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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 50th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 118: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/40/831; A/C.5/40/16)

1. Mrs. DONOSO (Bolivia) said that an organization's viability depended above all on its financial situation. The report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/40/16) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/40/831) indicated that the United Nations now had a short-term deficit of \$390.7 million as at 31 December 1985, which represented an increase of \$28.1 million over 1984; the major portion of the deficit was attributable to the non-payment by some States of their contributions for peace-keeping operations and to late payment of assessed contributions to the regular budget. However, neither the reasons why Member States did not pay their contributions regularly nor the needs of Member States could be ignored.
2. The States which withheld their contributions to the financing of peace-keeping operations stated that they could not participate in activities inconsistent with their beliefs; they felt, perhaps mistakenly, that the Organization was working indirectly against them. In order to persuade them to change their attitude, the Organization must help them to a better understanding of its position as an instrument for peace in all areas of the world.
3. In the case of other States, late payment was due not to ill will but to lack of resources. For many developing countries membership in the United Nations represented a heavy financial burden when their assessed contributions were increased by the cost of logistical support and other expenses producing a total at least 10 times higher than the set percentage. They often had to choose between the immediate needs of their people and their obligations to an organization whose founding had been inspired by romantic and idealistic objectives and whose activities sometimes seemed to them very limited. How then could they be blamed for not giving priority to the Organization?
4. Other States, while having the means to pay their contributions on time, delayed payment in order to express their dissatisfaction with some aspects of the performance of the United Nations. Such an attitude might seem irresponsible on the part of a State, but its value as an expression of lack of confidence could not be denied.
5. Therefore, in the search for a solution to the Organization's financial difficulties account must be taken not only of the economic aspect of the problem but also of its profound social causes. The confidence of developed and developing countries in the effectiveness of the United Nations must be restored, for the Organization had been established by them and for them. The crisis confronting the United Nations set those Member States which for various reasons did not discharge their financial obligations in opposition to a minority of developed countries which financed the major portion of the expenses of the United Nations and considered, not without reason, that the financial irresponsibility of others obliged them to bear an unjust burden. That was why the problem of the financial

(Mrs. Donoso, Bolivia)

deficit was perhaps the most difficult of the problems facing the United Nations. While the search for an effective solution depended on a few, it represented a challenge for all Member States, which should be ready to compromise.

6. In her delegation's opinion, a short-term solution would be to establish a temporary system of half-yearly rather than annual payment of contributions, which must be made in full with a maximum delay of three six-month periods. The reduction of the amounts to be paid would enable the competent ministries of the States in arrears to obtain the required funds more easily from their Governments and thus provide the Organization with the liquidity it needed if it was gradually to cover its deficit and make realistic budgetary projections.

7. As to the long term, a tribute must be paid to the Secretary-General for his efforts to restore the confidence of Member States in the effectiveness of the Secretariat and its discretion. The efforts made by the Japanese delegation to bring about administrative reform in the United Nations were also welcome. The modernization of management methods, cutting back of bureaucracy and elimination of unnecessary procedures would improve the Organization's effectiveness and ease the work-load of staff members so that they would be able to give more time to the most important matters. A revision of the distribution of budgetary appropriations would certainly help to reduce administrative and operational costs and thus free resources for substantive activities. The time had come to review all aspects of the system from the administrative and financial standpoints, in order to ensure optimum co-ordination of activities with the smallest possible budget. It was only by adapting to its present needs and avoiding any further economic deterioration that the United Nations would be able to maintain its effectiveness and retain the faltering confidence of Member States.

8. Her delegation believed that, except in a few exceptional cases such as the issue of special postage stamps with the theme of the economic and social crisis in Africa, the United Nations should not engage in revenue-producing activities, for they might tarnish its image and divert its attention from its specific purpose.

9. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago) said that it was no longer appropriate, in view of the persistence of and continued increase in the Organization's deficit, to speak of a short-term deficit. Unfortunately, it was probable that, as the Controller expected, the situation would only deteriorate. He had lost count of the number of occasions on which, during the first reading of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987, delegations had stated that if certain appropriations were approved, they would not contribute their share.

