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at 10 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: 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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39.

In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Mustonen (Finland),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.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. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve wanted to emphasize that the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (Group of 18) remained the basic document which must guide the current reform process. Like the Secretary-General, they thought that the experience of the past five years had been on balance positive. There was no doubt that significant results had been achieved in a number of areas: several Secretariat services had been restructured and the post-reduction exercise had been continued. For the first time in over 40 years the budget appropriations had been adopted by consensus at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. By supporting the reforms undertaken Member States had demonstrated their commitment to the work of the Organization and had thereby helped to strengthen it.

2. However, more needed to be done in order to consolidate those achievements. An improvement in the financial situation of the United Nations was now overdue. Fulfilment by Member States of their financial obligations would be the most tangible evidence of their political commitment. In some areas the comments of the Group of 18 remained valid: for example, the overly complex structure of the intergovernmental machinery or the proliferation of conferences and meetings of intergovernmental bodies. The Twelve strongly supported the appeals of the President of the General Assembly for a reduction in the number of resolutions and of reports requested from the Secretary-General, as well as in night and week-end meetings. It was for the Fifth Committee to give a lead. With regard to the restructuring of the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors, the Twelve were convinced that the Secretary-General would be able to act with the authority which he had demonstrated in other areas. They again urged all concerned to respect the Secretary-General's prerogatives as chief administrative officer of the Organization.

3. Even in cases where the results obtained had been relatively satisfactory there must be no relaxation of effort. One of the main benefits of the reform exercise was that it obliged the Secretariat to engage in permanent self-evaluation. The Twelve thought that increasing account should be taken of changing requirements and work-loads in future reviews of staffing tables. Any proposed retrenchment, redeployment or reinforcement of staff must take those factors into consideration. As the Secretary-General had said, redeployment was a constant necessity in the functioning of a dynamic organization.

4. There was, of course, a close link between the distribution of human resources and the distribution of financial resources. Resolution 41/213 had established for

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

the first time a framework to enable Member States to agree on the overall level of the programme budget. As experience had shown in 1989, that had facilitated agreement on the content of the programme budget and a broader measure of support for the funding of activities. The subsidiary bodies of the Fifth Committee had played an important role in that respect, and the Twelve wanted them to continue to function effectively in accordance with their mandates.

5. The Secretary-General had recently referred to confidence-building. But the Twelve thought that it was too early to say that the reform process had achieved its purposes. If the results were to prove of lasting value, Member States and the Secretariat, as the Secretary-General implied in paragraph 3 of his analytical report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 (A/45/226), must sustain the effort in a spirit of compromise and in the common interest.

6. Mr. LAZAREVIC (Yugoslavia), speaking on agenda items 117 and 119, noted that the analytical report on the implementation of resolution 41/213 provided detailed information and that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had found it generally satisfactory. Significant progress had been achieved in many areas and it could be said that the Secretary-General had accomplished the essentials of what had been requested from him. Nevertheless, in some areas little or no progress had been made. That was particularly true with respect to recommendations 2 and 8. Despite the action taken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and some regional commissions, the implementation of the two recommendations depended almost entirely on the conclusion of an agreement on the structure of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social fields. Until that problem was solved it would be difficult to decide whether the Economic and Social Council should have only one session per year.

7. The question must also be addressed in the context of the work which the international community would have to undertake in the years to come: the programme was a very heavy one in the economic and social fields. That did not reduce in any way the urgent need for concerted action to rationalize and co-ordinate better the work of intergovernmental bodies and administrative services throughout the United Nations system. The choice of the type of intergovernmental machinery to be introduced would depend largely on the spirit of co-operation demonstrated by Member States, a spirit which currently prevailed in the work in the political sphere. In any event, in the interim the two annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council should be maintained.

8. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General has succeeded in reducing by 11.95 per cent the number of posts funded from the regular budget without detriment to the programmes or the functioning of the Secretariat; however, that reduction had been largely offset by the increase in the number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources. Parallel with the internal restructuring of the Secretariat a new approach to administrative and financial matters had been introduced. The adoption of resolutions by consensus was an encouraging development which should become the regular pattern.

