



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon)

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

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/40/SR.49
4 December 1985

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 7.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/40/652 and A/40/673 and Corr.1 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)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
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1. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) said that his delegation welcomed the steps taken since the preceding session towards the achievement of an equitable geographical balance in the Secretariat, as a result of which the number of unrepresented countries which included his own country, had been reduced from 15 to 13, and the number of underrepresented countries had fallen from 24 to 15. But the position was not yet satisfactory; the majority of Secretariat staff still came from a small group of over-represented States. At previous sessions his delegation and others had called for the suspension of recruitment from those countries and greater use of fixed-term rather than permanent appointments in order to improve the representation of unrepresented or underrepresented countries. Nevertheless, 10 per cent of the staff members recruited during the period under review were nationals of over-represented countries, whereas table 9 annexed to document A/40/652 showed that a number of socialist and developing countries had not reached the mid-point of their desirable ranges. Clearly, the Secretariat had not done enough to overcome the prevailing imbalance in recruitment, and his delegation again appealed for a greater effort to that end in future. In its recruitment policy the Secretariat should ensure the principle of equitable geographical distribution by giving preference to applicants from unrepresented or underrepresented countries and suspending recruitment of nationals of over-represented States; that policy should also be pursued in recruitment for new organizations such as UNIDO. In addition, personnel separated from service should be replaced by nationals of the same countries, especially where States currently underrepresented were concerned.

2. The Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials (A/C.5/40/25) had not mentioned the unilateral measures taken by the United States authorities to restrict the movement of United Nations staff members from certain countries. Such discriminatory measures violated the status of the international civil service and the norms of international law, and his delegation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to prevail on the United States authorities to revise them.

3. Despite recent welcome efforts to increase the proportion of women in the Secretariat, the situation was still unsatisfactory. One reason was that women were poorly represented at the policy-formulating levels; of the 27 posts at the

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Under-Secretary-General level all were occupied by men, and only 4 of the 24 Assistant Secretaries-General were women. And of the 149 posts at Director level women occupied only 7. The shortcomings in women's representation and equitable geographical distribution, especially in senior posts, called for urgent attention. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would spare no effort in that regard.

4. Mr. SWISI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the earnest efforts made to correct the existing imbalances in the composition of the Secretariat had not met with success. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/40/673 had expressed disappointment in that regard.

5. According to the latest data available, there had been no tangible progress with respect to unrepresented countries. There had also been no significant changes in the staff position of the majority of Member States remaining underrepresented. The same was true of the situation of Member States represented at between the lower limit and mid-point of their desirable range.

6. At the same time, the number of overrepresented Member States had risen to 33, as against 29 at the time the medium-term plan had been launched, essentially as a consequence of United Nations recruitment practices.

7. Although there had been a substantial increase in the representation of developing countries at the senior levels, from 44 per cent to 48.5 per cent, that proportion was still not commensurate with their interests.

8. One of the adverse factors affecting overall recruitment policy was that most of the individual departments, offices and regional commissions followed their own recruitment practices. There was a need for greater co-operation between them and the Office of Personnel Services (OPS). His delegation strongly supported recommendation III of the Joint Inspection Unit that the authority of OPS vis-à-vis those bodies should be strengthened. It also endorsed those recommendations in general, particularly recommendations V and VI.

9. Any radical, practical solution to personnel problems must include the improvement of the situation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries and of those countries at the lower limit of their desirable range. A way must be found, even if it involved the adoption of a rotation system, to prevent the monopolizing of posts and the work of the Secretariat from becoming identified with one particular philosophy. There should be a freeze on recruitment from over-represented countries. The relevant General Assembly resolutions should be respected and their impartial implementation closely monitored.

10. There should be full respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations. International civil servants must respect the laws and customs of host countries and those countries must, in turn, provide every facility to enable officials to perform their duties in the proper manner.

11. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation thanked the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and OPS for their efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Secretariat, particularly by means of a more balanced representation of Member States in Professional posts.
12. Staffing should be based on criteria of efficiency, competence and integrity, and on recruitment on the widest possible geographical basis, as required by Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, so as to achieve an international civil service of the highest levels of competence, representing the broadest range of political, ideological, economic and social systems.
13. In regard to the medium-term plan of recruitment for 1983-1985, it was claimed, in the Secretary-General's comments (A/40/673/Add.1), that the target established by the General Assembly of earmarking 40 per cent of all vacant posts for nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented countries had been achieved and exceeded in 1985 and that the number of appointments of nationals of over-represented countries had been reduced to 10 per cent. JIU, on the other hand, had concluded that the plan had not been fulfilled (A/40/673) - a view which his delegation shared. According to the plan, 150 posts per year, i.e. 450 posts for the period, should go to nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented countries, with the aim of bringing those countries within their desirable ranges. The partial answer provided in the Secretariat's comments, particularly in paragraph 14, and the somewhat optimistic remark that such countries would be represented in further appointments by the end of the period, took no account of the likely shortfall. In that connection, he drew attention to the fact that, according to the latest data, the number of Soviet nationals in Secretariat posts had fallen from 176 to 168, that country being once again underrepresented.
14. Three points about the plan were noteworthy. Firstly, 50 per cent of all vacancies should be filled by nationals of underrepresented and unrepresented countries if they were to reach the lower limit of their desirable ranges. Secondly, nationals of countries already within or above their desirable range should not be recruited for such posts. Thirdly, it was difficult to ascertain from the Secretary-General's comments (A/40/673/Add.1) how many posts had been allocated for the purposes of the plan. Of 15 countries unrepresented and 26 underrepresented at the beginning of the period, there were still 12 of each; the shortfall, originally 217 posts, was still 154. In other words, barely 25 per cent of the target had been attained - hardly the fulfilment described by the Secretariat. Little had been done, moreover, to improve the status of women in the Secretariat, referred to in document A/C.5/40/30.
15. The Secretariat's plan had failed because many of the posts which should be earmarked for unrepresented and underrepresented countries were being used for other purposes, including the appointment of nationals of over-represented States. Another reason was the lack of will, particularly at higher echelons, to give effect to the plan, in spite of the General Assembly's decisions. Lack of applicants was certainly not the cause; paragraph 18 of document A/40/652 showed that some 30,000 applications had been processed, approximately 1,000 of them

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having been rostered. It could be seen too that much more attention had been given to applications from nationals of over-represented countries than to those of countries below the mid-point of their desirable ranges.

16. In order to fulfil future recruitment plans and ensure the principle of equitable geographical distribution, the current system of desirable ranges should be revised, as proposed in the JIU report (A/40/673). OPS should be strengthened, as called for by the General Assembly, and departmental heads should be required to give greater heed to future recruitment plans.

17. The most important need was for the Secretariat administration to overhaul its implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. His delegation failed to see why the Secretary-General, in his comments on the JIU report, should have quoted one of his early predecessors to the effect that the cardinal principle of geographical distribution was not that nationals of a particular nation should have a specified number of posts at a particular grade or grades, and that any rigid mathematical formula was unacceptable. The current system of desirable ranges was itself a mathematical formula; moreover, surely the Organization was not expected to discard its accumulated experience in building a balanced Secretariat to represent the interests of all its Member States. The observation implied an unwillingness to consider the JIU recommendations to enhance equitable geographical distribution; the latter had from the outset involved a mathematical formula, which therefore could hardly be deemed unacceptable.

18. Any mathematical formula must, of course, be right for the purpose. In that connection, his delegation supported the JIU proposals for a new system of desirable ranges which would prevent over-representation of some Member States at the expense of others. Although the process would take time, a start must be made if a genuinely balanced Secretariat was desired.

19. His delegation agreed with the views expressed by the representative of the German Democratic Republic on competitive examinations for P-3 posts and by the representative of Romania on the benefits of making wider use of fixed-term appointments. It shared the views on the importance of replacing separated staff members by nationals of the same country.

20. The Secretary-General's report on respect for privileges and immunities of United Nations officials (A/C.5/40/25) contained no mention of the recent measures taken by United States authorities against nationals of certain countries. The report covered only the period up to August 1985, and additional information on the subject should be provided. The Secretary-General, in his note of 9 September 1985, had mentioned that some Secretariat personnel had been subject to discriminatory restriction of movement by United States authorities, in violation of that country's obligations under the Charter, the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. Such measures undermined the status of an international civil service and disregarded the prerogatives of the Secretary-General. The latter had requested the United States Government to review its procedures in that regard, which were adversely affecting

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relations between the Organization and the United States. The Soviet Union joined with other countries in supporting the Secretary-General's position, and endorsed the call for the United States to live up to its international commitments vis-à-vis the United Nations and the Secretariat.

