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at 10.30 a.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st 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 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)
(A/34/6 and Add. 1, A/34/7, A/34/38)

First reading (continued)

Section 6. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (continued)

C. Programme support

1. Mr. SLORDHAL (Norway), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, as well as his own delegation, referred to paragraph 6.70 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 (A/34/6), in which the Secretary-General, for very sound reasons, requested two new posts (two D-1 and one P-3) for the Evaluation Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. The Secretary-General added that it would not be possible to supply the Unit's needs by redeploying staff from other units within the Department without seriously impairing their work.

2. The Advisory Committee had concluded, in that connexion, in paragraph 6.20 of its report (A/34/7), that if the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the medium-term plan were approved, the workload of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination would be lightened. It had therefore not approved the Secretary-General's request and had proposed that the Committee should reduce the amount requested for that programme by \$98,900.

3. Evaluation was the starting-point for planning, which was in turn the indispensable prerequisite for any serious programming. Since the Evaluation Unit's duties could not be carried out by a single Professional the delegations of Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden proposed that the Secretary-General should be given the two posts he requested and that the corresponding appropriation of \$98,900 should be approved.

4. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that if the Advisory Committee had decided not to approve the establishment of the posts requested by the Secretary-General it was because the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination might have implications for the work of the Evaluation Unit. Since those recommendations had not yet been approved, his delegation would like to have some explanation of the relationship of cause and effect between that consideration and the Advisory Committee's conclusions.

5. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) agreed with the delegations of the Nordic countries that the evaluation function was absolutely essential to the programming of United Nations activities. He still felt, however, that the staff already available to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was large enough to assume that function, provided they devoted themselves to practical work and not theoretical research. His delegation had been convinced by the arguments put forward by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6.20 of its report, and was therefore opposed to the establishment of the two posts requested by the Secretary-General.

6. Mr. BROCHARD (France) said that the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, established under General Assembly resolution 32/197, was still a relatively new administrative unit. It was difficult to see how it could be denied at the outset the means to demonstrate its capacity to carry out its duties. His delegation, therefore, although very much aware of the reasons put forward by the Advisory Committee, was in favour of establishing the posts requested by the Secretary-General and making the corresponding appropriation under section 6.

7. Mr. PIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the work programme of the Evaluation Unit called for the full-time services of three Professionals during the biennium 1980-1981. In its comments, (para. 6.20), the Advisory Committee had not said that the Secretary-General's request to that effect was excessive. It had simply proposed that staff already available in the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination should be redeployed to the Unit. However, no such redeployment could be made without impairing the work of the other units of the Department. If the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the presentation of a medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 was adopted, a draft programme would have to be submitted to it in May 1982, before being sent to the General Assembly at its session in the same year. The preparatory work would have to be started, therefore, by the autumn of 1980, in the form of directives to guide the planning of the various programmes. The substantive work and practical duties would be carried out throughout 1981 and 1982.

8. Also in 1980, action would have to be taken to carry out the decisions of various bodies. First, the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development would have to be implemented, after they had been approved by the General Assembly. A reading of the Programme of Action emerging from the Conference showed that the various bodies in the United Nations system would have to re-examine their programmes in the fields of science and technology very seriously, either to give them a new orientation or to start new activities. Second, everything pointed to the expectation that the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Copenhagen in the summer of 1980, would call on the United Nations to redefine its priorities in respect of activities relating to the integration of women in development. Lastly, the coming special session of the General Assembly on the preparation of a strategy for the third United Nations development decade would inevitably have implications for the activities of the Organization and on the orientation, content and priorities of its programmes.

9. It was clear, therefore, that the preparation of the next draft medium-term plan would demand more effort than usual, since the Organization's most important activities would be modified by the three Conferences to which he had referred. The substantive work would be carried out by the various units concerned, but it was the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination that drew up the procedures and saw to it that everything was done in accordance with the political will of the legislative bodies. At the same time, the Office would have to deal with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983 and evaluate programmes for CPC, which would meet in the spring of 1981. That was a substantive task, since, at that level also, it would be necessary to take into account the new orientations received during 1980.

(Mr. Ripert)

10. The Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination was also responsible for providing the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination with substantive support services in matters of methodology, for example the setting up of pilot programmes. Lastly, it assisted the Economic and Social Council in its highly specific analysis of the work carried out by the various bodies of the United Nations and the regional economic commissions.

