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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)
later: Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland)
(Vice-Chairman)
later: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)
(Chairman)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/226, A/45/370 and A/45/617)

1. Mr. ALI KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation concurred in the Secretary-General's assessment in his analytical report (A/45/226) that the United Nations had, to the best of its abilities, carried out the reforms mandated by the General Assembly. The purpose of the reform process should be to strengthen the Organization's ability to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter and the challenges currently facing the world. The United Nations must remain a dynamic organization. Reform was not a finite process, nor an end in itself but implied a constant review of the functioning of the United Nations in relation to its objectives. As to the Organization's capacity to attain those objectives, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that no organization could sustain a prolonged period of upheaval.
2. The difficulties of carrying out the reforms had been aggravated by continuing financial uncertainty. It should be borne in mind that an implicit objective of resolution 41/213 had been to restore the Organization's financial viability. Until that was achieved, the reforms could not be said to have been successful. Unfortunately, some of those delegations which continued to press for the full implementation of particular recommendations had yet to meet their financial obligations in full. At a time when so much was expected of the United Nations, his delegation earnestly hoped that that situation would soon be corrected.
3. His delegation had other misgivings about the manner in which resolution 41/213 had been implemented. A reform process aimed at enhancing the Organization's performance had instead become a budget-cutting exercise which had undermined staff morale and adversely affected programme delivery. In the case of recommendation 3, for example, both the number of agenda items and of resolutions adopted had increased since the forty-first session of the General Assembly. As far as the rational distribution of agenda items among Main Committees was concerned, another Main Committee was also considering an issue relating to personnel. As to restraint in requesting reports, a proposal for a new report had actually been made during the consideration of the current item.
4. The wisdom of some of the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had been called into question by ACC (recommendation 13) and ICSC (recommendations 53 and 61). Recommendation 24 had been that UNDP should consider the feasibility of taking over the functions of UNDRO, yet, by its resolution 41/201, the General Assembly had reaffirmed UNDRO's mandate. Recommendations 25, 26 and 33 had also not been found practicable. It was not clear how placing the functions of planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring in a single organizational unit, in response to recommendation 32, had benefited activities in the economic and social sectors. In that context, he recalled that

(Mr. Ali Khan, Pakistan)

many Member States had repeatedly stressed the importance of keeping substantive considerations in view when carrying out any restructuring exercise. The benefits if any, of the changes introduced, should be demonstrated by the Secretariat through a comparative analysis of the new and former procedures.

5. The General Assembly had made clear its position that the reform should not result in any negative impact on programmes. The Secretary-General had indicated that a negative impact on mandated programmes had been avoided, primarily because post reductions had fallen short of the mandated 15 per cent level at 11.95 per cent. The Secretary-General stated, in paragraph 81 of his analytical report, that programmes included in the current budget would not be negatively affected at that level of post reductions.

6. While 1,365 posts had been eliminated from the programme budget for the current biennium provision had been made for 2,549 posts to be funded from extrabudgetary resources. He wondered whether that figure should be interpreted as reflecting a 22 per cent increase in the number of posts actually required by the Organization to carry out its mandated activities. Reflecting its concern over that trend, CPC had called for further analysis of the relationship between posts and programmes funded from the regular budget and those funded from extrabudgetary resources. In paragraph 258 of his report the Secretary-General stated that the reforms had been carried out without serious negative effects on programmes. However, the suggestion that there had, in fact, been a negative impact was borne out by the programme performance report for 1988-1989, showing a decline in overall delivery rates from 82 per cent in 1984-1985 to 76 per cent in 1986-1987 and 74 per cent in 1988-1989. The fact that the post reductions had been effected arbitrarily, without regard to work-load analyses, might have contributed to that decline.

7. There was no analysis in the report of the effect of post reductions on equitable geographical distribution. Despite recommendation 47, the representation at senior levels of nationals from developing countries had declined during the biennium 1988-1989. The Secretary-General should be urged to redouble his efforts to correct that situation. Information on any changes that might have resulted from the implementation of recommendation 55 would be helpful.

