



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 9.05 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM 38: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE GROUP OF HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS TO REVIEW THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/41/49, A/41/663, A/41/763, A/41/780, A/41/781; A/C.5/41/25; A/C.5/41/L.3)**

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the draft report of the Fifth Committee on the recommendations by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (A/C.5/41/L.3). That report was the work of a drafting group and the "enlarged Bureau": delegations representing the regional groups, some other delegations he had invited to attend and any other delegation that had chosen to take part. A great deal of co-operation, understanding and good will had been demonstrated during the preparation of the report, and the delegations taking part had put their individual interests below those of the United Nations. That factor should be borne in mind in considering the report.

2. Delegations coming to the report for the first time might not find all their interests represented as they might have desired, but he was sure they would all understand that the report was intended to serve the Organization as a whole. As no one had been excluded from the drafting process, he believed that the report could be accepted without detailed discussion.

3. The purpose of the Committee's findings was to assist the General Assembly in reaching a decision on item 38, which was one of the most essential on the agenda of the forty-first session. Paragraphs 64 and 68 (d) of the findings on section VI of the Group's report, planning and budget procedure, each contained a phrase in brackets to reflect the fact that their contents had not been accepted by consensus. There had, however, been agreement on some findings in regard to that section; paragraph 69 of the draft report contained a list of points that remained to be resolved. He hoped that the Committee would accept that approach, for reaching agreement on section VI was clearly not part of its mandate from the General Assembly.

4. Mr. HADWEN (Canada) said that his delegation welcomed the report and the atmosphere in which it had been developed. He had been deeply impressed by the expertise and tenacity of his colleagues, and in particular by the special qualities of the Chairman. He urged the Committee to accept the report as it stood and refrain from reopening any of the issues.

5. He drew attention to the possibility that the opening phrase of paragraph 69 might be misinterpreted, and said that he did not take the phrase to mean that the Committee had resolved everything else, but simply that there had been no significant finding in those respects.

6. Mr. KUBIZNAK (Czechoslovakia), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the

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(Mr. Kubiznak, Czechoslovakia)

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, drew attention to the finding, in paragraph 57 of the draft report, to the effect that recommendations 55 and 57 by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had not enjoyed the necessary support within that Group. The Eastern European delegations and others had expressed fundamental reservations to those two recommendations both in the informal discussions and at the relevant plenary meetings of the General Assembly. Any decision by the General Assembly on the report of the Group should reflect the fact that there had not been agreement on those recommendations.

7. Mr. KASTOFT (Denmark) expressed the same misgivings as the representative of Canada about the use of "resolved" in paragraph 69 of the draft report and suggested that the word "considered" should be used instead. It would then be up to the General Assembly to consider and perhaps resolve the questions listed.

8. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation had no objection to transmitting the draft report to the General Assembly, although in some cases it would have preferred a different wording. Its final position on the item would depend in part on a satisfactory settlement on the problems listed in paragraph 69 of the draft.

9. Mr. ORTEGA-NALDA (Mexico) endorsed the comments of the representative of Canada. He pointed out that the list given in paragraph 69 of the draft report was described as "indicative": a term which did not exclude the possibility that there were others where some decision or some greater degree of precision was needed. As to the use of the word "resolved", it was his delegation's understanding that the points mentioned would have to be resolved at the earliest possible moment in the negotiations that would shortly resume in the General Assembly.

10. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that the draft report, though not entirely satisfactory, formed an acceptable basis for a document that could assist the General Assembly in its work on the item.

11. Although it had been suggested that the word "resolved" in paragraph 69 should be replaced by "considered", in his delegation's view, the word "indicative" was more important. The points listed had perhaps been considered, but they had certainly not been resolved; the term should therefore be retained. In his delegation's opinion, the current practice in regard to decision-making should be continued. There was a machinery already in place which could be improved. The meaning of "add-ons" as used in paragraph 69 (c) still had to be defined. He was aware of the need to exercise restraint in criticizing the draft report. If discussion on individual provisions was reopened, however, his delegation would feel at liberty to submit proposals for improvement.

12. Mr. VAN DER HOUT (Netherlands) said that his delegation had difficulties with the paragraphs of the draft report concerned with section VI of the report of the Group of Experts. In particular, it felt that paragraph 68 (a) was conceptually flawed since it combined two distinct functions to be carried out by two different entities on two separate matters. The task of the Secretary-General to present an outline of the programme budget for the next biennium and an indication of the overall level of resources required should be separated from the responsibility of Member States to make recommendations on the programme budget and on the level of resources.