10. While one of the root causes of the financial difficulties of the United Nations - the late payment of assessed contributions - was understandable, even inevitable in some cases, the same could not be said of the withholding of their contributions by certain Member States. That practice was reminiscent of the attitude of a spoilt child who took his ball away when the game was not going his way.

(Mr. Murray, Trinidad and Tobago)

11. Most of the solutions proposed by the Secretary-General were not really satisfactory. Borrowing from Member States, for example, might reward the States which did not pay their contributions if the United Nations borrowed from some of their financial institutions. The assessment of contributions on a two-yearly basis would not bring about any change of attitude on the part of the delinquent States. However, his delegation thanked the Secretary-General for presenting those solutions, many of which might in fact alleviate the seriousness of the problem without eliminating the root cause.

12. He also expressed his country's gratitude to the Member States which contributed troops and thus bore the burden of the deficit by agreeing to the postponement of reimbursements due to them. In a similar vein, he paid a tribute to the delegations of Pakistan and Sweden for their efforts in respect of the issue of special postage stamps, which had drawn attention to the problem of the financial crisis and might perhaps contribute to solving it.

13. It could not, however, be denied that the only durable solution would be to correct the attitude of Member States so that they paid their contributions promptly. The persistent financial difficulties of the Organization were clearly attributable to Member States which were financially strong enough to use the provisions of article 19 of the Charter to structure their payments and withholdings. In the final analysis respect on the part of Member States for their financial commitments to the Organization was a function of their conscience and political will. There could be no better proof of the commitment of Member States to the Organization during its fortieth anniversary than for them to honour their obligations. His delegation therefore looked forward to the report which the Secretary-General, at the request of the Advisory Committee, was to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

AGENDA ITEM 126: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued):

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (A/40/754 and 948; A/C.5/40/L.4)

14. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Security Council, in its resolution 756 (1985), dated 21 November 1985, had extended the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) until 31 May 1986. The Fifth Committee should therefore recommend that the General Assembly should authorize the necessary appropriation for UNDOF to continue its operations.

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of ACABQ on the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East (A/40/948), said that, in paragraph 12 of the report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the cost estimates submitted by the Secretary-General for UNDOF for 1985-1986 should be approved. Subject to the Security Council's decision on the extension of UNDOF's mandate for the period between 1 December 1985 and 30 November 1986, the Advisory Committee considered that UNDOF costs for that period should be no greater than a gross amount of \$36,564,000 (or a net amount of \$35,869,000). With reference to part A of the Advisory

(Mr. Mselle)

Committee's report, ACABQ also approved the figure submitted by the Secretary-General for UNDOF's costs from 1 December 1983 to 30 November 1985 inclusive.

16. Mr. VAHER (Canada), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the majority of Member States, out of respect for Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter, supported peace-keeping operations and recognized the importance of the role played by the forces entrusted with those operations in preparing for peace, safeguarding international security and promoting respect for the Charter.

17. The sponsors of the draft resolution therefore considered that, in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 2 of the Charter, the cost of those activities should be shared equally among Member States and that the permanent members of the Security Council had a special responsibility in that connection. They were accordingly concerned at the attitude of certain Member States which, by their refusal to contribute to the expenses of UNDOF, had imposed an unduly heavy burden on the countries which had provided contingents, particularly the least developed among them. It emerged from the Advisory Committee's report that, on 30 September 1985, the balance of contributions to be received from Member States totalled \$73 million, of which only \$6.2 million was regarded as recoverable. The success of peace-keeping operations was linked to respect for the principle of collective responsibility for their financing and the sponsors therefore urged all Member States to honour their obligations.

18. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen) observed that the Zionist entity bore the entire responsibility for its aggression against Lebanon and other Arab States and for the resultant expenses. His delegation would therefore abstain if draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4 was put to the vote.

19. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel), speaking on a point of order, said that his country had a name and that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, that name should be used by speakers.