8. Regarding reforms in the economic and social sectors, his delegation had taken note of the efforts to revitalize the Economic and Social Council, as reflected in its resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114. The work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields was of special importance and his delegation looked forward to the Assembly's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on restructuring in those sectors, to be considered in the plenary Assembly under agenda item 121. Although that report would address the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors, there were other areas of direct concern to the Fifth Committee, in particular the implementation of recommendation 32.

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9. While the introduction of a budget outline had enabled Member States to participate in the formulation of the budget at an earlier stage, it had not proved a reliable indicator of the level of resources required for the next biennium. Whether the Contingency Fund could operate effectively, given the demand for new programmes, remained to be seen. The new budgetary procedure was still in the process of evolving and must be kept under review. His delegation recognized that the new procedures had in 1989 enabled the General Assembly for the first time, to adopt the programme budget by consensus. Nevertheless, he emphasized that those procedures did not preclude any Member from calling for a vote, in accordance with the understanding on which resolution 41/213 had been adopted.

10. The question of extrabudgetary resources remained a grey area. His delegation fully concurred in the view of ACABQ that those resources could have an impact not only on the work programme but on the ordering of priorities and that it was essential to define the role of extrabudgetary financing in the Organization's overall financial structure.

11. The restoration of the Organization's financial viability was increasingly important. Since 1986, the United Nations had assumed vast responsibilities for solving new problems of global significance. The Organization needed staff of the highest calibre and in sufficient numbers to carry out its new activities and the necessary financing had to be provided on a sound and assured basis. It was, therefore, unrealistic to insist that budgetary levels should remain unchanged.

12. Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

13. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the relaxation of tensions among major Powers had resulted in a more effective use of the United Nations, thus helping to revive the confidence of Member States in the Organization's ability to resolve international conflicts and global problems. In response to rising expectations, however, the United Nations now had to shoulder greater responsibilities. In the field of peace-keeping and peace-making, in particular, its activities had grown dramatically to a total of 11 missions in the field at the end of 1989, compared with 5 at the beginning of 1988.

14. The Organization had managed its increased work-load well, thereby enhancing its image. That improved performance, however, had been accompanied by an increase in its financial requirements which Member States had to meet. He noted that missions in the field had been provided with extensive human and financial resources and had recorded sizeable unencumbered budgetary balances at the end of their mandate. While his delegation recognized the difficulties of organizing peace-keeping operations, which were in large part "unprogrammable", it attached importance to the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of every programme and activity carried out by the Organization. It therefore attached great importance to the Secretary-General's commitment to maintaining administrative and financial effectiveness and efficiency. While cost-effectiveness and increased efficiency were not ends in themselves, they were essential means of strengthening the United Nations.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

15. The Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had noted that over the years the increase in the number of posts had not been matched by an increase in the management capacity of the United Nations to maintain overall administrative efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness. That had been the fundamental problem to be resolved through the administrative reform envisaged in General Assembly resolution 41/213. Better management and redeployment were expected to create conditions whereby any increase in resources would result in greater output. The process had obviously heightened the consciousness of Member States and the Secretariat about the way in which the United Nations used its resources.

16. One of the major achievements of the reform was the new planning, programming and budgeting process. That process would help to ensure that priority-setting and the establishment of resource requirements in the medium-term plan and programme budget would result in the elimination of obsolete, marginally useful or ineffective activities. Implementation of the programme budget within the overall level of resources agreed upon would encourage the effective utilization and, eventually, the redeployment of available resources in accordance with priorities. Not only must there be a continued effort to adopt decisions on budgetary matters by genuine consensus, but much also remained to be done to consolidate the new budgetary process. A comprehensive solution must be found to the problem of additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation, currency fluctuations and other add-ons not chargeable to the Contingency Fund. It was necessary to examine, in the light of past budget performance, the extent to which resources could be redeployed from low- to high-priority areas before the adequacy of the Contingency Fund was reviewed in 1991. The surplus indicated in the performance report for the biennium 1988-1989 was much larger than the \$15 million Contingency Fund, which amounted to 0.75 per cent of total budget appropriation. For the biennium, there had been an uncommitted balance of \$23.6 million, or 1.3 per cent of the total amount appropriated, and unliquidated obligations of \$63.9 million, representing 3.7 per cent of actual expenditures for the biennium 1988-1989. When resources of that order were available, there was no basis for the fear that the new budgetary process might jeopardize the Organization's ability to fulfil its changing role and mandate.

