Secretariat, the need to engage psychologists, in view of the complexity of examination techniques. Lastly, in connexion with paragraph 28J.31 of the proposed programme budget, concerning the rental of examination halls, he noted that it should not be necessary to rely on the generosity of Member States. He therefore proposed that the Fifth Committee should approve the estimates submitted by the Secretary-General in those three paragraphs. He hoped that his proposal would be adopted by consensus.

58. Mr. P. FALL (Senegal) said that the clarifications given by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services at the preceding meeting and the statement made by the representative of Sierra Leone had convinced his delegation of the need to provide the Secretariat with sufficient means for the successful execution of staff training programmes. His delegation therefore supported the proposal made by the delegation of Sierra Leone.

59. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation strongly supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations on subsection 28J concerning staff training activities. The Soviet delegation considered that the proposal made by the delegation of Sierra Leone was unfair to the Advisory Committee. ACABQ had spent three months on an exhaustive analysis of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, enlisting the help of a number of Secretariat officials in its painstaking consideration of the budget document. Yet an attempt was currently being made to introduce last-minute changes in what was the fruit of meticulous work over a period of months. He wondered whether that was not financially irresponsible behaviour.

60. The Soviet delegation reiterated its agreement to the reduction of \$39,600 recommended by the Advisory Committee in connexion with paragraphs 28J.15, 28J.25 and 28J.31 of the proposed programme budget. In addition, it should not be difficult for the Secretariat to offset the lack of so small an amount in a budget so large - over \$300 million - as that for section 28. His delegation asked the delegation of Sierra Leone not to insist on its proposal and requested that, if the proposal were not withdrawn, it should be put to a vote.

61. Mr. KHAMIS (Algeria) assured the members of the Advisory Committee that non-acceptance of its recommendation in no way signified a lack of confidence or of gratitude for its work. His delegation supported the Sierra Leonean proposal.

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62. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a vote be taken on the Sierra Leonean representative's proposal that the Fifth Committee should approve an appropriation in the amount of \$39,600 for subsection 28J of the proposed programme budget for staff training activities at Headquarters, Geneva and the regional commissions (\$16,500 for rental of examination halls, \$6,600 for consultants and \$16,500 for professional studies and fellowships.

63. The Sierra Leonean representative's proposal was adopted by 47 votes to 29, with 22 abstentions.

64. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that he had voted against the Sierra Leonean proposal because he considered that, if the Secretary-General had wished to take the inflation factor into account in connexion with the staff training programme, he would have done so.

65. In addition, the United States delegation considered that the point of absurdity had been reached when a vote was taken on an amount so small in relation to the total estimate for section 28.

66. Mr. LÖSCHNER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation had voted against the Sierra Leonean representative's proposal because it considered that the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee after a careful study of the question had been sound. ACABQ had recommended very small reductions, in recognition of the budgetary restraint displayed by the Secretary-General.

67. His delegation wished to make it clear that it reserved its position with regard to the budget as a whole.

68. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) said that his delegation had voted against the Sierra Leonean proposal not because it considered that training activities were unimportant but because it was concerned about the recent tendency in the Fifth Committee to overrule the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. That was a practice which should be followed only in extreme cases. If that tendency were to persist, his delegation would be obliged to reconsider its position with regard to the budget as a whole.

69. Mr. GOSS (Australia) said that his delegation had cast a negative vote because it considered that the very small amount requested for training activities could be absorbed within the large amount to be appropriated for section 28 as a whole.

70. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Fifth Committee should approve in first reading an appropriation of \$202,737,600 for section 28 as a whole. That amount consisted of the \$202,639,300 recommended by the Advisory Committee plus the \$98,300 (\$75,700 under sect. 28C and \$39,600 under sect. 28J) which the Committee had approved on the proposals of the representatives of Chad and Sierra Leone, respectively.

71. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote on section 28, said that his delegation had intended to abstain; however, bearing in mind that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding section 28 had twice been rejected unjustifiably and even unreasonably, it would vote against the appropriation.

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72. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that his delegation had intended to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation on section 28; it would, however, abstain in the vote in protest against the attention being given to trifling details in the budget and to keep open its options with respect to the vote on the budget as a whole.

73. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested a vote on section 28.

74. At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken on section 28.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Congo, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam.

75. An appropriation of \$202,737,600 under section 28 was approved in first reading by 80 votes to 10, with 16 abstentions.

76. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that his delegation had already expressed its opinion on the improvised way in which amounts were being added to those recommended by the Advisory Committee. His delegation had abstained to keep open its options on the budget as a whole and would base its position in that regard on the decisions adopted on the remaining sections.

77. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that his delegation had been prepared to vote in favour of the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General for section 28 but had abstained because the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee, which his delegation whole-heartedly supported, had been changed.

78. Mr. DOWSE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had abstained out of concern over the tendency to reject the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. In the present instance, an amount of \$100,000 had been added to the already large request of the Secretary-General. His delegation regarded that addition as unnecessary and unjustified and would determine its position on the budget as a whole in the light of any subsequent additions made to the amounts requested by the Secretary-General.

79. Mr. VAN NOUHUYS (Netherlands) said that, although his delegation had voted in favour, it shared the concern expressed by an increasing number of delegations regarding the tendency to overturn too lightly the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

80. Mr. HOUNA GOLO (Chad) said that his delegation had gladly voted in favour of the appropriation for section 28 as a whole. It greatly regretted the present tendency to accuse some delegations which, in good conscience and in exercise of their sovereignty, were trying to correct the Advisory Committee's recommendations when the latter were not in the interest of programmes that were of great importance to them. His delegation's proposal regarding the requirements under section 28.C had been motivated solely by the consideration that, since the General Assembly in 1978 had adopted resolution 33/143 and in 1980 would have to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations contained in that resolution, the Secretary-General should be given the tools he required to apply those recommendations.

81. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain) said that his delegation had voted for the appropriation under section 28 as a whole because the amount voted on was only slightly higher than that recommended by the Advisory Committee. Nevertheless, it was bound to state that, as a matter of principle, it was greatly disturbed by the Fifth Committee's tendency to depart from the Advisory Committee's recommendations and, if that tendency continued, his delegation would reconsider its final position on the proposed budget as a whole for 1980-1981.

82. Mr. P. FALL (Senegal) said that, although his delegation normally accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, in some cases its decisions were based on specific requirements. The affirmative vote was without meaning if there was no possibility of expressing another opinion. His delegation considered each individual case and acted according to its interests, whatever some delegations might think.

83. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) expressed concern at the language used by some members of the Committee and their attitude towards the budget. As the Algerian delegation had stated, the budget proposals for the biennium 1980-1981 showed almost zero growth and were accordingly extremely moderate. In a few cases, matters of great interest to some Member States had not been given sufficient consideration in the discussions and submissions of the Advisory Committee. Those Member States might see fit to make adjustments to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, especially in areas of interest to them, and were fully entitled to do so. Those that did not share their opinion should not interpret their attitude as

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(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

irresponsible or heedless of the limited resources available. It had clearly been implied that certain delegations did not respect budgetary constraint. That was untrue. The fact that a recommendation of the Advisory Committee was sometimes altered by no means meant that insufficient regard was paid to it or that the Advisory Committee was belittled. Rather it was a matter of approach. The delegations which had proposed changes in the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were fully aware that they must act with extreme caution and great care. The Fifth Committee should avoid situations in which comments tantamount to threats were directed at some delegations.

84. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the proposals made by the delegations of Chad and Sierra Leone to adjust the amounts recommended by the Advisory Committee under sections 28.C and 28.J because, although it held the Advisory Committee in great esteem, it was aware that the latter's role was simply to give an opinion. His delegation rejected the argument that delegations which proposed changes in the Advisory Committee's recommendations were acting in a fiscally improper or careless way. It whole-heartedly supported the statement made by the Kenyan delegation.

85. Mr. JASABE (Sierra Leone) said that, in accordance with its view that diverse national interests must be reflected, his delegation had cast an affirmative vote. If the national interests of one group of States failed to correspond to those of other groups, that in no way justified charges of fiscal irresponsibility.

86. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had voted in favour, in the belief that the Advisory Committee was discharging its duties satisfactorily. It nevertheless could not agree with the Advisory Committee's recommendation, in paragraph 28.27 of the Committee's first report, concerning the reclassification of the post of Senior Medical Officer and would have voted against that recommendation if there had been a separate vote on it.

87. Mr. MARTORELL (Peru) said that his delegation's affirmative vote in no way implied lack of appreciation for the work done by the Advisory Committee. His delegation endorsed the views of the Kenyan delegation and felt that some of the language used by one delegation was unacceptable.

88. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) said that, although in principle it opposed the growth of administrative costs, his delegation had voted for the proposals of the delegations of Chad and Sierra Leone because the explanations given by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services at the preceding meeting had convinced it of the need to provide adequate means for the implementation of the relevant programmes. His delegation endorsed the opinion of the representative of Kenya concerning the comments made by some delegations.

89. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that, had it been present during the voting, his delegation would have voted for the appropriations under section 28.J and section 28 as a whole.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.