(Mr. Lazarevic, Yugoslavia)

9. The reform of the United Nations was a continuing process which must embrace not only the activities of the Secretariat but also the work programmes of intergovernmental bodies, which should be more resolute in eliminating or phasing out outdated programmes in favour of new programmes which responded better to the new needs of the international community.

10. The Yugoslav delegation thought, that the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 might be more easily discussed after it had been considered by CPC and the Advisory Committee. The number of programmes and subprogrammes contained in the plan was impressive. Given the new trends in international political and economic relations, it would certainly be necessary to revise some programmes. The Secretary-General's introduction of the medium-term plan was particularly important in that respect, because it reflected the changes taking place in the world and the opening-up of new perspectives for international co-operation.

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/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

11. Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the medium-term plan was important for two reasons: it was the principal programme planning instrument of the United Nations, and it would determine the direction of United Nations activities until the year 2000, reflecting the collective will of Member States. There was currently an unprecedented will to make the United Nations an effective instrument at the service of international peace and security. Prospects were also promising for international co-operation in the area of social, economic and environmental issues.

12. In the Nordic countries' vision of the United Nations in the 1990s, two important tasks stood out. One was to combine and co-ordinate peace-keeping and peace-making activities, not least by developing tools and procedures for preventive diplomacy and by setting up a mechanism to deal with regional conflicts and those internal conflicts that had regional implications. The other was, to adopt effective measures to deal with global social and economic issues (poverty, environmental degradation, drugs, etc.). What was needed was thus a realistic division of labour among the various organs of the United Nations system, together with well-defined programmes of action. The United Nations system must also improve its capacity to function as an integrated whole when the solution of a particular set of problems so demanded.

13. The past year had shown that changes on the international political scene might in turn call for other changes. The new plan must allow for adjustments permitting activities and resources of the system to be geared to meeting new demands. Flexibility was thus indispensable.

14. If Member States and the Secretariat mobilized all available resources and skills to deal with those two major areas of concern, the United Nations would be in a position to play an effective role. The medium-term plan, particularly the introduction thereto, was a crucial instrument in that regard, since it set forth

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

the line of action for the United Nations. The Nordic countries concurred with the views expressed by the Secretary-General in the introduction, which seemed to them clearly to summarize the tasks and priorities facing the United Nations.

15. They were pleased to note that the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation had been used as a point of reference. The new international development strategy, which complemented and filled out the Declaration, would also be an important instrument.

16. The delegations of the Nordic countries attached particular importance to human resources development activities (including the social aspects of development), to emergency assistance and humanitarian aid, to environment and development, and to the protection of human rights. With regard to human rights, before any new instruments were adopted, it was important to ensure that there was no danger of their weakening existing instruments.

17. The delegations of the Nordic countries approved of the proposed structure of the plan, and welcomed the reduction in the number of programmes and the consolidation of some activities. However, like the Advisory Committee, they felt that extrabudgetary resources needed to be more clearly identified, as did the linkage between the medium-term plan and the programme budgets.

18. They had studied the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) with great interest. In their view, the reports underscored the importance of the work of that Committee in planning United Nations programmes. The role of the Secretary-General in his capacity as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization was also of crucial importance. The Nordic countries welcomed his continuing efforts to improve the efficiency of the Organization and programme planning.

19. If the United Nations was to be efficient, its financial stability must be restored. To secure that, Member States must honour their obligations and pay their contributions in full and on time. Clearly, resources would continue to be scarce in relation to the magnitude of the tasks to be performed. It was thus important to use those resources in the most efficient and responsible manner possible.

20. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, concurred with the comments made by the Secretary-General in the introduction to the medium-term plan. The Twelve attached great importance to two major principles: (a) that a matter could be regarded as a priority only if the objective sought clearly called for multilateral action; (b) that the medium-term plan must deal with issues that were of continued concern to the international community. That being said, the Twelve agreed with CPC that priorities were indicated on a broader basis in the introduction to the plan than in the proposed programme budget outline. The Secretary-General was right to assign the highest priority to maintenance of peace and security in paragraph 39 of his introduction. With regard to establishing an order of priority among programmes, the Twelve would be ready to participate actively in any informal

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(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

consultations that might be held during the session. Bearing in mind the three criteria specified in regulation 3.15 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, they considered that international law, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assistance to refugees should be added to the list of priority areas provided by CPC in paragraph 30 of document A/45/16 (Part II). Of course, other questions requiring immediate consideration might perhaps also have to be added at a later date. The plan would have to be revised in order to take account not only of the subsequent decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, but also of developments on the international scene. To facilitate revision and reference, it would be preferable to publish the document in a loose-leaf format.

21. In accordance with regulation 3.3 (c) of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, efforts should continue to include in the plan an indicative estimate of the resources necessary to finance programmes. In that regard, the Twelve welcomed the fact that the outline programme budget gave not only a global figure for the appropriations necessary for the first biennium of the period covered by the plan, but also a breakdown of those figures between major programmes.

22. The report of the Secretary-General on programme performance for the biennium 1988-1989 was of special interest in considering the plan, inasmuch as most of the actions contained an element of continuity. The Twelve concurred with the conclusions of CPC and the Advisory Committee regarding the report. In paragraph 18 of his report, the Secretary-General rightly noted that the coverage of the exercise was incomplete, because it did not include some activities and because no precise indications were given of the degree of importance of outputs implemented or postponed. Outputs included in the categories "others" and "reports" should also be more clearly identified. The Twelve encouraged the Secretary-General to persevere in his efforts to monitor more closely the use of extrabudgetary resources.

23. The Twelve noted with satisfaction the attention given by CPC to the evaluation and co-ordination of programmes. Evaluation posed a problem of methodology for all organizations of the United Nations system. Self-evaluation, on which some of them depended exclusively, needed to be rigorous and systematic and complemented as appropriate by in-depth evaluation. The Twelve appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the existing evaluation machinery and believed that a specialized technique and staff should be developed so that the results in respect both of general action and individual programmes could be clearly reported. In all such activity, of course, the complementarity of programme and budget performance reporting must be strictly observed.

24. Regarding co-ordination, the Twelve fully endorsed the statement of CPC in paragraph 391 of its report, stressing the need for efficient and coherent utilization of the human and financial resources of the United Nations system as a whole and highlighting the importance it attached to co-ordination at both the intergovernmental and inter-secretariat levels. Special attention should be brought to the problem of avoiding duplication of work and overlaps, particularly in the economic and social sectors. CPC recommended further refinement of the

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

methodology and the inclusion of cross-references to other relevant activities in each subprogramme. Such an initiative would probably be helpful. In conclusion, the Twelve hoped that CPC and ACC would strengthen their efforts for better co-ordination throughout the system so that it might be perceived as an effective tool of international co-operation.

25. Mr. TISLER (Czechoslovakia) said that progress had been achieved in preparing the medium-term plan, the Secretariat having taken into account the various elements of the planning, programming and budgeting process, the importance of which was emphasized by the General Assembly in resolution 44/194. The process should be flexible enough to allow resolutions and decisions yet to be adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to be integrated into the plan before it came into effect. Generally speaking, his delegation was satisfied with the introduction, which it found balanced and comprehensive. It welcomed the emphasis placed on the maintenance of peace, disarmament, economic and social development and the protection of human rights, as well as the need to enhance the Secretary-General's role in the prevention of conflicts. It wished to emphasize, however, that the achievement of those goals depended primarily on the political will of Member States, reflected in the timely payment of their contributions in full, both to the regular and to the peace-keeping budgets of the Organization. In 1990 the Government of Czechoslovakia would be paying a second instalment of what it owed to the United Nations for the maintenance of UNIFIL, which the former régime had refused to finance.

26. The consideration of the proposed medium-term plan was also an opportunity for assessing the contribution of the reform process to the strengthening of the Organization's effectiveness. The proposed plan should therefore be considered in connection with the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 41/213, particularly since the plan had been prepared in accordance with the new planning process laid down in that resolution and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly. In conclusion, he said that his delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the report of CPC, which it believed reflected in a balanced manner the consensus arrived at by that Committee.

