



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH 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 104: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(A/C.5/34/L.13, A/C.5/34/L.22)

1. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that the views expressed by other delegations had not persuaded his delegation to change its views on the question of the composition of the Secretariat. General Assembly resolution 33/143 set forth criteria to improve the representation of under-represented States, and there had hardly been time in one year for it to produce the results that had been hoped for; it was too soon to disturb recruitment policy again.

2. Furthermore, his delegation could not support any decision calling for a study which blatantly prejudged the results of such a study, to the detriment of those States on which the Organization relied for its financial and other resources. It continued to believe that the paramount criterion for selecting United Nations employees must be efficiency, competence and integrity, as set out in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

3. However, if the Assembly decided to rely instead on Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter when recruiting staff, then it should base the scale of assessments on the same principle of sovereign equality. The resolution adopted at the 57th meeting over the opposition of the United States and all the major contributors disturbed a consensus which had prevailed since the foundation of the Organization. His delegation believed that either a special relationship must be accepted between a State's budgetary contribution and its desirable range, or there must be an equal sharing of expenses, in the name of sovereign equality.

4. There could be other solutions which his delegation proposed to go into later; one was to establish desirable ranges in the light of contributions to the budget and taking into account the number of staff on board at a given date each year; another alternative would be to use an effective contribution ratio system.

5. His delegation had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 because it believed that it was harmful to the interests of the United Nations and might well reduce the support given to the United Nations by those States on which the Organization primarily relied for its resources.

6. Mr. UCHUNO (Nigeria) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 and against the draft amendment in document A/C.5/34/L.22 partly because the former called for clear-cut answers which would make it possible to assess the criteria governing the setting of desirable ranges for States and regions, and partly because more broadly-based participation in the work of the Secretariat would imbue Member States with confidence in the United Nations. His delegation took exception to the allegations made by certain delegations which

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(Mr. Uchuno, Nigeria)

spoke of "ganging up" whenever the Member States of the third world defended their own interests. He looked forward to the day when it would be possible to adopt resolutions by consensus following consultations held in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and understanding and in a spirit of justice and peace.

7. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the socialist States which had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, said that they had done so because they thought that the draft decision was an attempt unilaterally to prejudge the conclusions of the study which the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. The delegations of the socialist States were strongly opposed to the formulae proposed in the draft decision for radical changes in the present system of allocation of posts in the Secretariat.

8. The serious deficiencies in the present composition of the Secretariat were due partly to the slow pace at which the solutions proposed to improve the representation of under-represented and non-represented States were taking effect, while the representation of over-represented States continued to increase, partly to the fact that two thirds of the posts subject to geographical distribution were held by nationals of over-represented countries on permanent contracts, and partly to the inequitable distribution of key posts, very few of which were held by nationals of socialist States.

9. The method at present in use relied on objective criteria established on scientific bases and it was for that reason that the delegations of the socialist countries could not accept a decision which purported to amend that system but would merely accentuate the present imbalance, in total disregard of the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The socialist States could not accept any further decrease in the number of posts held by their nationals on fixed-term contracts.

10. In preparing the study requested, the Secretary-General should take full account of the views expressed in the Fifth Committee, particularly by the socialist countries, which thought that the situation which had arisen was likely to have far-reaching adverse consequences.

11. Mr. McMAHON (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the nine States members of the European Economic Community, said that the approach of those States was based on the provisions of Articles 100 and 101 of the United Nations Charter, which were not referred to at all in the draft decision which had been adopted. The delegations of the nine States had participated actively at the previous session in working out General Assembly resolution 33/143 which had been adopted by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations and was intended to improve the representation of under-represented and unrepresented States. They believed that the Secretary-General should be given more time to implement that resolution fully. Moreover, they could not accept a decision which, by laying down rigid criteria, prejudged the outcome of the study which the Secretary-General was requested to make.

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(Mr. McMahon, Ireland)

12. The importance of the contribution factor in the determination of the numerical representation of Member States in the Secretariat had been recognized since the founding of the United Nations and was still a valid principle. Any radical change in the present system could threaten the traditional consensus on the question of the composition of the Secretariat.

13. Finally, the decision which had been adopted might generate proposals which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Secretary-General to implement, so that the independence of the international civil service might be jeopardized. For all those reasons, the delegations of the nine States members of EEC had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 and would feel in no way bound by the results of the study requested.

14. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that he had voted in favour of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 but without enthusiasm, since such a text should have been adopted a year earlier, before resolution 33/143 had been adopted. Furthermore, he did not think that the decision would produce the desired results, since the same bodies or experts who had set up the present system would be called upon to make the studies requested, and that the decision provided loopholes for the Secretariat - which it would take advantage of if it did not really wish to bring in the changes sought by the third world - even if it did not leave the door open to a further compounding of present injustices. At any rate, the studies called for were only a first step towards necessary changes.

15. Mr. SWEGER (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that those countries, which were sponsors of the draft amendment in document A/C.5/34/L.22, had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 because it prejudged the outcome of the studies which had been requested. The Nordic countries had often stressed that the Secretary-General should be given a certain amount of latitude with regard to the geographical distribution of posts, and that the determining factor in the recruitment of staff should be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

16. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) said that there was a risk that the adoption at the 57th meeting of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 jeopardized the principle of consensus, which was one of the foundations of the Organization. First of all, the draft resolution came much too soon, scarcely a year after the adoption of resolution 33/143, which was intended to improve the representation of the under-represented and unrepresented countries. Furthermore, the rigid criteria laid down in the decision prejudged the results of the study requested and stated the decisions to be adopted at the thirty-fifth session. Finally, by dealing only with the problem of the developing countries, the decision was not in keeping with the balance and universality which were fundamental to the Organization.

17. His delegation had noted that a number of delegations had shown by their contributions to the discussion on personnel questions that they were primarily seeking to protect or promote their own national interests, a position which seemed

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incompatible with a concern to provide United Nations staff members with satisfactory career prospects. Draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 took no account of that important rule of personnel policy; on the contrary, by endeavouring to secure the appointment of their nationals to high-level posts, the Member States were restricting the opportunities for promotion of staff members already in the service.

18. His delegation also believed that the use of the contribution factor in determining desirable ranges was in no way contrary to Article 101, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which clearly stipulated that "the staff shall be appointed by the Secretary-General under regulations established by the General Assembly", or to Article 101, paragraph 3, which stated that the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff should be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. It considered that the approach adopted at the current session with regard to the question of the composition of the Secretariat represented a regrettable politicization of the issue, which in any case could only be resolved by consensus. For all those reasons his delegation had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 and it would not feel bound by the results of the study which had been requested. It hoped that at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General would present an even-handed and objective study which would help to avert a dangerous confrontation.

19. Miss GUIMARAES (Brazil) said that her delegation had voted in favour of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, but that it reserved its position on the matter until her Government had examined the study requested of the Secretariat.

20. Mr. VICARIO (Spain) said that his delegation had always believed that there should be negotiations before a draft resolution was submitted, as had been the case with resolution 33/143. At the current session, by contrast, his delegation had been unaware of the draft decision submitted by the Group of 77 until it had been distributed in its final form.

21. Furthermore, the decision which had been adopted made no mention of Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter, prejudged the results of the study requested, established rigid criteria, and might restrict the role of the Office of Personnel Services and, consequently, the Secretary-General's policy in that area.

22. Insufficient time had elapsed since the adoption of resolution 33/143 and the procedure followed was liable to jeopardize the principle of consensus. For that reason his delegation had voted against the draft decision.

23. Mr. SPETSIOS (Greece) said that, because his country was well below its desirable range, it attached great significance to matters relating to the geographical distribution of posts. His delegation considered that intermediate levels of development should also be taken into account.

24. The draft decision in document A/C.5/34/L.13 set out a number of criteria which could be combined in different ways to yield different results. Since it was difficult to visualize the scope of those results clearly, his delegation had chosen

(Mr. Spetsios, Greece)

to reserve its position in order to give its views, on the basis of specific data, when the study requested was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. It had therefore abstained in the vote.

25. Mrs. SANDIFER (Portugal) explained that she had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 because she considered that its content and its wording were not objective and prejudged the results of any study which the Secretary-General might undertake. The elements proposed in the decision were arbitrary, particularly subparagraph (b) (iii), which tended to favour some States at the expense of others. It was to be regretted that the text made no mention of Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter. Her delegation regretted that the members of the Committee had been unable to find common ground in that area, which was of primary importance for all Member States and for the Organization itself. It would have been to everyone's advantage to tackle that delicate issue in a spirit of compromise and frank discussion from the outset.