20. Peace-keeping operations could not be a substitute for the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, the prolongation of such operations in the Middle East reflected the complexity of the problems of that region, which had caused the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNDOF on a number of occasions with the agreement of all interested parties. That being the case, his delegation hoped that the majority of the members of the Fifth Committee were ready, as he was, to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4.

21. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen) reminded the Committee that the General Assembly had adopted a resolution equating zionism with racism and pointed out that a well-known Zionist personality had declared that Zionist aggression against foreign States was contrary to the spirit of zionism.

22. Mr. SWEISI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) considered that the establishment and financing of peace-keeping forces could not bring a definitive solution to the Middle East problem. Since it was not the responsibility of Member States as a

(Mr. Sweisi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

whole but that of the aggressor to meet the expenses resulting from aggression, his delegation would abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4.

23. Mr. KHALEEL (Maldives) announced that his delegation would not participate in the vote on draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4.

24. Mr. MOJTAHED (Islamic Republic of Iran) announced that his delegation, too, would not participate in the vote because, in its view, the cost of the Force should be met by the racist occupying régime and those who supported it.

25. Mr. GJIKA (Albania) said that Albania would vote against the draft resolution because of its position, which was already well known to the General Assembly. It was not a question of financial considerations but of respect for certain principles.

26. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he could not understand why the costs of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East were so high. It was to be hoped that, when UNDOF headquarters were relocated, those in charge would seek premises at a reasonable rent. That having been said, his delegation agreed completely with what the Advisory Committee had said regarding the need to economize and to make UNDOF's costs more cost effective.

27. If the Committee voted on the draft resolution, the Soviet Union would request a separate vote on parts A and B. It would be obliged to abstain on part A. It would vote against part B, as it could not countenance any violation of the financial regulations which provided that the balance of unutilized funds should be returned to Member States.

28. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria), supported by Mrs. DEREGIBUS (Argentina) and Mr. OTHMAN (Jordan), noted that draft resolution A/C.5/40/L.4 had been submitted to the Committee at a rather late date. Before taking a decision, time for reflection was needed.

29. Mr. FORAN (Controller), in response to Mr. VAHER (Canada), said that even if, according to the regulations, financing for UNDOF should cease on 30 November, steps could be taken to ensure uninterrupted financing until the beginning of the following week.

30. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) suggested that the Committee should conclude forthwith its discussion of the draft resolution under consideration and that at its next meeting, on 2 December, it should proceed directly to the vote. Using the services of Forward Echelon, the General Assembly would be able to have the results of the Fifth Committee's deliberations before its afternoon meeting. However, that procedure presupposed that everyone agreed not to postpone again a vote on Monday, 2 December.

31. The CHAIRMAN, pointing out that there was nothing to prevent resumption of the question at the following meeting, suggested that a decision should be postponed until the 51st meeting.

32. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEMS 116 AND 117: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1986-1987 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

33. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago), referring to the decisions taken by the Fifth Committee relating to the construction work at Addis Ababa, to the UNIDIR budget and to the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, said that if his delegation had been present during the relevant votes it would have voted in favour.

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/40/L.21 and L.22 concerning agenda item 18 (Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples) (A/C.5/40/64)

34. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in his statement on the subject (A/C.5/40/64), the Secretary-General estimated the cost that would be incurred by the adoption of draft resolution A/40/L.21 at \$269,500, and by the adoption of draft resolution A/40/L.22 at \$55,000. In paragraph 17, the Secretary-General indicated that a total appropriation of \$581,900 had been proposed under subsection 2 of section 3A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 and that the 1986 portion of that appropriation was \$283,800. He was not requesting any additional amount for that section.

35. With regard to section 27, the Fifth Committee had already approved in first reading an appropriation of \$75,673,100, as had been recommended by the Advisory Committee, and the Secretary-General was not requesting any additional appropriation in respect of the implications of draft resolution A/40/L.22.

36. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that the adoption of the two draft resolutions in question would have no additional financial implication for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987. The necessary costs would be covered within the amounts already requested by the Secretary-General in respect of the proposed programme budget.

37. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that if it adopted draft resolutions A/40/L.21 and L.22, no additional appropriation would be required at the present stage.