27. Mr. Maycock (Barbados) took the Chair.

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

Activities of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions  
(A/45/7)

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the purpose of the Advisory Committee's first report was to provide the Fifth Committee with an overview of the questions which the Advisory Committee had considered at the meetings it had held in Santiago, New York, Geneva and Vienna in 1990. The report therefore covered a large number of issues, many of which would be dealt with in separate reports to be submitted to the Fifth Committee during the current session. Consequently, the report did not contain any recommendations requiring a decision by the Fifth Committee. It might perhaps wish to take note of the report.

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29. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that he would like the Secretariat to explain whether the special account referred by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 10 of its report would be used for all peace-keeping operations. If so, what would happen to the procedure that had been used thus far? Regarding the unutilized balance of the funds allocated to peace-keeping operations, he asked whether the sums owed to Member States could be used to cover arrears of contributions to the regular budget.

30. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should take note, with satisfaction, of the first report of the Advisory Committee.

31. It was so decided.

Work-load standards for various categories of conference-servicing staff, including clerical and typing staff, and work-load statistics for the various conference services in the 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 bienniums (A/45/7/Add.1; A/C.5/45/1)

32. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced document A/45/7/Add.1, in which the Advisory Committee discussed the Secretary-General's proposals on work-load standards for seven categories of conference-servicing staff. The Advisory Committee noted that the work-load standards approved by the General Assembly several years earlier had been established before the introduction of technological innovations. In the case of typists, for example, the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 8 of his report that word processing had significantly increased the productivity of typists. Accordingly, the Secretary-General was proposing a 25-per-cent increase in the relevant work-load standards. The Advisory Committee noted the problems cited by the Secretary-General as reasons why the increase in productivity had not been greater, but took the view that the difficulties were not insurmountable and that as the Secretariat gained more experience in the use of modern technology the work-load standards might be further revised. It recommended that for the time being the work-load standards for typists should be increased by 30 per cent.

33. Referring to the observations made by the Secretariat on the quality of documents submitted to the Department of Conference Services in electronic form, the Advisory Committee recommended various measures in paragraph 4 of its report, in particular the establishment of standards which would help to enhance the Department's over-all productivity.

34. With regard to translation, the Advisory Committee noted that the Secretary-General was proposing that the proportion of documents subject to self-revision should be increased to 40 per cent. The target set when that self-revision had been introduced was 45 per cent. In view of the fact the Secretariat acknowledged that its proposals had been developed more as a rule of thumb, the Advisory Committee recommended that the original target of 45 per cent should be maintained.

35. There were no work-load standards for reproduction. For the reasons set out in paragraph 6 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the figure of



(Mr. Mselle)

20,000 page impressions should serve as a starting-point for Geneva, rather than the 15,000 proposed by the Secretary-General.

36. The Secretary-General was not proposing any changes in the existing work-load standards for interpretation, précis-writing and verbatim reporting. The Advisory Committee would continue to follow the matter with interest, especially with regard to the use of temporary assistance for the provision of those services.

37. As indicated in paragraph 8, the Advisory Committee continued to be dissatisfied with the situation in Vienna. It would revert to that question during its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

38. In paragraphs 10 to 17 of its report, the Advisory Committee reviewed the information it had obtained from the specialized agencies on the subject of work-load standards. The conclusion it had reached was that, except for interpretation, for which there existed an agreement that was generally applied by a number of agencies, there were no unified work-load standards for conference-servicing staff in the United Nations system. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Secretariat should, in the context of appropriate inter-agency consultations, explore the possibility of introducing uniform standards wherever possible in those areas which were not currently covered.

39. Subject to the observations made in paragraphs 3, 5, 6 and 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should approve the work-load standards set out in the annex to the document under consideration.

40. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) found the Secretary-General's proposals disappointing. Although the question of work-load standards had been under consideration for several years, very few changes were envisaged and in many fields there were still no standards set. In the case of typists in particular, the work-load standards seemed very low: compared with the standard of 70 words a minute currently required from skilled secretaries in New York, the daily work-load at the United Nations would correspond to one hour's work. Aligning the salaries paid such staff with salaries paid outside could be justified only if work-load standards were also more or less in alignment.