26. Miss MUCK (Austria) said that her delegation had become a sponsor of the draft amendment in document A/C.5/35/L.22 because it had no objection to the carrying out of a study on the composition of the Secretariat provided that the study was based on the principles set out in Article 101 of the Charter. She was unable, on the other hand, to approve draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, since it established guidelines which prejudged the outcome of the study requested.

27. Mr. GOSS (Australia), replying to those who had reproached him for having submitted the draft amendment in document A/C.5/34/L.22 without giving prior notice to the sponsors of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, said that agreement on the draft amendment had only been achieved the previous Thursday morning and that he himself had promptly made contact with the representative of India in order to explain to him the intentions of the sponsors.

28. It was indeed regrettable that the amendment had been submitted at such a late date, but, had the Fifth Committee met on the previous Thursday, it would have been able to hold a wider discussion, and the Group of 77 had been at liberty to request more time to hold consultations had it so wished. In fact the delegations of the Western countries which had voted in favour of the amendment in document A/C.5/34/L.22 had not been obliged to consult the Group of 77 before taking a decision. There had been nothing to stop them from adopting the same procedure as the Group of 77, which had submitted the draft decision without consulting other delegations.

29. Since draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 had been formulated by a group, it could have been supposed that the delegations forming part of that group would have wished to ascertain the views of another group for the purpose of initiating discussion. His delegation could not submit an amendment on its own, nor could it make contact with the sponsor of the first draft decision before the Western States had decided on the position which they intended to adopt. His delegation had therefore had no alternative but to act as it had done.

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(Mr. Goss, Australia)

30. Explaining why his delegation and the delegation of New Zealand had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, he said that they did not approve of the timing of its submission, the method adopted, or the substance of the decision. Since the current session of the Committee was called upon to consider the budget, the scale of contributions and questions relating to pensions, and in view of the fact that it was already behind in its work, it was a very inopportune moment to present a draft decision which had significant implications for personnel policy, a subject which the Committee could not adequately discuss.

31. He also regretted the way in which the draft decision had been presented. Normal practice in the past had been that working groups on personnel questions, open to representatives of all countries, had formulated consensus drafts, as had been the procedure with regard to resolution 33/143. At the current session, by contrast, a group of members had submitted a draft decision in final form, informing the other delegations that the negotiations must be on the basis of that text since clear guidelines had to be given to the Secretary-General. They were not being invited to negotiate but purely and simply to accept the draft decision as it stood.

32. It was impossible to accept a draft decision on the composition of the Secretariat which made no mention of Article 101 of the Charter and which put forward assumptions which were questionable in that the intention was to give equal weight to the contribution factor and to increase the minimum range. No convincing arguments had so far been advanced for an increase in that range. Although equal in status in the United Nations, Member States were not equal in their ability to contribute. It was not unthinkable that the same might be true of their ability to provide staff for the Secretariat. The contribution factor was admittedly not the sole determining criterion in that respect, but it was more accurate than the fact of membership. If there were to be modifications of the current system, any proposed change must be examined in consultation and not imposed unilaterally by one group of members.

33. The delegations of Australia and New Zealand were in favour of carrying out a study, but they believed that the decision that had been adopted was unsatisfactory in that the text envisaged not a study, but a request for statistical support for conclusions already arrived at. The situation was particularly regrettable in that a neutral study could have provided a basis for consideration of the question at the following session. He hoped therefore that the Secretary-General would present a more wide-ranging study which would offer various possibilities to enable the Committee to make its decision, and that the sponsors of the draft decision would adopt a conciliatory approach when the time came. He hoped that it was in that spirit that the sponsors of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 had withdrawn the procedural motion which they had submitted.

34. Mr. EL-HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation had voted for draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 because it considered that the criteria which had long been used to determine desirable ranges were unfair. They favoured the developed countries at the expense of the developing countries, in contravention of the spirit of the Charter, which aimed at establishing justice and equality among all the States Members of the United Nations.

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(Mr. El-Houderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

35. The developed countries should realize that the developing countries had been very patient, and should look kindly on their legitimate demands to see justice restored in an atmosphere of friendly consultation which was in everyone's interest. It was not a matter of the majority's asserting its interests at the expense of a minority, but of amending rules which no longer conformed to reality. The logical way to proceed was to study the situation in accordance with well-defined guidelines and approaches.