38. At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet

Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Federal Republic of Italy, Netherlands, Portugal.

39. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 98 votes to 3, with 8 abstentions.

40. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen), Mr. DIALLO (Guinea), Mr. YONIS (Iraq), Mr. ROY (India) and Mr. COULIBALY (Mali) stated that, if their delegations had been present at the time of the vote, they would have voted in favour of the Chairman's proposal.

AGENDA ITEMS 124 and 125: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (A/40/30 and A/40/653 and Add.1; A/C.5/40/26, 41 and 44, A/C.5/40/45 and Corr.1 and A/40/7/Add.12) AND UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (A/40/9 and 848; A/C.5/40/24 and 41) (continued)

41. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago) regretted that the technical reports submitted by ICSC and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board were unreadable for the uninitiated. The same might be said of the conclusions of other organs of the General Assembly; his delegation appealed to them to make an effort to present simple and readable texts, bringing out the main points and thus allowing all interested parties to join in the discussions, rather than confining them to a small number of initiatives.

42. The most important of the recommendations before the Committee were those concerning the range of the margin between the remuneration of the international civil service and that paid by the United States Federal Administration. At first glance, a range of 110 to 120 appeared convenient, but other suggestions which had emerged in the course of the debate - 112 to 118 or 109 to 121, for example -

(Mr. Murray, Trinidad and Tobago)

appeared to have some merit. Everyone seemed to be agreed on a mid-point of 115, although the two outer limits of the range were somewhat arbitrary, inasmuch as the base of the margin was not clear.

43. There was no ignoring the fact that matters relating to post adjustment were the subject of proceedings before the Administrative Tribunal. What at first appeared to be a quite straightforward recommendation by ICSC was in fact a contentious issue. The current focus on the margin arose because of a perception that the remuneration and pension benefits of United Nations staff were too high. But in relation to what? If United Nations remuneration was "too high", why had the comparator service instituted an equalization allowance for its civil servants who were on transfer to an international agency?

44. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly had adopted certain decisions because Member States considered that the pensionable remuneration and pension benefits of United Nations staff were too high. It would serve no purpose to consider each of the individual recommendations currently before the Committee. Above all, the annual adoption of ad hoc measures in isolation from a general policy framework must be avoided. His delegation had at the previous session already suggested that a comprehensive view should be taken of all questions relating to conditions of service in the common system.

45. The Committee had heard many statements on all those questions. Although all parties should have their say, it was unfortunate that their views were not in harmony. For his delegation, the public exchanges between the staff associations, the executive heads and the Inspectors had been very revealing: they had exposed a deep-seated dissension in the common system deriving from the dissatisfaction of employees with their perception of the attitude of their employers. He contended that the Fifth Committee must regard itself as the employer of international staff and view all questions submitted to it on the subject in that context.

46. One of the basic principles of industrial relations was that there should be continuous negotiations between employee and employer. The principle was respected at the United Nations with regard to the General Service staff, who could negotiate with the Secretary-General, acting on behalf of the General Assembly. However, there was no such parallel procedure for the Professional and higher categories of staff. Although they were able to present their views to ICSC and the Fifth Committee, the fact remained that the latter could make changes, which were sometimes substantial, to their conditions of service without any real negotiations between employer and employee.

47. The United Nations operated in accordance with a system which allowed basically for the automatic adjustment of salaries and pensions. It was only to be expected that, after some time, such automatic changes no longer corresponded to the general financial conditions, and it was therefore necessary to make occasional comprehensive reviews. It was the opinion of his delegation that a comprehensive review was due.

(Mr. Murray, Trinidad and Tobago)

48. The decisions taken at the previous session clearly indicated that the General Assembly recognized that salary and pension benefits could not be allowed to increase unchecked. Nevertheless, even within the very real constraints of a limited budget, the Assembly must still respect its obligations with regard to the rights of international civil servants and preserve the integrity of the Pension Fund, in the context of the Noblemaire principle. His delegation believed that international civil servants would be willing to work towards that end, knowing that they would have to compromise or reduce their expectations in return for the elimination of uncertainty about their future.