17. The staff reductions effected so far had had no negative impact on mandated programmes. The United Nations should continue to work to control any unnecessary expansion of its functions and budget, taking into account the staff reductions mandated by resolution 41/213. A positive indication of such restraint had been the reduction by nearly 50 per cent of the number of programme outputs added through legislative decision or at the initiative of the Secretariat over the past four years. The Secretary-General should also continue his efforts to reduce the number of high-level posts, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/201.

18. The Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had recommended that there should be further post reductions following the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat after the completion of the initial three-year period. In that connection, his delegation had three suggestions: first, a rational work-load standard should be established to prevent the impact of

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reductions from varying from department to department; second, the number of junior Professional staff should be increased and there should be recruitment from outside to ensure that not just the numbers of staff but also the staffing structure would be changed; third, there should be more transparency and coherence in personnel management, which should be based on objective methods and clear criteria for recruitment, evaluation and promotion. Serious attention should be paid to improving the quality of the staff, which was the Organization's most important asset.

19. Delays in restructuring the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors had endangered major achievements in other areas, and reform in that area was long overdue. Functions must be revitalized so that it would be possible to respond better to the requirements of developing countries. His delegation welcomed the level of agreement reached in such organs as UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Europe with regard to streamlining structures, reducing documentation and the number of meetings, and improving the organization of work by shortening agendas and streamlining calendars. It was also gratifying that four important United Nations bodies had decided on biennialization. Vigorous efforts to those ends should be made by all intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. The Secretary-General should take the initiative in rationalizing the intergovernmental machinery necessary for each of the forthcoming major international conferences and meetings on such priority issues as the environment, the least developed countries, international debt and drugs, rather than awaiting the results of deliberations in those forums. The role of the Committee on Conferences should also be strengthened to help it to contribute to a better utilization of conference facilities and resources, not only of the United Nations but of the entire United Nations system. The Committee should also enforce strict observance of the established rules on the control and distribution of documentation and improve conference servicing by making use of recent technological innovations.

20. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). The United Nations system was expected to play a major role in multilateral co-operation aimed at solving problems that were increasingly multidisciplinary and global in scope. It was essential, therefore, for the United Nations and the specialized agencies to develop a truly integrated approach to those problems. With enhanced co-ordination within the system, it would be possible to make better use of scarce resources and avoid waste and duplication. For that reason, his delegation believed that the time had come for CPC to consolidate and evaluate its own performance and establish a work programme designed to enhance and strengthen co-ordination within the United Nations system on the basis of input from ACC, particularly the prospective annual overview report. Under the direction of the General Assembly, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) was responsible for the process of reforming the United Nations and for system-wide co-ordination. If it took the steps suggested, it would contribute substantially to promoting the reform and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness both of the United Nations and the system as a whole.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/?79, and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

21. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the proposed medium-term plan for 1992-1997 had particular significance, not only because it would constitute the basis for the programme budgets of the Organization for the next six years but because it was the first comprehensive blueprint for a post-reform United Nations. His delegation shared the view that the medium-term plan helped to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of mandated activities and was gratified that the Secretary-General had indicated in his introduction to the plan that he agreed.