36. The decision which had been adopted would restore balanced representation of developed and developing countries in the Secretariat. It should also help to establish more equitable desirable ranges, which should be strictly adhered to, since any departures from them might create an unacceptable imbalance.

37. Mr. MALLOUM (Mauritania) said that his delegation had voted for draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13. The current system, which went back over 30 years, no longer reflected present realities because it gave undue weight to the criterion of contribution at the expense of membership. The decision which had been adopted merely drew attention to the anomaly by requesting a detailed study of the current situation and of possible solutions. It was in the light of such considerations that his delegation had voted against draft amendment A/C.5/34/L.22, which discounted the legitimate aspirations of the majority of Member States.

38. Mr. VAN NOUHUYS (Netherlands) said that, without in any way adding to or detracting from the explanations given by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the nine States members of the European Communities, which had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, he wished to draw attention to two encouraging facts. Although his delegation was not satisfied with the draft decision as adopted, it had noted with interest during the debate that many delegations of the Group of 77 seemed to interpret the text much more flexibly than the Group of Western countries had understood it. He trusted that those delegations would display the same attitude at the thirty-fifth session, when the Committee would be considering the study requested of the Secretary-General.

39. Secondly, the debate had been less acrimonious because of the brave decision taken at the 57th meeting by the representative of India, on behalf of the Group of 77, to allow the Group of Western States to submit their views, as contained in amendment A/C.5/34/L.22, to the Committee for its judgement.

40. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13 and against amendment A/C.5/34/L.22 because it considered that the draft decision embodied the minimum aspirations of the developing countries. He rejected insinuations that the Group of 77 had imposed its will without taking fundamental considerations into account and without trying to reach agreement on the basis of a frank and open exchange of views, since the draft decision followed up resolution 33/143, to which everyone had contributed in order to achieve a consensus.

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(Mr. Williams, Panama)

41. The composition of the Secretariat had already given rise to prolonged discussion owing to the inequitable distribution of Professional posts at the expense of the developing countries. As the representative of Mauritania had said, the criteria used for the last 30 years were no longer valid. It was now recognized in every international forum that all member States should have equal representation, regardless of their contribution, because equality was the very foundation of any organization. The delegations of developed countries could rest assured that the Group of 77 had not ruled out negotiations and was ready to continue the discussion at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

42. Mr. TOMIO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) observed that, when a situation no longer appeared desirable for two thirds of the membership of the Organization, that situation was a threat to its viability and should be rectified. Such seemed to be the case where the composition of the Secretariat was concerned. In voting for draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13, his delegation had signified its agreement with the desire for change which lay behind the draft. The sponsors had been flexible and realistic in calling not for a study which would be favourable to them but for a number of alternatives that might improve the situation. When the results of the study which was requested were submitted at the next session, all delegations could enter into negotiations, the outcome of which did not seem to have been prejudged.

43. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) said that his delegation had voted against draft decision A/C.5/34/L.13. His Government was convinced that resolution 33/143, which had been adopted after serious negotiations involving all Member States, should constitute the very basis of United Nations personnel policies in years to come. Furthermore, any improvement of that policy should be pursued gradually and not radically. He therefore deeply regretted that a draft decision with extremely important implications for the future direction of that policy had been adopted by a simple majority without serious efforts to make it mutually acceptable. The adoption of that decision might have an adverse effect on Japan's support for the United Nations, including its financial support.

44. He noted the importance accorded in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter to recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, in addition to the paramount consideration of the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Since the establishment of the United Nations, contribution had always been an essential criterion in relation to the composition of the Secretariat. In the view of his delegation, special treatment with regard to recruitment from developing countries was not necessarily compatible with the spirit of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. Handling the question of composition of the Secretariat in the North-South context was a distortion of proper personnel policy. Finally, weakening the relationship between financial contribution and composition of the Secretariat, as envisaged in decision A/C.5/34/L.13, might endanger the existence of the United Nations itself.

45. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said he was sure that the Secretary-General would do all he could to discharge the mandate set out in decision A/C.5/34/L.13, for which his

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(Mr. Kemal, Pakistan)

delegation had voted. His delegation had been unable to vote for amendment A/C.5/34/L.22 because it contained such imprecise guidelines that the Secretary-General would not have known what his study was supposed to cover.