11. In preparing the most recent medium-term plan, the Office had not been able to work as the General Assembly had explicitly requested it to do in its resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. While its work could be regarded as purely administrative, it also gave occasion for reflecting on the functions of units of the Secretariat and on the adequacy of the United Nations system to the new needs defined by the General Assembly. It would appear, therefore, that if the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6.20 of its report was approved, not only the performance of the more or less theoretical methodological work entrusted to the Office, but also the new substantive work requested of it, would feel the effect.

12. Mr. METELITIS (United States of America) said that his delegation had been asking for a copy of the information sheet on programme element 3.3 of subprogramme 3 (Transport development), referred to in paragraph 6.69 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 (A/34/6), for two months. It would like to know the reason for the delay, since the circulation of that document involved no editing or translation. Without that information, it would be difficult for him to cast a fully informed vote on the section under review.

13. Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination was the kingpin of the United Nations restructuring programme. Through that Office, the Organization was able to undertake the evaluation of its most important work. However, despite the substantial number of staff allocated to it and the strengthening of intergovernmental machinery designed to improve the process of programme examination, the work had remained at the theoretical level, in that questions were still being asked about the very notion of medium-term planning. It would be difficult to finance activities if they led to no specific results.

14. His delegation had already said that the Secretary-General should make further efforts to redeploy the resources available to him, and it considered that the Evaluation Unit, on which the present discussion seems to be centred, provided just such an opportunity. Accordingly, his delegation could not support the proposal submitted by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries.

15. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain) said that the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs had enlightened his delegation on certain points which had appeared to be obscure. The Under-Secretary-General's statement seemed to imply that it was impossible to deploy any of the resources in question. On that point, however, his delegation shared the doubts expressed

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(Mr. Pico de Coaña, Spain)

by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany and deplored the inadequacy of the concrete results obtained for the present biennium. Finally, he had understood that the two posts requested would be used for activities to start from the autumn of 1980 and he would like to have clarification on that point. If his understanding was confirmed, he would support the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the proposal to establish the two posts requested by the Evaluation Unit should be rejected.

16. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that, although his delegation usually supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations, it favoured, in the present case, the Nordic countries' proposal to approve the creation of a D-1 post and a P-3 post for the Evaluation Unit of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination. His delegation had adopted that position because it was convinced that the evaluation work of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination was extremely important to ensure a better utilization of all the resources of the Organization and that it was necessary to increase the resources allocated to that Office. He also felt that the real problem raised by certain delegations was the source and not the timeliness of the additional resources. However, his delegation wished to affirm that, although it supported the proposal of the Nordic countries, it remained none the less convinced that in other parts of the Secretariat it was possible to redeploy resources.

17. Mr. METELITS (United States of America) said his delegation supported the improvements of programme planning, co-ordination and evaluation of United Nations activities. It did not feel that a major issue of catastrophic proportions should arise over the request for two additional posts. What was more important was that the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination had already been considerably strengthened during the last session of the General Assembly and that a too-rapid infusion of resources was counter-productive. Account should also be taken of the large amount of so-called delayed programme growth (\$80,800) as shown in table 6.21 of the programme budget proposals and not only of the actual programme growth shown in the same table. Moreover, the resources justified at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly were not deployed in priority assignments and there were still vacant posts within the Department. The programme should become more dynamic.

18. The resources requested for evaluation activities (7.9 per cent of the total of the subprogramme) were not sufficient and redeployment of increased resources to evaluation was desirable. Moreover, the decision taken by CPC concerning the preparation of the future medium-term plan had led to a reduction in the total workload of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination and those resources could be redeployed to strengthen the Evaluation Unit. For that reason, his delegation felt that there was no justification for approving the creation of two new posts for the Evaluation Unit.

19. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) pointed out that his delegation had already had occasion to stress the lack of co-ordination between the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

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(Mr. Kuyama, Japan)

The problem seemed to recur with regard to the two posts now being discussed by the Committee. His delegation had therefore not been surprised to hear the proposal made by the representative of Norway at the beginning of the meeting on behalf of the Nordic countries.