22. His delegation also agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the time had come to address the issue of whether the medium-term plan, in its current form, fulfilled the criteria set out in the relevant regulations and rules governing programme planning. There were some notable improvements in the structure and planning process of the proposed plan: a new programme structure had been adopted, the number of programmes had been reduced through consolidation of related activities, and priorities had been established for most of the subprogrammes. Nevertheless, much remained to be done if the medium-term plan was to be of real use to Member States and the Secretariat. His delegation had consistently stressed that the medium-term plan should be at once a strategic and a pragmatic instrument for guiding the work of the United Nations and that it should be concise but bold and action-oriented. In view of the bulky documentation issued in connection with the plan, he supported the Advisory Committee's observation that the plan must be simplified and shortened if it was to be of use. Consideration should be given to establishing, from the very beginning of the planning process, clear guidelines for the format of the plan, so as to reduce its length and avoid rhetorical excess.

23. The original concept of the plan had been that it should be directly relevant to the programme budgets. However, the extent to which the plan served as the framework for the formulation of those budgets was unclear. There was a need for a fundamental review both of the medium-term plan, in terms of its planning process, format and goals, and of the budgeting process.

24. His delegation attached the highest importance to the introduction to the plan, which highlighted the goals and objectives, priorities and means that would be available under it. His delegation recognized that the format of the introduction to the proposed plan represented a marked improvement, and set clear-cut priorities. It was obvious that the Secretary-General had taken into account the concerns expressed by Member States at the preparatory stage. His delegation appreciated the statement of the Secretary-General according the peace-making and peace-keeping activities of the Organization the highest priority, and was also pleased that consideration had been given to addressing inter-sectoral priorities.

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25. His delegation wished to make two requests that it felt would help refine the proposed priorities. Firstly, it would like to request an assessment of what such priority-setting implied for the entire medium-term plan. Designating peace-making and peace-keeping activities as a policy priority might entail careful identification of those issues in the economic and social sectors that were closely linked to issues of peace and security. For example, it would be wrong to lose sight of assistance to rehabilitation and settlement programmes, and the United Nations should also promote co-operation after the resolution of a conflict so that the land and economy of a country ravaged by war might be restored. A broader range of efforts to advance co-operation for peace, encompassing political, economic and social sectors, would need to be further elaborated. The second request concerned the degree of specificity of the priorities designated. It should be possible to translate priorities into specific strategies and time-limited objectives the attainment of which would be verifiable. It was obvious also that, unless an estimate of the resources needed was included, the entire exercise of priority-setting became meaningless.

26. In view of the extrabudgetary nature of resources allocated to peace-keeping activities, the proposed priorities should be translated into allocations of both regular and extrabudgetary resources. To that end, it would be useful if the Secretariat provided States on a continuous basis with analytical information on the allocation of resources among programmes of the medium-term plan, in order to facilitate the monitoring of trends in priority-setting. Such information should indicate distribution of financial and staff resources, both regular and extrabudgetary, among the programmes defined in the plan, and should be submitted biennially to CPC in order to assist the Committee in its task of evaluating progress and updating the plan.

27. Programme implementation, and in particular the monitoring of output delivery, was one of the important stages of the programme cycle. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that evaluation had still not been completely accepted as a management tool, and systematically and routinely integrated into the decision-making and management process.

28. His delegation also took the question of programme performance very seriously and endorsed the Advisory Committee's view that reports such as those contained in the Secretary-General's report on the programme performance for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/45/218 and Add.1) were of little value. That was true even from the quantitative point of view to which the report confined itself, since the report treated as identical outputs that were very different in terms of quality, importance and the resources entailed. The overall programme delivery rate arrived at on the basis of so inaccurate an assumption was more than misleading, it was harmful, since many delegations had cited that delivery rate in past bienniums as evidence that the programme performance of the Organization was deteriorating. In that connection, his delegation regarded as quite reasonable the view of the Advisory Committee that the submission of further programme performance reports should be suspended pending the resolution of the underlying methodological difficulties.