49. Accordingly, any decision taken by the Committee should provide for a comprehensive review of the process of adjustment of pensionable remuneration and pension benefits and for the establishment of mechanisms allowing for direct negotiations between employers and employees on the recommendations of ICSC and the Joint Staff Pension Board. He was convinced that a strong, loyal and dedicated international civil service would help the Organization to realize the aims and objectives of the Charter.

50. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the investments of the Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/C.5/40/24), although containing an inventory of investments and tables relating to their distribution by geographical location and sector, was not sufficiently detailed to permit a thorough exchange of views on the strengthening of operations by the Fund, as requested in resolution 35/216 B. Such consideration was, however, indispensable, since the choices made with regard to investment had a direct effect on the actuarial balance and thus on the general management of the Fund. His delegation was, moreover, surprised that the report provided no information on the proportionate amount invested in transnational corporations; he would like to know to what extent efforts were being made to reduce that amount, as had been requested by the General Assembly in various resolutions.

51. The total rate of return on investments had been 8.1 per cent, which represented a good performance. A further improvement could be expected as a result of the declining United States dollar. It was also gratifying that the investments of the Fund in Africa had increased from 69.5 to 74.6 million dollars. However, there was a need to increase development-related investments - which currently amounted to 20.5 per cent of the total book value of the Fund - by researching actively all the possibilities for investment in those countries. In that context, Algeria was making every effort to enable the Fund to apply General Assembly resolutions, as was clear from tables 2 and 4 of the annex to the report. His delegation was pleased that the Fund had halted its indirect investments in South Africa but wished to receive fuller information on that point.

52. The actuarial valuation of the Fund still showed an imbalance, although it had been reduced from 4.79 to 3.01 per cent. Algeria therefore supported the Joint Staff Pension Board's recommendation that the rate of contribution be increased to 22.5 per cent and would even wish, like the Advisory Committee, that it should be rapidly increased to 24 per cent. So far as the scale of pensionable remuneration applicable from 1 January 1985 was concerned, it was anomalous that new

(Mr. Ladjouzi, Algeria)

participants in the Fund should bear the cost of decisions favourable principally to former participants. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee, that the load should be distributed equally among all participants in the Fund. Moreover, it would wish to know whether it was true, as the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System maintained, that the 50 per cent reduction in the actuarial deficit had been financed by savings achieved through cutting benefits of staff, which would be contrary to the provisions of article 26 of the Pension Fund Regulations.

53. Furthermore, it was doubtful whether raising the statutory retirement age to 62 years could remedy the actuarial imbalance in a lasting manner and whether such a step was opportune in terms of promotion of staff. On the other hand, it was essential to have a method for determining pensionable remuneration in order to provide the pension system with a stable basis. In that connection, the fact that ICSC had been unable to propose a new scale because it did not know what scheme the Federal Administration of the United States would adopt illustrated the limitations of the Noblemaire principle so far as pensions were concerned. Other criteria incorporating an automatic adjustment mechanism should perhaps be envisaged in order to avoid too frequent reviews. In that connection, he remarked that the reapplication of the provisions of article 54 (b) of the Pension Fund Regulations might convince international civil servants that the General Assembly had no intention of cutting their benefits.

54. With regard to the method of lump-sum commutation of a part of the pension, his delegation had no objection to the use of a composite discount rate but thought that there should be no further limitation of the amount which could be paid in that form. It saw no need for the imposition of a ceiling on the highest levels of pensions.

55. Lastly, the Joint Staff Pension Board should be encouraged to co-ordinate its activities with ICSC and the Office of Personnel Services with a view to determining, within the overall framework of personnel policy, a pension system that would effectively meet the international civil servants' concerns.

56. Mr. FORSHELL (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, welcomed the fact that the Pension Fund's actuarial imbalance had been reduced to 3.01 per cent as a result of various economy measures and of an increase in the organizations' contribution rate. However, the Fund was not yet entirely out of the woods, and the Nordic countries would therefore be inclined to regard favourably the Board's recommendation that the rate of contribution should be raised once more, from 1 January 1986. With reference to the Fund's investments, he expressed satisfaction with the return obtained, which had amounted to 8.1 per cent, and with the completion of the procedure of divestiture of investments linked to South Africa.