20. Mr. VAN NOUHUYS (Netherlands) said that his Government attached great importance to the evaluation of programmes in the United Nations system. Although the Evaluation Unit of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination was a new service, which, for that reason, perhaps needed strengthening, the arguments put forward by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6.20 of its report (A/34/7) seemed convincing. At the moment, the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination comprised 34 posts, including one assistant Secretary-General, two D-2 posts, four D-1 posts, 10 P-5 posts and nine P-4 posts. The P-3 posts and below were relatively few as compared with P-4 posts and above. Accordingly, a different solution from that proposed by the Norwegian delegation might be to agree, as a transitional measure, to increase the responsibilities and functions of a D-1 post and to create only one additional P-3 post.

21. Mr. RIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said, in reply to the United States representative, that the thousands of information sheets on the elements of the programme were internal documents or working tools for the Secretariat. For that reason, the Secretariat was eager not to institute procedures such as the systematic communication of such sheets. However, the internal documents of the Secretariat were not secret and hence instructions had been given to satisfy the meet of the United States representative. However, it would be desirable to avoid the automatic distribution of such information since it might lead to considerable work and expense.

22. Planning was a developing science for which hardly any theory existed and for which the aim was to obtain immediate results. However, it was sometimes a good thing to evaluate the progress made and to obtain greater insight into certain methodological aspects. Nevertheless, the work to be undertaken in 1980 by the Evaluation Unit of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination would be essentially practical. As for specific results, it should be noted that the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had only been in existence for one year and time was needed to obtain solid results. The Department had requested only two additional posts mainly because it wished to make progress but not with an excessive haste which delegations would be the first to condemn. Moreover, the Department comprised 36 posts of which only six had been approved at the time when it was created. The others had been taken from other sectors of the Secretariat and in 1980 the 32 posts would be reduced to 27. Four of the six posts would be filled very soon and there would then remain only two posts to be filled.

23. If the Advisory Committee's recommendation was approved, the staff of the Department would be reduced for the coming biennium because of the transfer of five Professional posts to the regional commissions and the resulting redeployment would compel the Department to restrict its evaluation activities in certain sectors.

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24. Mr. SESSI (Italy) said that, while the solution proposed by the representative of the Netherlands did not solve the problem of the Office, his delegation could not support the proposal of the Nordic countries since, for reasons of principle, it wished to adhere to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

25. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain) thought that the Netherlands proposal to approve the creation of a P-3 post for the Evaluation Unit was a satisfactory solution. If it was a formal proposal, his delegation was ready to support it.

26. Mr. SWEGGER (Sweden) thought it was paradoxical that delegations was ready to recognize the importance of the task of the Evaluation Unit but were not prepared to give it the necessary resources to perform that task successfully. At the moment the Evaluation Unit had only a single permanent Professional post, whereas in the other specialized evaluation bodies three to five persons were concerned with that task. As the Under-Secretary-General had stated, the volume of work of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was going to increase and, if the Committee did not approve the D-1 and P-3 posts for the Evaluation Unit, the work of the Department would be slowed down in other fields, which would be unfortunate. For that reason, the Swedish delegation, together with the other Nordic countries, felt that the two posts requested by the Secretary-General should be approved.

27. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) recalled that at its nineteenth session CPC had worked out certain important ideas, including that of a medium-term plan prepared by a deductive process. He noted with satisfaction that in paragraph 6.8 of its first report (A/34/7), the Advisory Committee had seen fit to approve the reclassification of a post for the Projections and Perspective Studies Branch. As CPC had also stressed the importance of evaluation in the planning cycle, it would seem advisable to approve all the resources requested for the Evaluation Unit, in particular the D-1 post and the P-3 post, to ensure that the Unit could perform the considerable task it would have to undertake when the new plan was worked out. Since the Committee should consider the work of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination in the light of the new CPC directive, his delegation favoured the creation of the two posts requested.

28. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, although her delegation usually endorsed the recommendations of ACABQ and CPC, in which moreover Trinidad and Tobago was represented, she nevertheless considered that the Fifth Committee should be able to improve on their recommendations. It was surprising to note that the Evaluation Unit had at the moment only a single Professional post, as was clear from paragraph 6.70 of the budget estimates. If the Committee assigned to evaluation the importance it was due, three posts for that group did not appear to be excessive. It would seem that the Evaluation Unit would have plenty of work, even before the beginning of the next medium-term plan, for the United Nations system suffered from a lack of effective evaluation.

29. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) associated himself with the remarks made by the representative of Cameroon and stressed the importance which CPC accorded to the evaluation of programmes. The Evaluation Unit, which had only recently been established and had only one Professional post at the moment, should be given

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(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

the means to meet the expectations of Member States and to assume the tasks incumbent upon it in the field of evaluation and analysis of programmes. The Committee should therefore approve the two new posts, which were necessary to support the planning programme to be undertaken by CPC. For that reason, his delegation was able to support unreservedly the request made by the Secretary-General and to endorse the proposal of the Nordic countries.

30. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the activities of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, recognized the need to strengthen the Evaluation Unit in the light of the work done by CPC, and supported the Secretary-General's proposals. Nevertheless, a clear definition of the functions involved in the two new posts requested must be submitted to CPC at its next session, and it was to be hoped that the activities of the Evaluation Unit would not duplicate those of the Joint Inspection Unit.

31. Mr. DE FACQ (Belgium) said that for once his delegation would not support the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, for it believed that the evaluation programme of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was extremely important.

32. Mr. PAL (India), noting that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were based on the report of CPC (A/34/38 (Part V)), said that paragraph 57 of that report stated that the tasks that replaced the preparation of a new medium-term plan for 1982-1985 would not result in a reduced workload under subprogramme 5.1 that could free resources for redeployment to the subprogramme on evaluation. Consequently, the increased staffing that the Secretary-General had requested for the Evaluation Unit must be approved so that evaluation could continue to play an active role.

33. Mr. VAN NOUHUYS (Netherlands) said that no delegation had disputed the importance of the task to be performed by the Evaluation Unit and the majority had felt that the staffing of that Unit should be increased. The problem was where to find the additional manpower required, given the workload of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination as a whole. His delegation felt that the Office had staff who could be redeployed and take over some of the tasks entrusted to the Evaluation Unit and wished formally to propose a compromise solution whereby the Committee would approve the creation only of an additional P-3 post.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had two proposals before it. Under the proposal made by the representative of Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries, the Committee would approve the creation of the D-1 and P-3 posts requested by the Secretary-General for the Evaluation Unit and, consequently, the amount of \$98,900 over and above the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee. The second proposal, that of the Netherlands delegation, was to approve the creation only of the P-3 post and thus to add a corresponding amount to the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee. In accordance with rule 131 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which stated that, if two or more proposals related to the same question, the Committee would vote on the proposals in the order in which they had been submitted, he invited the Committee to take a decision on the proposal of the Nordic countries.

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35. Mr. VAN NOUHUYS (Netherlands) noted that, according to rule 131, the Committee could decide to vote in a different order and suggested that his proposal should be put to the vote before that of the Nordic States, because it was more logical to vote first on the least radical proposal.
36. The CHAIRMAN said that because the voting had already started, in accordance with rule 128 it was too late to change the order in which proposals would be put to the vote, and delegations could speak only in explanation of vote.
37. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in accordance with the position of principle it had often stated regarding the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, his delegation could not support the proposal submitted by the delegations of the Nordic countries.
38. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation would vote against the proposal of the Nordic countries, not only for the reasons which it had already indicated during the debate, but also because it would have preferred the Committee to vote on the proposals in the reverse order, so that the proposal of the Netherlands delegation could be considered more thoroughly.
39. Mr. BAMBA (Upper Volta) recalled that his delegation had always followed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, in accordance with its policy of austerity both at home and in the United Nations. Nevertheless, because evaluation was of great importance and the Secretariat had indicated that any internal redeployment of staff resources would adversely affect its work, his delegation would support the proposal submitted by the Nordic countries.
40. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that the Netherlands proposal was a good compromise, which would provide the Secretary-General with the resources required by the Evaluation Unit, and he would vote against the proposal submitted by the delegation of Norway.
41. The proposal of the Nordic countries to approve the creation of a D-1 post and a P-3 post requested in paragraph 6.70 of the proposed programme budget was adopted, and the corresponding appropriation of \$98,900 under section 6 was approved, by 61 votes to 29, with 14 abstentions.
42. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted against the proposal of the Nordic countries not because it was unaware of the importance of the Evaluation Unit, whose work it would continue to follow closely but because it felt that the Netherlands proposal had been a good compromise that would have been acceptable.
43. Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico) endorsed the statement of the representative of Spain, and said that he would have voted for the compromise solution submitted by the Netherlands.
44. Mr. MARTORELL (Peru) endorsed the statements of the previous speakers and said that his delegation, which in no way underestimated the importance of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, had voted against the proposal of the Nordic countries because the Netherlands proposal had provided a more satisfactory solution.