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme I: Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization (continued)

29. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the title of major programme I should be changed. The ultimate goal of all the programmes of the United Nations was the maintenance of international peace and security; as it stood, however, the title of major programme I gave the impression that other United Nations activities were not for that purpose. His delegation also felt that the title of programme 1 under major programme I brought together activities which were very different in nature, and that, in the case of "good offices", the activities referred to overlapped with those of programme 2, "Political and Security Council affairs". He would therefore suggest that the title of programme 1 should be changed to "Peaceful resolution of disputes" and that programmes 2 and 3 should be merged and given the new title of "Collective measures for the preservation of peace". The title of the fourth subprogramme might then be changed to reflect the fact that it covered programmes for the adjustment of international situations, including economic situations, which might lead to breaches of the peace.

30. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) noted that CPC had recommended approval of programme 1 on the understanding that further clarification of the concept of peace-making would be provided by the Secretary-General at the current session of the General Assembly. However, after reading the note submitted by the Secretariat in that context (A/C.5/45/CRP.1), his delegation had come to the preliminary conclusion that the concept of peace-making remained vague. It might be inferred from paragraph 3 of the Secretariat's note that good offices and peace-making were the same thing, but the references in later paragraphs to intra-State conflicts or tensions and to the preparation and holding of free and fair elections gave the impression that peace-making involved more than good offices. His delegation understood that the development of events had led the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to extend the meaning of what had so far been understood as good offices and peace-making, and it did not question what the Secretary-General had done so far in that respect. It felt, however, that, for the future, it would be well to have greater clarity and precision with regard to the definition of those activities.

31. His delegation felt that the question was an important and difficult one, and it considered that the treatment of it by CPC in paragraph 81 of its report reflected an extremely delicate balance. As the representative of Ghana had suggested, a serious problem of definition was involved. Until such time as the competent substantive bodies took a position on the question, the reference to peace-making should be excluded from the title of programme 1.

32. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that programme 1 was very important inasmuch as it involved activities which were basic for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although the Security Council was the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Secretary-General had also been given an important role to play in that respect under the Charter. His delegation fully supported the programme, but would suggest that its title be

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changed slightly to read "Good offices, maintenance and restoration of international peace and security, and research and the collection of information". The maintenance and restoration of international peace and security were frequently referred to in the Charter as associated activities, for example in Articles 39 and 51; it therefore seemed justified to link the two activities in the title of programme 1. His delegation also agreed that research and the collection of information were essential in supporting the Secretary-General's efforts in the field of preventive diplomacy and negotiation, and should therefore be included as part of programme 1, provided that duplication with other information activities was avoided.

33. Turning to programme 5, he emphasized the Organization's responsibility with regard to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need to give absolute priority to ensuring the implementation of the mandates conferred by the General Assembly in that field.

34. With regard to programme 7, it was important to take advantage of the improvement in the international climate to strengthen the existing mechanisms within the United Nations for the promotion of general and complete disarmament. Drawing attention to paragraph 7.1 of document A/45/6 (Prog. 7), he said that Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations was not the only legislative authority for the programme; other provisions could have been mentioned, including Article 11, Article 27 and, in connection with the proposed revitalization of the Military Staff Committee, Article 47.

35. With regard to paragraph 7.5, he felt that the question of weapons production and the proliferation of nuclear weapons should have been mentioned in connection with arms transfers.

36. He supported the fellowship programme designed to provide assistance to developing countries, as mentioned in paragraph 7.17, and felt that priority should be given to subprogramme 4.

37. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said that in the implementation of major programme I, the Secretary-General must ensure a balance between the analytical and research elements and the operational aspects of the programme. Emphasis should be given to subprogramme 3 of programme 1, which was an appropriate tool for providing guidance.

38. He drew attention to paragraph 108 of the report of CPC (A/45/16 (Part I)), which highlighted the importance of programme 6.

39. CPC had recommended that the concept of peace-making should be clarified prior to the adoption of programme 1. Drawing attention to document A/C.5/45/CRP.1, he emphasized that, as stated in paragraph 7, a mandate from the Security Council or the General Assembly and the concurrence of the parties involved were indispensable. He also drew attention to paragraph 2, which stated that the Secretary-General's mandate for good offices and peace-making derived from various

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Security Council and General Assembly resolutions; those instruments should be specified.