57. On the question of pensions as such, the five Nordic countries considered that the composite discount rate was in the interest of both the Fund and the participants. They noted that the problem of imposition of a ceiling on the highest levels of pensions concerned only a small number of officials, since, according to information appearing in paragraph 48 of the Joint Staff Pension

(Mr. Forshell, Sweden)

Board's report (A/40/9), of the 153 participants with the rank of Under-Secretary-General, Assistant-Secretary-General or their equivalent, 80 per cent had less than 21 years of service and almost 50 per cent less than six years of service. The imposition of a ceiling would therefore have only a minimal effect upon the Fund. If, however, the measure was thought desirable, the Nordic countries would favour the formula outlined in paragraph 51, one of whose practical advantages was that no special maximum rule for the lump sum would be necessary.

58. On the subject of the two-track pension adjustment system, the Nordic countries had noted that, according to the Board's conclusion, the 20 per cent cap would have to be monitored over the next few years before a decision to recommend possible changes could be taken and that the delay would have no adverse financial implications for the Fund. However, they expected the Board to revert to the matter as soon as possible.

59. With regard to compensatory measures for participants whose pensionable remuneration had been lowered on 1 January 1985, the Nordic countries welcomed the solution recommended by the Board in paragraph 74 of its report linking protection to the concept of final average remuneration. They considered that, before reviewing the methodology for the determination of pensionable remuneration, the General Assembly should await additional information on the new retirement scheme adopted by the Federal Administration of the United States. At the same time, they welcomed the intention of ICSC to revert in 1986 to some concerns expressed in that connection at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

60. Lastly, the five Nordic countries took the view that there were several arguments in favour of some expansion of the Board; its link with the General Assembly would be strengthened thereby and the Fund's participants would be better represented. In that connection, they welcomed the decision to grant formal observer status to the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS).

AGENDA ITEM 123: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (A/40/652 and A/40/673 and Add.1, A/C.5/40/5 and Add.1, A/C.5/40/6 and Corr.1, A/C.5/40/25, 27, 30, 38, 39 and 59)

61. Mr. WELLA (Togo) noted that progress had been made towards improving the geographical distribution of United Nations staff. The 40 per cent target for appointments of nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States had been reached. However, the situation was not yet fully satisfactory and, in view of the complexity of recruitment procedures, his delegation once again requested the Secretariat to observe the greatest possible rigour in applying the General Assembly's directives in staff matters.

62. Action on the measures described in paragraphs 13 to 17 of the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/40/652), relating, in particular, to the establishment of recruitment targets for each department, recruitment through competitive examinations, and the publicizing of vacancies in the media, should be continued. Accordingly, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's request for the maintenance of a P-3 and two General Services posts in the Division of Recruitment (para. 28C.28 of the programme budget).

(Mr. Wella, Togo)

63. The proportion of women in the Secretariat had increased only slowly. It was legitimate to hope that the appointment of a female Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat would play a positive role in that respect, provided her powers within the Office of Personnel Services were clearly defined.

64. The extension of competitive examinations to the P-3 level ought to facilitate the recruitment of the most competent and highly qualified staff. His delegation doubted, however, that the measure was practicable in the case of countries which had a small range and were above the mid-point of that range.

65. With regard to the career development system, his delegation noted the status of the work programme as set out in document A/C.5/40/27 and hoped that a definitive draft would be submitted for consideration at the forty-first session. It also favoured the establishment of an office of Ombudsman in the Secretariat. Such a step would induce officials responsible for programmes to be fairer and more thoughtful in their decisions concerning the staff. His delegation was somewhat alarmed by the excessive development of staff association activities and thought it desirable that the Secretary-General should submit a report at the forty-first session on measures he intended to take in order to maintain such activities within reasonable limits. In conclusion, he called for a strengthening of the role and authority of the Office of Personnel Services.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.