21. Mr. DIALLO (Guinea) said that discussion of agenda items 116, 117 and 122 had testified to Member States' close interest in personnel questions, staff costs, and the competence and performance of Secretariat personnel. The deliberations and documentation had shown that no coherent personnel recruitment and management service yet existed, that the notion of an international civil service was still being viewed in ideological and political terms, and that attempts to reform the system were still meeting with serious difficulties.

22. His delegation reaffirmed its belief in the criteria of independence and competence of personnel and the principle of equitable distribution of posts both among regions and between men and women. His delegation firmly supported the goal of raising to 25 per cent within four years the proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution.

23. The purpose of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, enshrined in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, was to maintain the world-wide character of the Secretariat, so as to reflect all cultures and economic, political and social systems. Despite all efforts, however, some countries remained underrepresented or unrepresented; his country, a Member of the Organization since 1958, had still not reached the mid-point of its desirable range. A recruitment mission should be dispatched to Guinea, as soon as possible, in order to rectify the situation. His Government would provide the mission with every possible facility.

24. Mr. MILLER (United States of America) said that comments had been made in the Committee on his country's observance of the host country agreement; his delegation felt bound to reply, although the matter was within the purview of another body.

25. The United States had always lived up to its obligations under its agreement with the United Nations. At the same time, it must and would continue to take all necessary steps to protect its national security. In that connection he noted that the nationals of certain countries, including the Soviet Union, paid no heed to the concept of a truly international civil service and remained fully committed to the service of their own countries, not of the Organization.

26. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he would not pursue, in the Fifth Committee, the point raised by the previous speaker; his delegation had expressed its views on the matter in the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

27. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) reiterated his delegation's view that the United States measures in question violated the status of the international civil service.

AGENDA ITEMS 116 and 117: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1986-1987 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/40/3, A/40/6, A/40/7, A/40/7/Add.9 and 11, A/40/38 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/40/262; A/C.5/40/14, A/C.5/40/29, A/C.5/40/31/Rev.1 and A/C.5/40/36)

First reading (continued)

Section 32. Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance of premises (continued)

28. Mrs. WEIL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that all the delegations which had spoken had expressed concern at the delay in implementing the construction project at Addis Ababa, particularly when compared with the progress made on the construction project at ESCAP in Bangkok. While the Bangkok project was further advanced than the ECA project that had been true at the thirty-ninth session, inasmuch as the design competition had already been completed, engineering consultants had been selected and an advisory group had been set up in the secretariat. Progress had subsequently been made in ECA which now had its own advisory group; a quantity surveyor was about to be appointed and the design competition was scheduled to be completed by May 1986. Appointment of the project co-ordination staff was moving forward. The revised project timetable was contained in paragraph 15 of document A/C.5/40/31/Rev.1.

29. Several delegations had inquired about the financial impact on the project of the slippage in the initial schedule. In that connection, she would like to stress that the total time spent on the project would not be altered. The original period of two and a half years allowed for the design phase had been very generous; the revised timetable, including the design competition, envisaged a period of 21 months. That estimate was realistic and was consistent with the revised Bangkok timetable. There were no significant changes in the revised timetable, the projected completion date remaining the same. Consequently, there was no need for extraordinary measures. The situation was set out clearly in paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/40/31/Rev.1.

30. A question had been raised regarding the commitment of the Secretariat to implement General Assembly resolution 39/236; it had been inferred that the Secretariat intended to modify the project but that the Advisory Committee had not accepted the Secretariat's proposal. That was not the case. The Secretariat was firmly committed to implementing General Assembly resolution 39/236 and had no intention of modifying the scope of the project. The condition of Africa Hall seemed to warrant urgent action and the Secretariat had felt that it could take such action without delaying the new construction work.

31. In reply to questions asked regarding ECA building management and maintenance, it was a fact that the upkeep of ECA headquarters had not been up to par and that situation had been observed by the Advisory Committee and by others. In that connection, the Secretariat had noted the comments of the Advisory Committee regarding assistance from Headquarters; a new chief of administration had been appointed in Addis Ababa; the responsible unit was being restructured and personnel

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changes would follow. The current situation of building management, regular maintenance and cleaning in Addis Ababa was explained in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/40/36.

32. Some delegations had expressed concern that the contents of paragraphs 16 and 17 of document A/C.5/40/36 seemed to imply that the scope of the new project would be reduced. That was not so; the major maintenance projects listed in those paragraphs concerned the existing buildings and not the new conference facilities.