46. He drew attention to the important question of the applicability of rule 130 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The essence of texts submitted should be considered in order to determine whether they were amendments to an existing proposal or new proposals. With a view to facilitating the future work of the Committee, rule 130 should not be applied too strictly.

47. The CHAIRMAN recalled that he had been very cautious about the amendment. He had refrained from expressing his personal view and had sought the opinion of the Legal Counsel. It was fortunate that the Committee had not had to decide whether or not it was an amendment. It was very difficult for a committee to interpret rules of procedure which applied to all committees of the General Assembly. Extreme caution was required.

48. Mr. PAL (India), speaking in exercise of the right of reply on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the negotiations which had ended in the submission of the draft decision by the Group of 77 had not proceeded as some delegations had indicated.

49. It was true that the Group of 77 had not consulted the other groups until fairly late, but it had preferred to have a text available for that purpose. Once the text had been drafted, other delegations had been informed and had had an opportunity to comment on it. Subsequently, when the text had been finalized, delegations wanting a copy had been able to obtain one. Their reaction had been negative and they had indicated that negotiations on the basis of the draft decision were out of the question. That was why the Group of 77 had taken the initiative of requesting that it should be put to the vote, at which point it had learnt that an amendment was being drafted. He wished to emphasize that the Group of 77 had always been prepared to enter into negotiations and had never intended to be discourteous towards any group. It could not, therefore, be claimed that lack of courtesy on the part of the Group of 77 justified the adoption of such an attitude by another group.

50. It had also been argued that, if the draft decision had been put to the vote by secret ballot, the Group would not have presented a unified front. To claim that pressure had been exerted within the Group itself was a serious charge. Was it suggested that there must be a pressure group simply because the membership was so large? All groups, large or small, functioned on a democratic basis, and the text had been drafted in accordance with democratic principles.

51. Finally, with regard to the risks that the Organization would incur as a result of the implementation of the decision, it was unthinkable that any country would support the United Nations solely in order to be able to find positions in it for some of its nationals. It was also unthinkable that the carrying out of the study requested of the Secretary-General would sound the death-knell of the Organization.

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52. Mr. JONAH (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services), replying to a question from the representative of Chad regarding the status of the competitive examination for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category, said that the Secretariat had taken into consideration the opinions expressed in the Fifth Committee with a view to meeting the grievances of the staff concerned and taking the additional measures that had been recommended. The Secretary-General had submitted proposals for transitional measures to the Joint Advisory Committee at Headquarters. When formulating its proposals, JAC had made every effort to take into account the situation of staff members holding Professional posts as at 20 December 1978. Those proposals had been submitted to the other Joint Advisory Committees, whose replies were expected within a few days.

53. On the basis of the conclusions of the Joint Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had decided that the core paper examination should be held on 24 November, as scheduled. However, in view of the time needed to consider the occupational groups, it had been decided to postpone the specialized paper until January or February 1980.

54. After the unrest of the last few weeks, the examination had taken place in a calm and orderly manner. Of the 416 candidates accepted, 333 had taken the examination; that proportion of 78 per cent was above the average, which was 68 or 69 per cent. He hoped that the figure would be similar at the other examination centres.

55. With regard to future examinations, he recalled that at the 33rd meeting of the Committee he had drawn attention to the difficulties facing the Office of Personnel Services owing to lack of resources. Without the additional resources needed to hold examinations, particularly for the recruitment of translators and interpreters, the conduct of the next session of the General Assembly might be jeopardized.

56. At the same meeting, he had stated that the Secretary-General wished to apply two principles, namely, the holding of the competitive examination and the discontinuation of the old system, thus confirming his decision to proceed with the examination. While recognizing that some doubts persisted regarding the method adopted, he (Mr. Jonah) recalled that he had asked the Committee to express its views clearly on the subject so that the matter could be settled once for all.

57. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) said he would like to know what procedures were used by the Office of Personnel Services for the recruitment of translators and interpreters, where difficulties were encountered because successful candidates sometimes refused to accept the conditions of employment offered on the ground that they were not appropriate to their qualifications. In order to remedy the persistent shortage of qualified translators and interpreters in some of the language services, the Secretariat would have to be more flexible. Enough qualified translators and interpreters must be recruited for the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

58. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) asked whether the posts to be filled by examination were still vacant or whether they had been filled in some other way. He would also like to know whether, in selecting the examination subjects, the Secretariat had taken into consideration the disadvantageous situation of General Service staff members who, because of their duties during the General Assembly session, did not have the time needed to study the work of the Secretariat.

59. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) endorsed the principles applied by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services in arranging the examinations. He asked whether the Office of Personnel Services intended to publish the results of the general paper separately or to publish only the final results of the examination. He also asked how much time it was expected to take after publication of the examination results before the successful candidates were assigned to the posts waiting to be filled.

60. Mr. JONAH (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services), replying to the questions put by the representative of Morocco, said that the 51 posts reserved for the examination were still available. If for any reason some of those posts were no longer available, the Secretary-General would make arrangements so that there would still be 51 posts reserved for the examination.

61. The Secretariat had taken into consideration the fact that some staff members might be at a disadvantage because of the extra workload created for them by the General Assembly. That was why the specialized paper had been postponed until January-February.

62. In reply to the representative of the Philippines, he said that the Secretariat would not publish the results of the general paper separately.

63. Mr. DEBATIN (Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management) stated that the Secretary-General would make every effort to apply not only the letter but also the spirit of General Assembly resolution 33/143.

64. Delegations had offered valuable comments and advice on the organization of the examinations. The question was important not only for the administration, which had to ensure that Professional posts were filled by competent persons, but also for the staff, particularly General Service staff members who had been occupying Professional posts and had expected that fact to be taken into account in the final decision. The solution that had been found to that problem, in the light of the deliberations of the Fifth Committee, should be satisfactory from the standpoint both of the efficiency of the Secretariat and of staff morale.

65. In that respect, appreciation was due to the staff and the Joint Advisory Committee for having made every effort to provide advice and to implement the relevant decisions.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

66. Mr. DUQUE (Secretary of the Committee), referring to document A/C.5/34/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1 containing a list of documents to be submitted to the

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Committee during the current session, reported that, apart from the budget performance report and the revised estimates relating to science and technology, for which the Committee had made an exception, three documents under item 98 had not yet been submitted: the report on accommodation at the Vienna International Centre (heading VIII), the report on revised estimates for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (heading XVIII) and the report on revised estimates for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (heading XIX).

67. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) recalled that he had already informed the Committee that the Secretary-General might not be able to meet the deadline for the submission of two reports, namely, the report on accommodation at the Vienna International Centre, for which a large amount of data had to be assembled in order to determine the resources required, and the report on revised estimates for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, regarding whose structure major decisions had to be made. The first part of the report on the Vienna International Centre was due to be circulated that same day, and the revised estimates for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development should be submitted towards the end of November or during the first few days of December. With regard to the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, major decisions had had to be taken in connexion with the structure to be proposed to the General Assembly, which accounted for the delay in submitting that report.

68. The CHAIRMAN said that the Fifth Committee was in a difficult situation and requested the representatives of the Secretariat to draw the attention of the Secretary-General to the matter.

69. He then suggested that the Committee should consider those agenda items which could be postponed until the following year and, in particular, the questions under item 98 entitled "Services provided by the United Nations to activities funded from extrabudgetary resources" (section VII) and "Comprehensive study of the question of honoraria" (section IX), item 99 (Financial emergency of the United Nations) and the question under agenda item 100 entitled "Impact of inflation on the budgets of organizations in the United Nations system".

70. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) expressed the hope that, in view of the importance of the matter, the Committee would shortly receive the report on the revised estimates for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy.

71. Mr. DEBATIN (Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management) assured the Committee that the Secretary-General was doing his utmost to submit the reports within the stipulated time-limits.

72. With regard to the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, substantial efforts had been required to determine the structure and functions of the Department and, in particular, to ensure that its effectiveness would not be impaired by overlapping. An in-depth analysis had also been necessary in order to determine the financial resources required. That work had now been completed, but it must be emphasized that, in questions of such great importance, haste could sometimes do more harm than good.

(Mr. Debatin)

73. Frequent consultations had been required in connexion with the organization of the Vienna International Centre, since both IAEA and UNIDO were also concerned. The first part of the report on the question was already complete and would shortly be followed by the part concerning the financial aspects.

74. The United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy represented an essential part of the work of the United Nations. The Department of Administration and Management had received the revised estimates for the Conference only a few days previously.