41. His delegation would like the representatives of the Secretary-General to explain what they meant when they said that the introduction of new technology would obviously not improve the quality of the documents submitted to the Department of Conference Services. Given the high level of qualifications required of the staff, it was surprising that officials needed to be taught how to draft better. Moreover, it would have been desirable for the Advisory Committee to explain whether its recommendations, in particular those in respect of self-revision, would be reflected in a reduction in staff requirements in the programme budget. His delegation noted with regret that the situation in Vienna was still unsatisfactory and that there were still no standards for the United Nations system as a whole. It was not opposed to adopting the recommendations before the Fifth Committee but it would like the Committee to decide to follow up

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

the matter with a view to raising the work-load standards of the Department of Conference Services to a satisfactory level.

42. Mr. WYZNER (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments), replying to the questions put by delegations, noted first of all that work-load standards were applied to all conference services, which was not always the case in other parts of the Secretariat. The Department was a pioneer in that respect; it had also been one of the first to take advantage of new technology, which was a prerequisite for any increase in productivity. Obviously, work-load standards could hardly be expected to be raised in sectors in which there had been no technical advances for a number of years; on the other hand, in a sector such as word-processing, where there had been many innovations, it had been possible to raise standards.

43. It was difficult to compare the work done by secretaries outside with the work of the word-processing services in an international organization such as the United Nations where often very complex documents had to be produced in six languages. It was also often the case that a single document was the result of several successive revisions, which the statistics did not take into account.

44. It would be seen that the other organizations referred to in the Advisory Committee's report, some of which were outside the United Nations system, applied by and large the same approach as the United Nations in regard to work-load standards. It was clear, however, that there was still room for improvement, hence the proposals put before the General Assembly and approved by the Advisory Committee. The Department would make every effort to apply the new standards recommended, but at the same time there would have to be improvements in such areas as mission planning.

45. As far as savings were concerned, 8 per cent of the permanent posts in the typing units had been discontinued (20 posts out of 257) and, in 1987, a number of the temporary posts provided for in the budget had not been filled; in addition, the number of temporary staff engaged for sessions of the General Assembly had been reduced from 81 to 48, almost a 50 per cent reduction. The gains in productivity would undoubtedly lead to additional savings but, for the time being, it was necessary to wait and see what results the implementation of the new standards yielded before making other proposals.

46. A report on the question of unifying conference services at Vienna would shortly be put before the Fifth Committee. Currently, there were three separate services at that headquarters station and their regrouping in a single service, managed by the United Nations, would unquestionably provide a more effective solution that would allow savings to be made. The steps taken in that direction would be described in detail in the report in question.

47. The Department's criteria for recruitment were highly selective. All language posts were filled by competitive examination. The examinations were difficult, and were a good test of candidates' qualifications. In paragraph 4 of its report, the Advisory Committee touched on the problem of the quality of the documents received

(Mr. Wyzner)

from the submitting departments and expressed the view that training in that respect should be improved, a recommendation that he wholeheartedly endorsed.

48. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that setting work-load standards for the Department of Conference Services was supposed to help the Fifth Committee to evaluate the expenditure on conference services. From that point of view, the Advisory Committee's recommendations should be regarded not as mandatory criteria but rather as overall guidelines, offering a basis for discussion between the Advisory Committee and the Department. The Fifth Committee should therefore simply take note of the Advisory Committee's recommendations and urge it to continue its dialogue with the Department.

49. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked whether the revised standards recommended by the Advisory Committee also applied to the regional commissions.

50. Mr. WYZNER (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that conditions of work were different in some offices away from Headquarters, particularly where there was no word-processing equipment. The revised standards were applicable only where technological innovations had been introduced, as had been recognized by the Advisory Committee. The standards were thus not universally applicable to all duty stations.

51. It should, moreover, be noted that word processing, far from being a mere typing function, included such new functions as formatting, proof-reading and document indexing, which together comprised an overall process. There could thus be no stop-watch attitude to word processing.

52. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that it would be useful for interested delegations to be able to hold informal consultations on the very important question of work-load standards for conference services. Appropriate measures in that area could result in substantial savings, which would free additional resources for programmes. With regard to the functions referred to in paragraph 9 of the report by the Secretariat (formatting, document retrieval, etc.), it should be noted that some of them took very little time. Moreover, contrary to what was stated in the report, word processing facilitated such functions as the proof-reading of documents.

53. Mr. WYZNER (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that most of the functions listed in paragraph 9 had been cited by way of example. It went without saying that those functions did not all take the same amount of time and that some of them took less time than plain typing. The point was that, in the case of some documents, work-loads could not be measured solely in terms of words per day.

54. Another important question referred to by the representative of the United States was that of inter-agency co-ordination. Co-ordination was already being undertaken in the context of the inter-agency meetings on language arrangements, documentation and publications, which took place once a year and dealt with questions relating to technological innovations. As the officer presiding over

(Mr. Wynner)

those meetings, he would impress on the participants the need for closer co-ordination in terms of technological innovations and work-load standards. He stressed that in that area the United Nations was in the vanguard of the common system, as the information gathered by the Advisory Committee demonstrated. He hoped that the other organizations would follow the United Nations lead, thereby enabling common standards to be applied, as had already happened in the case of interpretation, where an agreement had been reached between CCAQ and the International Association of Conference Interpreters.

55. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should defer its decision on the question before it to the following day's meeting, pending the results of informal consultations which the United States delegation was intending to co-ordinate.

AGENDA ITEM 124: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued) (A/45/32)

PRINTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/C.5/45/8)

56. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that following the brief meeting that had been held recently between the Committee and representatives of the Secretary-General, he was in a position to confirm the views expressed by the Advisory Committee at the 11th meeting.

57. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that internal printing capabilities should be improved or modernized so as to reduce external printing costs. He asked whether the Secretary-General had issued guidelines to minimize the number of successive versions of documents printed externally. He also wished to know what percentage of all printing was done externally.

58. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that at the previous meeting it had been stated that official documents of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council had to be printed externally because of their format. He would welcome clarification of that point. Further, he noted that his delegation was currently receiving verbatim records of Security Council meetings held in 1983, and asked whether those documents had been printed externally.

59. Mr. PATTERSON (Chief Editor) said that, owing to a lack of the necessary typesetting equipment, official documents could not be printed internally in all languages. Nevertheless, the planned introduction of electronic typesetting equipment should ultimately enable verbatim records in all languages to be printed internally. For the time being, the typesetting of verbatim records of Security Council and General Assembly meetings was still done externally.

60. In order to use external services as economically as possible, care was taken to ensure that documents being printed were not continually revised by submitting departments and that, once printed, they were not sent back to printers for further revision. In any event, if changes were absolutely necessary, it was preferable to make them during printing, despite the additional costs, rather than subsequently to issue a corrigendum. It was important to monitor costs in that area through careful management. The Documents Control Section played a decisive role in that,

(Mr. Patterson)

in co-operation with submitting departments, it ensured that documents printed externally were revised as little as possible.

61. The Organization worked with various printers and generally obtained several quotes. Quotes given over the telephone had to be confirmed by facsimile.

62. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked whether it would not be possible to change the format of official documents of the Security Council and Economic and Social Council to eliminate the need for external typesetting.

63. Mr. PATTERSON (Chief Editor) said that typesetting involved reducing the length of documents and making them more readable. It was important for official documents to be presented in as clear and concise a manner as possible. As stated, it was hoped to be able to print such documents internally by means of electronic typesetting equipment.

64. Review of the publications programme as a whole over recent years revealed that the proportion of documents produced entirely in-house had risen from just under 60 per cent to slightly over 63 per cent at Headquarters, and from 58 per cent to approximately 63 per cent at other duty stations. Other documents were either produced partly externally and partly internally, or were produced externally in their entirety.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the Secretary-General's recommendations in document A/C.5/45/8.

66. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.