33. The representative of Brazil had asked what methods would be employed in order to restore the present buildings to standards of maintenance equivalent to those in other United Nations centres. In reply, she would like to refer to the background of the situation as described in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/40/36. In response to the problems listed in that paragraph, the Secretary-General had proposed the co-ordinated plan which was detailed in paragraph 5 of the same document, particularly in subparagraphs (c), (d) and (e). Priority areas which had been identified for attention were listed in paragraph 7 while paragraphs 10 and 11 proposed interim arrangements. The full impact of the cost involved would be reflected in the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989.

34. Mr. ROY (India) asked whether the Secretariat could confirm that a certain Member State had indicated that it would not pay its share of the construction costs in Addis Ababa. If that was true, he would like to know what measures the Secretariat would propose to take in order to ensure that the project was implemented on the scale which had been decided upon.

35. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) asked whether the amount of \$3,070,000 quoted in paragraph 17 of document A/C.5/40/31/Rev.1 as the estimated expenditure for the biennium 1986-1987 included the carryover of \$2,850,000 unspent from the 1984-1985 biennium. In his view delay would be likely to increase the resources needed and it might therefore be necessary to envisage an increase in the amount which had been allocated in General Assembly resolution 39/236, section III.

36. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said it was his understanding that the Assistant Secretary-General had said that the work of renovation and maintenance would not affect the scope of the construction project. It was also his understanding that the Assistant Secretary-General had assured the Committee that, despite the time slippage, it was still expected that the project would be completed in time and therefore that no additional expenditure would be required. If that was the case, he could not understand why the Advisory Committee could not accept the Secretary-General's proposals.

37. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria) supported the representative of Kenya. He would also like to know how much was spent on maintenance of United Nations buildings at Geneva, Vienna and Headquarters.

38. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division), replying to the representative of India, said that the United States might not be able to contribute to the ECA project. The Secretariat position was that the General Assembly had, in principle, approved the project at an estimated cost of \$73,501,000. Any withholding by a

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Member State of its share of the costs would give rise to a deficit in the amount of the withholding.

39. As to the question asked by the representative of Algeria, he said that actual expenditures for the project through 31 December 1985 had been estimated at \$270,000 and the balance of the appropriation for the 1984-1985 biennium, amounting to \$2,850,000, would be carried forward into the 1986-1987 biennium. The Secretariat had not requested an additional appropriation because major expenditures would not be incurred until 1988-1989. He did not anticipate that the delay would make it necessary to go beyond the ceiling approved by the General Assembly in 1984.

40. Mrs. WEIL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services), speaking in reply to the representative of Kenya, said that the planned maintenance work was for existing buildings. The Secretariat had drawn a distinction between the old and the new buildings.

41. On the issue of the revised timetable, she expected that the total time for the project would remain unchanged. The alterations to Africa Hall proposed by the Secretary-General had not been approved by the Advisory Committee; the alterations had not been intended as a substitute for new construction work but were originally intended to be carried out in 1991.

42. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) said that the costs of major maintenance of the United Nations buildings at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna were set out in table 32.3 of the proposed programme budget. The amounts were as follows: for Headquarters \$2,695,900; for Geneva, \$1,914,700; and for Vienna, where the buildings were much newer, the amount was \$116,800.

43. In reply to the representative of the United States, who had asked how the amount of \$401,200 saved in respect of work at the United Nations office at Nairobi had been redeployed, the Secretariat proposed to use the savings to cover the costs of rehabilitation and concrete lining of oxidation ponds, generators to supplement existing generators since power usage had been higher than expected, zoning and metering of lighting systems of conference and cafeteria areas, renovation of bridge links between old office blocks, road repairs, improvements to the main lobby and various small miscellaneous items. It was true that the \$401,200 could have been used for other activities and an additional appropriation requested for the items he had mentioned. The Secretary-General had however considered that the action which he had proposed was appropriate.

44. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria) asked the Secretariat to confirm his understanding that the cost of rehabilitating Africa Hall would be in addition to the amount required for the new project.

45. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division) said that the representative of Nigeria was correct. It had never been the intention of the Secretariat to substitute the rehabilitation of Africa Hall for the new project. The state of Africa Hall was such that rehabilitation work could no longer be deferred.

46. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) asked whether the amount of \$3,070,000 specified in paragraph 17 of document A/C.5/40/31/Rev.1 included the remodelling of the large room.