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45. The CHAIRMAN, acting at the request of the representative of the USSR, put to a vote the appropriation under section 6 (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) of the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981. After deducting the estimate for programme of activity 4 in section 6 (Science and technology), which the Committee would consider later, and taking account of the amounts just approved by the Committee for the establishment of D-1 and P-3 posts for the Evaluation Unit over and above the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee, the total appropriation under section 6 amounted to \$38,072,100.

46. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that his delegation was concerned that the Committee had once again altered a fully justified recommendation of the Advisory Committee. In accordance with its position of principle never to approve the inclusion in the regular budget of posts which had previously been financed by extrabudgetary funds, his delegation could not approve the appropriation under section 6.

47. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation would abstain in the vote because, firstly, it opposed the inclusion in the regular budget of posts previously financed by extrabudgetary funds, as proposed under the "Statistics" programme (paras. 6.48 to 6.61 of the proposed programme budget), and, secondly, it did not approve the reclassification of the post mentioned in paragraph 6.15. His delegation hoped that during the second reading of the budget it would receive the information it had requested.

48. An appropriation of \$38,072,100 under section 6 was approved in first reading by 88 votes to 9, with 8 abstentions.

49. Mr. LÖSCHNER (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had approved the appropriation under section 6 as a whole, in view of the importance attached to it by the international community - both developing and developed countries - but continued to feel that the Committee should not depart from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

50. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the appropriation for section 6 as a whole, since the section was extremely important, but would have preferred the proposal submitted by the Netherlands delegation in respect of the posts requested for the Evaluation Unit.

51. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) said that he had voted in favour of section 6, which was of great importance, but hoped that CPC would be given a more precise description of the activities of that programme the following year.

52. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the proposal submitted by the Nordic countries and in favour of the appropriation requested for section 6 as a whole, believing that the Fifth Committee must be able to deviate from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee when it was appropriate to do so. It would not have voted in favour of the Netherlands proposal, since the point was not to achieve a compromise solution but to give the Evaluation Unit the wherewithal to carry out its task.

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Establishment of an Information Systems Unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (A/34/380; A/C.5/34/5; A/34/7/Add.2)

53. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the comments made by the Advisory Committee in document A/34/7/Add.2 were clear. As it indicated in paragraph 11 of its report, the Advisory Committee endorsed the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendation, which had been accepted by the Secretary-General, to the effect that subject to the availability of voluntary funds the pilot project of the ISU's Development Information System be extended for one more year and that the General Assembly review the question at its thirty-fifth session. In addition, the Advisory Committee drew the Fifth Committee's attention to section II, paragraph 1, of resolution 33/116 A.

54. Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico) recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit had considered that the only way of evaluating the effectiveness of the Information Systems Unit was to enable it to operate for an extra year, so that the General Assembly could take a final decision on the matter at its thirty-fifth session (A/34/380, para. 20). It had been indicated that the Unit would not be a burden on the Organization's regular budget in that it was intended to mobilize extrabudgetary funds for the extra year. For all those reasons, the Advisory Committee recommended in paragraph 11 of its report (A/34/7/Add.2) that the operation of the Unit should be extended by one year. His delegation had particularly noted that, as the Advisory Committee had mentioned in the same paragraph, there was no commitment on the part of the Organization subsequently to transfer the costs of the operation of the Unit to the regular budget. His delegation therefore formally proposed that the Committee approve the Advisory Committee's recommendation by authorizing, subject to the availability of additional voluntary contributions, the extension for a further year of the Information Systems Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

55. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that his country had supported the setting up and utilization of the Information Systems Unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs by making computer time and the services of an expert available to it. His delegation agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that the system must operate for almost a year before its usefulness could be demonstrated. That recommendation had been accepted by the Secretary-General and by the Advisory Committee, subject to the availability of additional voluntary contributions. The General Assembly would then have to decide, at its thirty-fifth session, whether the project should be continued or not. In that connexion, his country was happy to announce that it was prepared to provide up to \$25,000 to help in financing the project, on condition that the Organization and other contributors assumed responsibility for the balance of the amount required for the extension of the project for an extra year.