75. It was essential that the Committee should give the Secretariat a grace period for the submission of the documents on those questions. In any case, the delays which had occurred in the submission of the documents were the result not of negligence but of the complexity of the issues.

76. On the question of honoraria, the various organizations involved, in particular, the International Law Commission, were concerned by the fact the question was postponed from one year to the next. In the meantime, a number of organizations, in particular, the Administrative Tribunal of ILO, had taken corrective measures to offset the erosion of honoraria resulting from inflation.

77. The CHAIRMAN said that, while it was important that reports should be subjected to an in-depth analysis by the Secretariat, it was equally important that members of the Committee should have sufficient time to examine them before entering into consultations or requesting instructions from their Governments.

78. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) agreed with the Chairman that it would be advisable to postpone agenda item 99 (Financial emergency of the United Nations) until the following year, since no progress had been made on the question during the current year and the Negotiating Committee on the Financial Emergency of the United Nations had not met.

79. It must be emphasized, however, that the report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/C.5/34/44) presented a somewhat sombre picture of the financial situation of the United Nations, which had a deficit that was growing at an alarming rate. The question was very serious and must be considered as soon as possible. It should be made clear that, if the Committee postponed consideration of the question until the following year, it was only because it could not find a short-term solution, and that it was none the less very concerned by the situation.

80. Mr. MARTORELL (Peru) deplored the fact that the Committee had not yet received the report on the revised estimates for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The developing countries attached great importance to that Department and, in particular, to its restructuring. His delegation hoped that there would be sufficient time to study the relevant documents which he hoped would contain information regarding programmes of technical co-operation between various countries.

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81. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that all the items on the agenda were important but, as the Committee did not yet have all the necessary documents, it must make a choice and decide which questions should be postponed until the following year. His delegation agreed with the Chairman's suggestion. In particular, it would like to see consideration of the questions under agenda item 98 entitled: "Comprehensive study of the question of honoraria" (section IX), "United Nations International School" (section XIII) and "Depository functions of the Secretary-General and registration and publication of treaties" (section XXVIII), as well as of item 99 (Financial emergency of the United Nations) and item 100 (Administrative and budgetary co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency) postponed until the thirty-fifth session.
82. The Committee might consider postponing other items, bearing in mind the publication dates of the relevant documents and the fact that such documents had to be considered by subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, which in turn would make their recommendations to the Fifth Committee.
83. Mr. MORET-ECHEVARRIA (Cuba) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/34/L.18 which would postpone until the thirty-fifth session consideration of the part of agenda item 100 which concerned the impact of inflation on the budgets of organizations in the United Nations system. His delegation's proposal was designed to lighten the workload of the Committee, but it would be wrong to assume that the importance of inflation had been diminished. On the contrary, the deficit of the United Nations was increasing every year and means must be found to compensate for the impact of inflation which was particularly severe in the developed countries, where the headquarters of a number of United Nations agencies were located.
84. In view of the importance of the question, his delegation requested that it should be given priority when the Fifth Committee's work programme was drawn up at the thirty-fifth session.
85. Mr. GOSS (Australia) agreed that it would be desirable to postpone a number of agenda items until the following year with the exception of the question of honoraria.
86. With regard to agenda item 98, sections II (First class travel) and III (Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat) could also be postponed or, at least given very brief consideration.
87. With regard to agenda item 100, Japan and Canada had submitted a draft decision regarding the creation of a single administrative tribunal. In view of the importance of the question, it would perhaps be preferable to wait another year before taking a decision on the subject.
88. Finally, on the question of the draft decision submitted by the Cuban delegation, he suggested that the Committee should take a single decision covering all the agenda items which it wished to postpone until the thirty-fifth session.

89. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) expressed the hope that the Committee would not postpone consideration of the question of the United Nations International School until the thirty-fifth session. It was clear that the Committee must postpone consideration of agenda item 99 (Financial emergency of the United Nations) because it had not received the relevant documents in time. The delay in the submission of documents affected the developing countries in particular since, in view of their limited means, they could not be in constant consultation with their Governments.

90. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) supported the proposal of the representative of Australia that the Committee should adopt a single draft decision covering all agenda items which it wished to postpone until the thirty-fifth session.

91. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) reminded the Committee that the previous year a number of delegations had requested the Secretariat to submit an organizational chart of the United Nations. His delegation would like to know when such a chart would be available as it had been promised for the current session.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.