47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in 1984 the Advisory Committee had recommended that the Secretary-General's proposal for the full remodelling of the ECA conference building, including Africa Hall, at a cost of approximately \$8 million should be postponed and that a decision on the matter should be taken once the construction of the other conference rooms had been completed. The remodelling proposal would have involved the expansion of the seating capacity of Africa Hall to 100 delegates seated at tables with possible further expansion to 150 seats. The current capacity of Africa Hall was 84 seats. The Advisory Committee had recommended that that proposal should be postponed and that six new conference rooms should be built, namely, one large conference hall, one medium and four small conference rooms. The Secretariat now said that a decision on the remodelling proposal should be taken in 1985 and that it was a "limited" remodelling and not the remodelling considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

48. The Secretariat had also proposed that some of the small conference rooms might be incorporated into the existing conference building which accommodated Africa Hall. That proposal had been made to the General Assembly in 1982 when the Secretariat had proposed two small conference rooms in the Africa Hall building but, following an architectural and engineering study, which had been submitted to the thirty-eighth session and postponed until the thirty-ninth session, the Secretariat had ruled out that possibility. The Secretariat was now asking the Fifth Committee to go back to the position in 1982 when the Secretariat had suggested the possibility of including two conference rooms in the Africa Hall building. That was indeed a change.

49. It was clear from paragraph 16 of document A/40/7/Add.11 that the Advisory Committee had been informed by the representatives of the Secretary-General that, although the scope of the project remained unchanged, the Secretary-General might well need to propose qualitative and other changes, should none of the designs submitted be within the budget authorized by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee had therefore concluded that all the information which it needed in order to know the precise scope and actual cost of the project which had now been put to the General Assembly was not available. Moreover, the original project was to have been completed by 1990/1991, including the remodelling of Africa Hall. The Fifth Committee was now being told that the Africa Hall remodelling and all the other work could be completed in a shorter period than originally envisaged. That had caused the Advisory Committee concern; it was not accustomed to making decisions on the basis of imprecise assumptions. If there had been changes, the Advisory Committee wished to know what they were and what their cost would be. That could be understood clearly only after the results of the design competition were known in 1986.

50. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee was doubtful about the capacity of ECA to supervise the simultaneous execution of several different works by different contractors on the same site; that had been made clear in paragraph 17 of document A/40/7/Add.11.

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51. For all those reasons the Advisory Committee had concluded that the remodelling of Africa Hall must be evaluated within the context of the overall project.

52. A question had been raised regarding the accounts for construction projects. Construction projects had their own accounts. Funds were appropriated by the General Assembly and placed in the individual construction project account. If the funds were not spent within one calendar year or one financial period, those funds could be rolled over until the project had been completed.

53. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that the explanation which had just been given had helped to draw attention to questions that had been overlooked. However, the Committee should not lose sight of the fact that one member was intending to withhold its share of the costs. Although such situations had arisen in the past, he questioned the legality of the practice of choosing which items a member's contribution could be used to finance. Unless that question was settled, there was no point in discussing the project any further.

54. The CHAIRMAN said that that question raised by the representative of Kenya should perhaps be referred to the Legal Counsel. Drawing attention to paragraph 16 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/40/7/Add.11), he proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the Secretary-General's reports on United Nations accommodation at Bangkok and on the United Nations Office at Nairobi (documents A/C.5/40/29 and A/C.5/40/14 respectively).

55. It was so decided.

56. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of paragraph 25 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/40/7/Add.11), the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it request the Secretary-General to report on the major long-term maintenance work at ECA in his annual progress report on the construction of conference facilities at Addis Ababa.

57. It was so decided.

58. At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken on the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the appropriation and revised estimates for section 32.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico,

Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

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

Abstaining: Belgium, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Italy, Mongolia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

59. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$10,701,300 and revised estimates in the amount of \$19,515,500 under section 32 for the biennium 1986-1987 were approved in first reading by 85 votes to 2, with 15 abstentions.

60. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that his delegation had abstained in the voting because the proposed remodelling of the main hall of the ECA building should be postponed. However, the building should be maintained to prevent further deterioration.