56. However, his country would not make that contribution unless the Secretariat took a certain number of measures needed for evaluation of the project. Those measures were the following: the Secretariat would prepare a concise but comprehensive information booklet containing a sample of the Development Information Abstracts, which it would send to all missions in New York, to Governments, United

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(Mr. Pedersen, Canada)

Nations bodies and to the research institutions concerned. The Secretariat would contact a number of Governments in order to ascertain their views on the Information Systems Unit.

57. His delegation hoped that it would be possible to mobilize the extra funds needed for the continuance of the project. It would be regrettable if the human and material resources devoted to the project had been spent in vain, especially in view of the fact that the first evaluations which it had been possible to make of the project indicated that it should prove very useful, both for the recipient countries and for the donor countries. For that reason he supported the proposal submitted by the Mexican delegation.

58. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, since the adoption of resolution 33/116, the Secretary-General had been able to demonstrate neither the necessity nor the utility of the Information Services Unit. Nor had he succeeded in ensuring compatibility between that Unit and other units such as the United Nations Bibliographic Information System and the Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Services.

59. His delegation did not support the recommendation submitted by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 30 of its report stating that a further year would have to elapse before the Information Services Unit could be properly evaluated in terms of the use which would be made of it. In that context, it should be recalled that at the thirty-second session the Advisory Committee had quite correctly recommended (document A/32/256/Add.1) that recruitment of the staff needed for publishing those documents which were of particular interest among the 20,000 which had accumulated should proceed on a provisional basis. Using that work as a basis, a decision could have been taken on the need for a special information system. In any case it was the Information Services Unit which should have assumed responsibility for that work. That recommendation had not, however, been respected. As indicated in paragraph 26 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/34/5), the quality of the documents could not be used as a criterion for excluding a document from the system.

60. In other words, rather than establishing the system's usefulness in advance and then proceeding to set it up, the Secretariat and the Joint Inspection Unit were proposing that the system should first of all be set up and that the attempt to prove its usefulness should be made afterwards. His delegation was surprised that the Advisory Committee had forgotten the relevant recommendation it had made at the thirty-second session, and that it was supporting the proposal of the Joint Inspection Unit. JIU was further proposing to establish the usefulness of documents in terms of the frequency with which they were requested by the users. That was a debatable criterion in so far as it did not take the content of the documents into account. It could also be foreseen that, once the Information Services Unit commenced operations, it would be natural for users to take an interest in it from mere curiosity. The only valid criterion was certainly not the number of times that documents were requested but rather the actual use which was made of them.

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(Mr. Palamarchuk, USSR)

61. His delegation further noted that the Unit was beginning to take on responsibilities which had not been assigned to it at the time of its establishment, particularly co-ordination of the activities of other information systems. It was also concerned that it had been proposed that the Unit's title should be changed to "Information Systems Unit".

62. His delegation felt that the activities of the Information Services Unit were useless and that, even if they were continued for a year, no proof of their usefulness would emerge, especially if the criteria proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit were to serve as a basis. It would therefore be risky to take a hasty decision on the proposed recommendation, especially in view of the fact that the activities of the Information Services Unit had the serious drawback of duplicating the work of the United Nations Library and EDPIS and using staff who could have been assigned to essential tasks. His delegation did not agree that the Unit should continue its activities, whether or not they were financed by voluntary contributions. An attempt had already been made to include a portion of the Unit's expenditures in the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981. On principle, his delegation did not participate and would not participate in the financing of posts previously financed from extra-budgetary funds which would be included in the Organization's regular budget after 1 January 1978.

63. Mr. SWEGER (Sweden) said that the previous year his delegation had declared itself in favour of the creation of the Information Services Unit because of the "potential" usefulness that it might present; that usefulness was becoming increasingly evident. Consequently, his delegation supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee that the Unit's activities should be extended for a year, so that it might be given a proper field trial.

64. When that question had been considered for the first time in 1976, it had been agreed that the test period over which an appeal would be made for voluntary contributions would be three years. It was in those circumstances that his Government had made a voluntary contribution in 1977. It would be regrettable to end the project without being able to evaluate it properly.

65. His delegation was glad to hear that Canada intended to make a voluntary contribution. The Secretary-General should endeavour to mobilize the remaining funds needed - a quite modest amount in all. He hoped that the General Assembly would take a decision at the next session regarding the inclusion of the costs of the Unit in the regular budget. His delegation looked forward to the full report to be submitted on the subject at the next session.

66. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation supported the proposal submitted by the Secretary-General. From a consideration of the annexes to document A/C.5/34/5, it might be noted that the Information Systems Unit was one of the most economical and productive, and he hoped that it would be possible to harmonize its activities with those of the United Nations Library Information System. His delegation would like to see a chart of the whole United Nations information system, in order to see the Unit's place in it. In accordance with resolution 32/197 concerning restructuring, it would be desirable for the Unit to be attached to the Office of the Director-General.

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67. Mr. DE FACQ (Belgium) said that the task of the Information Systems Unit was to disseminate information both within and outside the United Nations system. His delegation was concerned about the proliferation of information systems and small information units within the United Nations. The Department of Information had a division concerned with economic and social information. What were the links between the Information Systems Unit and that division?

68. Mr. ANGELIDES (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) welcomed the United Nations initiative to provide improved access to economic and social development information contained in unpublished documents. UNESCO was particularly satisfied with the methodology employed in the establishment of the Development Information System, which followed closely the guidelines provided in the UNISIST programme.

69. Within the framework of that programme, UNESCO was co-operating closely with other international information systems, such as the International Information System for Agriculture Sciences and Technology (AGRIS) and the International Nuclear Information System (INIS); during the past two years, UNESCO had co-operated with the United Nations with the view to revising the Macrothesaurus which had been adopted by the Development Information System. UNESCO had also co-operated with the Economic Commission for Africa on a feasibility study of the DEVIS/Africa Programme, which would be compatible with the Development Information System. UNESCO welcomed the fact that the Development Information System had retained the MINISIS Programme, which was compatible with the Integrated Set of Information Systems (ISIS), which UNESCO was making available to organizations of the United Nations family. UNESCO looked forward to participating in the test-use of the Development Information System in the coming months.

70. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the proposal submitted by the Mexican delegation, to which it wished to add a recommendation that, in the coming years, use of the project should be carefully monitored by valid statistical methods, as mentioned by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 19 of its report (A/34/380). Furthermore, the Joint Inspection Unit mentioned, in paragraph 26 of the same report, that, even at the current late date, "a useful purpose could be served if the proposed system" was "presented to the IOB /Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems/ for review and comment, both generally and with specific regard to its compatibility with existing systems". His delegation proposed that that review should be carried out as soon as possible and that the results should be published in the form of a United Nations document by mid-1980 at the latest so that Member States could have cognizance of it before considering the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General at the thirty-fifth session.

71. Mr. RIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the extension of the pilot project for an additional year seemed justified and would be used to advantage. The Secretariat would prepare the brochures requested by the Canadian representative and would transmit them to Member States and to various organizations. It would also make the necessary contacts with a number of Member States, both developed and developing countries,

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in order to enable them to evaluate themselves the usefulness and advantages of the system. Similarly, the Secretariat would consult IOB, as the United States representative had requested.

72. With regard to harmonization with the system used by the United Nations Library, measures had already been taken to avoid duplication and to facilitate access to both systems.

73. In response to the concerns expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union, he explained that the co-ordination work entrusted to the Information Systems Unit would not go beyond the Department itself. It was therefore essential to ensure co-ordination between the Information Systems Unit and the systems of the regional economic commissions, the other departments of the Secretariat and the other United Nations organizations. The Unit also intended to participate in the development of an information systems network. Furthermore, the Unit's system was compatible with that established recently at the Moscow Institute of Social Sciences.

74. The Secretariat should find additional voluntary contributions to finance the project during the coming year. The pledge made by the Canadian representative was particularly welcome, and consultations would be undertaken with other Member States.

75. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the representative of Mexico proposed that the Fifth Committee should, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, authorize, subject to the availability of additional voluntary contributions, the extension for an additional year of the pilot project on the Information System for the development of the Information Systems Unit. Furthermore, the United States representative proposed that the functioning of the project should be carefully monitored by valid statistical methods, that it should be submitted for review and comment to the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems (IOB) and that IOB should submit a report on the subject by August 1980 at the latest.

76. Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico) agreed that the text submitted by the United States representative should be incorporated in his proposal.

77. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested that a vote should be taken.

78. The proposal submitted by the representative of Mexico, as amended by the United States representative, was adopted by 78 votes to 9, with 1 abstention.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.