40. With regard to the question of resources, it would be important in the future for delegations to have before them an indication of the resources provided for the implementation of major programmes. The negative impact of the provision of extrabudgetary resources must be borne in mind. If the Secretary-General had acted in accordance with regulation 3.8 and regulation 3.18 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, there would have been a discussion within CPC of the alternative resources proposed by the Secretary-General for the implementation of the programmes.

41. Lastly, he concurred with the priorities accorded by CPC to the various subprogrammes.

42. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked whether it would be appropriate for the Fifth Committee to change the titles of major programmes, as had been proposed, and whether doing so would have any bearing on the titles of subprogrammes or on the reallocation of resources.

43. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, with regard to the questions raised by the representatives of Cuba and Venezuela, a representative of the Secretariat would comment on the concept of peace-making at a later meeting.

44. With regard to the question raised by the representative of the Philippines, the Committee had a sovereign right to change the title of any programme, and doing so would not affect the reallocation of resources as no figures had been submitted.

45. Replying to the representative of Ghana, he said that programmes 1 to 4 had not been submitted to any subsidiary organs for review because there were no such organs which were competent; the Main Committees of the General Assembly, to which the representative of Venezuela had referred, were not subsidiary organs. With regard to the suggestion made by the representative of Ghana that programmes 1 and 2 could be merged, the Secretariat had endeavoured to have the proposed medium-term plan reflect the centres of responsibility of the major Secretariat structures, taking into account the changes which had occurred.

46. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that, while he appreciated the assurances given by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division that another representative of the Secretariat would address the Committee with regard to the matter which he had raised, he emphasized that he had not raised a question, but rather had insisted that the legislative mandates corresponding to the concept of peace-making operations should be specified for the Committee.

47. With regard to the procedures for discussion of the proposed medium-term plan, he asked whether the other Main Committees had been requested to include such an item in their agendas.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that he had written to the Chairmen of the other Main Committees to invite them to consider the item.

49. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the plan was the result of a long and complicated consultative process. The representative of Cuba had correctly pointed out that consideration of the plan was not a formal item on the agenda of the other Main Committees. The Fifth Committee had primary responsibility for presenting the medium-term plan to the plenary Assembly; it had never been the intention to generate a full debate on the item in the other Committees. While there was currently no ground for making consideration of the plan a formal item on the agendas of the other Committees, their Chairmen were free to present comments on the various programmes, and the Fifth Committee would not take a final decision until those comments had been received.

50. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that he was concerned at the lack of precision with regard to the activities encompassed by programmes 1 to 4. With regard to programme 1, for example, the activities involved were those undertaken by the Secretary-General to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and other actions undertaken by the Security Council. Therefore, the term "peace enforcement measures" would be preferable to "good offices". Similarly, with regard to programmes 3 and 4, it was necessary to specify the legislative mandates from which they derived and the activities which would qualify them as programmes, rather than referring, for example, to "special political questions". CPC had had an opportunity to examine those questions, but not all delegations were members of CPC.

51. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) emphasized that the Fifth Committee had primary responsibility for considering and stating its views on the proposed medium-term plan.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that on 11 October 1990 he had addressed a letter to the President of the General Assembly. The Chairmen of the other Main Committees had then been requested to submit replies on behalf of their Committees by 9 November 1990.

53. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the procedure was not very complicated. The Chairman of the Fifth Committee had merely to write to the Chairmen of the other Committees in order to draw their attention to the proposed medium-term plan. In the past, replies had always been received by a certain date, and frequently the other Committees had indicated that they had no comments to make with regard to the various programmes. The draft resolution submitted by the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly always included a statement to the effect that the views of other Committees had been taken into account. Accordingly, the juridical basis for other Committees to present their views existed, and it was the responsibility of those Committees to decide whether or not they wished to avail themselves of the opportunity to comment on the sections of the medium-term plan which fell within their spheres of competence.

Major programme II: Implementation, codification and progressive development of international law

54. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) drew attention to paragraphs 127 to 139 of document A/45/16 (Part I). CPC had recommended approval of programme 9 with a number of modifications, as set out in paragraph 132. CPC had also recommended approval of programme 10 subject to the modification of three paragraphs, as indicated in paragraph 139 of the report.

55. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) said that at the recent session of CPC, his delegation had expressed its reservations concerning activities related to the Preparatory Commission of the Sea-Bed Authority, as mentioned in paragraph 138. While it would not block the adoption of the programme by the General Assembly, it remained firmly opposed to those activities.

56. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) underscored the importance of the codification and progressive development of international law. For that reason, emphasis should be given to paragraph 3 of programme 9. He also felt that high priority should be given to programme 10. Despite the major progress which had been made at recent meetings of the Preparatory Commission, particularly with regard to the registration of pioneer investors, the programme deserved urgent implementation.

Major programme III: International co-operation for economic and social development

57. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that major programme III had originally comprised only programme 11 of the proposed medium-term plan, of which CPC had recommended approval in its report (A/45/16 (Part I), para. 146), subject to the provisos stated therein. The request for a separate programme for Africa had led to the formulation under major programme III of programme 45 (A/45/16 (Part II), paras. 9-17) of which CPC had also recommended approval subject to various modifications.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Revised estimates under sections 3, 13, 27 and 31 and income section 1 (continued)
(A/C.5/45/2, A/45/7/Add.2)

58. The CHAIRMAN said that informal consultations on the revised estimates were still under way.

59. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that the amount of \$1.4 million referred to by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 10 to 13 of its report (A/45/7/Add.2) had been intended to support university-level studies by Namibians abroad, many of whom were in mid-career. Such training was of particular importance to Namibia. The situation was complicated by the failure to attract voluntary contributions to the United Nations Fund for Namibia. His delegation was extremely concerned over what would happen if such contributions were not forthcoming. With regard to the appeal which the Secretary-General now intended to make, he wished to know what the likelihood was of attracting the amount needed, and what could be done to assist the students affected if contributions fell short of the required amount.

(Mr. Lopez, Venezuela)

60. With respect to the Transitional Unit for Namibia, the Advisory Committee had recommended a smaller staffing table (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 14) than that requested by the Secretary-General, on the assumption that the volume of work to be handled by the Unit was decreasing. In fact approval of a smaller staffing table would mean that the Unit was over-extended. His delegation thus supported the original proposal made by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/2, para. 57).

61. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his delegation supported the proposed establishment of the Transitional Unit for Namibia, and inquired what the reaction of the Secretariat was to the smaller staffing level proposed by the Advisory Committee. His delegation also supported the recommendations concerning office automation at the Economic Commission for Africa, and noted the alternative proposal made by Japan in that regard. He trusted that it would be possible to reach a consensus in informal consultations.

62. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Venezuela and Morocco. The proposal made by Japan concerning ECA offered a solution which seemed likely to be acceptable to all.

63. Mr. HAMEDA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation questioned the need for the establishment of the Transitional Unit for Namibia, since the activities to be carried out by that Unit could be performed by other political offices and regional organizations. It would be preferable to use the resources where they were really needed. His delegation agreed with the comments of the Advisory Committee (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 7) concerning redeployment of the staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia.

64. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked what the net assets of the Institute for Namibia were on its closure in September 1990 and what had happened to them. He also asked for information on the degree of office automation at the various regional commissions.

65. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that his delegation fully appreciated the need for consensus, but was concerned that some were attempting to use that as a strategy to defer approval of the office automation programme at ECA, even though there was general agreement with the Advisory Committee's recommendations. On the understanding that it would not constitute a precedent, the Committee should take a decision on the revised estimates under section 13 without further delay and approve the ECA office automation programme.

66. With regard to the proposed establishment of an information centre in Namibia, his delegation noted that the Government of Namibia was being asked to provide certain facilities, which were not, to his understanding, normally requested of host Governments. The request was particularly inappropriate given United Nations responsibilities towards Namibia. The funding for briefings referred to by the Advisory Committee in its report could be applied to the new nation's needs and should not be deleted.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.