61. Mr. MILLER (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against the appropriations because the expansion of the conference facilities at ESCAP was not justified at the current stage. Moreover, although his delegation did not oppose the proposed maintenance work at ECA, some of the cost estimates made in that connection appeared to be inflated, and since many of the problems were not new, the requirements should have been included in the Secretary-General's initial budget proposal. His delegation also opposed the Secretary-General's proposal to spend the unexpended balance of the appropriation for the Nairobi project, as set out in document A/C.5/40/14. That practice was likely to encourage overbudgeting. The balance should be returned to the Member States. Requests for additional resources should be presented in the Secretary-General's budget proposals or as revised estimates so that Member States could consider them in the context of the Organization's overall priorities. With reference to the proposed conference facility at Addis Ababa, he confirmed that his country would withhold from its contribution to the United Nations its share of the cost of that project. In view of the widespread suffering in Africa, such spending was a poor reflection on the United Nations. However, his country would continue to support programmes of assistance to Africa.

62. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had abstained in the voting because the Secretariat's estimates were too high. It also opposed the practice of systematically spending any savings. However, in view of the bad working conditions in Addis Ababa, his delegation would have voted in favour of the proposed construction project there if the Advisory Committee's recommendation on that question had been put to a vote.

63. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that he had voted against the appropriations because most of the funds which had been approved would be allocated to the expansion of facilities at ESCAP. However, had there been a separate decision on the ACABQ recommendations regarding Addis Ababa, his delegation would not have opposed the decision. He expressed concern about maintenance work at Addis Ababa and looked forward to substantial and rapid improvements in that respect.

64. Mr. VAHER (Canada) said that he had abstained in the voting for the reasons mentioned by the representative of the United Kingdom. However, he also expressed support for the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding the remodelling of the facilities at ECA.

65. Mr. NODA (Japan) said that, had he been present during the voting, he would have voted in favour of the appropriations.

66. Mr. ORSATELLI (France) said that he had abstained in the voting because construction work, whether at Bangkok or Addis Ababa, should not receive priority at the current time. However, he could have voted in favour of the estimates for maintenance of buildings at Addis Ababa.

67. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the appropriations for section 32, despite its reservations about the explanations given earlier by the Secretariat. Indeed, he still had doubts about certain aspects of the Secretary-General's report, especially the possibility of qualitative and other changes. He supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the remodelling at ECA, and it was unfortunate that certain delegations had injected extraneous considerations into the discussion of that question. The construction work at Addis Ababa was a regular United Nations project covered by the regular budget. It had nothing to do with assistance to Africa which was being used as a cheap, political argument. Assistance to Africa was a separate issue from the regular budget and he was surprised that a Member State intended to withhold its contribution on that pretext. He asked for an assurance that the project would be carried out in spite of the position adopted by the Member State in question.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.6 concerning agenda item 80 (A/C.5/40/28)

68. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that according to document A/C.5/40/28, the programme budget implications consisted of an additional appropriation of \$58,800 and conference-servicing costs of \$306,200. The Advisory Committee recommended that any requirements under that item should be reported in the context of the performance report.

69. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that the adoption of draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.6 would not entail an additional appropriation at the current stage and recommended that the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments up to \$58,800, that he should report thereon to the General Assembly in the first programme budget

(The Chairman)

performance report for the biennium 1986-1987, and that conference-servicing costs estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$306,200, should be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing costs to be submitted at a later stage in the session.

70. It was so decided.

71. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out an error in paragraph 11 (a) and the fifth line of paragraph 9 of document A/C.5/40/28, where "7" should read "6".

72. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the statistics on documentation were exaggerated. There was a need to achieve greater savings, in particular through the termination of outdated programmes. Had the proposal been put to a vote, his delegation would not have been able to vote in favour.

Programme budget implications of the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research contained in document A/40/744 (A/40/7/Add.9; A/C.5/40/33)

73. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the question at issue was the contribution from the regular budget to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), as explained in paragraph 4 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/40/7/Add.9). The Advisory Committee was proposing an appropriation of \$162,200 under section 2B instead of the amount requested, namely \$170,000.

74. Mr. MILLER (United States of America) inquired about the action that the First Committee had taken, or was going to take, on the Secretary-General's report on the Institute (A/40/744). If the First Committee had not yet taken a decision regarding the activities of the Institute for 1986, he wished to know whether the Fifth Committee was in a position to act on the request for a subvention from the regular budget.

75. It appeared that the amount of the subvention requested had been determined on the basis of the most liberal interpretation possible of article 7, paragraph 2, of the statute of UNIDIR, rather than on the basis of the latter's actual programme requirements. Member States did not have enough information to determine whether the full amount was really needed. He went on to inquire why document A/C.5/40/33 contained no indication as to whether the subvention could have been provided by redeploying resources under section 2B, or within the budget as a whole.

76. Mr. VAHER (Canada) said that his country had been a consistent supporter of the Institute. At the preceding session, it had supported resolution 39/148 H and, in October 1985, had made a voluntary contribution of \$40,000 towards the Institute's 1986 budget. However, he shared the concern expressed by the representative of the United States regarding the interpretation of article 7, paragraph 2, of the statute of UNIDIR. Indeed, the ceiling set under that article

(Mr. Vaher, Canada)

appeared to have become the floor for funding from the regular budget. He asked for more information on how the Institute's budget had been drawn up and inquired whether the current budget would become a pattern for the future. He also requested information on the amount of voluntary contributions made since 27 September 1985.

77. Mr. ANNAN (Director, Budget Division), in reply to the question asked by the representative of the United States, said that no action was required of the First Committee. The budget of UNIDIR was approved by the Board of Trustees only on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and after careful consideration. The possibility of redeploying resources had indeed been considered before the proposal had been put forward, but it had proved impossible to absorb the amount requested as a subvention. The information requested by the representative of Canada on voluntary contributions since 27 September was not yet available but would be forthcoming. It was unfair to say that the ceiling of 50 per cent from the regular budget had become the floor. Efforts had been made to elaborate a workable programme and the amount requested was not extravagant. The Institute's fund-raising efforts were yielding results and more voluntary contributions were expected in 1987. Should those expectations be realized, the subvention required from the regular budget would decrease, and it should not be assumed that it must automatically be 50 per cent of voluntary contributions.

78. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that adoption of the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research would entail an additional appropriation of \$162,200 under item 2B of the programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987.

79. Mr. MILLER (United States of America) requested a recorded vote on that item and, by way of preliminary explanation, said that his delegation would oppose the proposed subvention to the Institute because his country accepted neither the statute of the Institute nor its financial implications. Although his delegation favoured research on disarmament, the decision which the Fifth Committee was about to take was irrelevant to that subject. His country was opposed to the funding from the regular budget of voluntary programmes and organizations such as UNIDIR, which clearly lacked the widespread support of Member States, and rejected the Board's unjustified request for the maximum subvention allowable under the UNIDIR Statute.

80. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that he shared the reservations expressed by the representative of the United States and could not support the proposal.

81. Mr. VAHER (Canada) said that his country would support UNIDIR with voluntary contributions, but that the request for the maximum subvention permitted in the first year was excessive; it set a precedent which his delegation did not approve of. His delegation would therefore abstain in the voting.

82. A recorded vote was taken on the Chairman's proposal.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: Belgium, Germany, Federal Republic of, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Fiji, France, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, New Zealand, Portugal, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

83. The proposal was adopted by 81 votes to 8, with 13 abstentions.

84. Mr. ORSATELLI (France), speaking in explanation of vote, said that, as the largest contributor to UNIDIR, France was clearly interested in the work of the Institute. As a matter of principle, however, his delegation would not wish to see the Institute brought under the regular budget and had therefore abstained in the vote.

85. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because it opposed the use of the regular budget to subsidize institutions which should be supported on a voluntary basis.

86. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that, at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had opposed a grant from the regular budget to UNIDIR and, consistent with that position, it had voted against the proposal.

87. Ms. HILLYER (New Zealand) said that her delegation supported the work of UNIDIR but shared the reservations which had been expressed regarding the interpretation of article 7 of its statute. New Zealand had therefore abstained.

88. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium) said that by systematically requesting the maximum subvention from the regular budget, UNIDIR had not shown proper respect for the Fifth Committee. Additional evidence was required to justify the need for such a large subvention. His delegation had therefore voted against the proposal.

89. Mr. NODA (Japan) said his delegation shared the view of the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and Belgium. It had therefore voted against the proposal.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.7 concerning agenda item 88 (continued) (A/C.5/40/42)

90. Mr. ALFARSI (Oman) said that, if his delegation had been present during the vote on the plan of action contained in document A/C.5/40/42, it would have voted in favour.

91. Mr. MONIRUZZAMAN (Bangladesh) said that his delegation would also have voted in favour of the plan of action contained in document A/C.5/40/42, had it been present during the vote.

The meeting rose at 10.25 p.m.