13. Mr. GAMA FIGUEIRA (Brazil) said it was his delegation's understanding that the General Assembly should refer the matters dealt with under recommendation 61 to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) without taking any substantive decision on them. The Commission, established to regulate conditions of service in the common system, should be permitted to perform that function; otherwise the General Assembly would be taking a decision without full knowledge of its implications and impact. On the question of total entitlements, he recalled that at the Committee's 13th meeting, the Chairman of ICSC had noted that currently there was no yardstick for measurement because no margin had yet been established for the total compensation comparison.

14. Mr. BOUR (France) said that although his delegation supported the conclusions of the Group of Experts, it did not feel that the draft report fully reflected its position; in a spirit of compromise, it would agree for the draft report to be transmitted to the General Assembly. His delegation believed it was for the General Assembly to decide, when it took action on the recommendations by the Group of Experts, whether the Committee's findings should serve as a guide to their implementation. His delegation also felt that paragraphs 63 to 69 of the draft were indications to facilitate the work of the General Assembly, and should not prejudice the course of the negotiations there.

15. Mr. TOMME MONTHE (Cameroon) said that since the draft report could not be fully satisfactory to any delegation, all delegations were at the same disadvantage. The report should be forwarded to the Assembly so as to facilitate the negotiations there.

16. Mr. GITSOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation believed that the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts ought to be reflected in recommendation 43. It had not insisted on the point because it understood that the reference to Article 101, paragraph 3 of the Charter in paragraph 47 of the draft made the amendment unnecessary. Recommendation 43, if adopted, would accordingly be implemented with due respect for the equitable geographical distribution of posts implied in Article 101 of the Charter. No competitive examination should result in an increase in the over-representation of certain countries to the detriment of others.

17. Mr. IOZA (Egypt) said that his delegation welcomed the draft report, although some specific recommendations were not included in it. It reserved the right to review its position on certain points if the debate was reopened at the plenary session. It regarded paragraph 69 as indicative, and believed that there was no need to reopen the question of the decision-making process.

18. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that, several paragraphs of the draft report went beyond the Committee's mandate and could prejudice the decisions to be taken in the General Assembly. His delegation supported the remarks made by the representative of the Netherlands on paragraph 68 (1) and viewed paragraphs 65 and 68 (a) in the context of paragraph 69 (b). In a spirit of co-operation, it would agree to transmit the draft report to the Assembly, and it would express its substantive position there.

19. Mr. INZKO (Austria) said that his delegation had previously put forward an amendment which it wished to have included in the draft report. The amendment read: "Should consideration of recommendation 25, paragraph 4, be envisaged, it should be done in observance of the relevant General Assembly resolutions".
20. Mr. EDON (Benin), Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) and Mrs. DVITIYANAND (Thailand) said that they supported the amendment.
21. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium) said that his delegation could join the consensus although the draft report at times went beyond the Committee's mandate. In the case of certain passages, his delegation had reservations similar to those of the Federal Republic of Germany.
22. MR. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that one of his delegation's main concerns during the entire discussion of the report of the Group of Experts had been to help the General Assembly to adopt the Group's report at an early date. His delegation felt that the Committee had fulfilled the mandate given to it by the Assembly. The conclusions in the draft report constituted an important basis for agreement between Member States on the planning and budgetary machinery and the implementation of all the recommendations of the Group of Experts.
23. He hoped that the Committee's findings on section VI would be strengthened by further compromises on the points of disagreement mentioned in paragraph 69. The list of points given there was not exhaustive. If it was expanded, the balance between the concerns of Member States reflected in the draft report should be respected.
24. Mr. MOHAMED (Somalia) said his delegation believed that the Committee's factual finding, in paragraph 38 of the draft report, about the different nature and functions of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and UNDP would help the Second Committee in its consideration of a draft resolution endorsing Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/47.
25. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that although a number of delegations had expressed reservations about certain aspects of the draft report, none of them had said anything that seriously conflicted with it. It would have been difficult to produce a document which was acceptable to all 159 delegations. In order to promote the financial and administrative efficiency of the United Nations, the Committee should come out in support of the draft report.
26. Mr. OTHMAN (Jordan) said that had had enough discussion. It should adopt the draft, and transmit it to the Assembly in a spirit of compromise, as a consensus report.
27. MR. CAVAGLIERI (Italy) said that his delegation had no objection to submitting the draft report to the General Assembly. Nevertheless, it had doubts about some parts of the draft report and the extent to which it accorded with the mandate given to the Committee, notably in the findings on section VI. In paragraph 69, his delegation felt that the word "indicative" should be strongly stressed, and the words "still to be resolved" changed to "on which there had been no progress."

28. Mr. FERNANDEZ MAROTO (Spain) said that his delegation had reservations about some parts of the draft report - notably the comments on section VI of the report of the Group of Experts which, it felt, did not fully correspond to the Committee's mandate, and would not necessarily help the General Assembly to take an appropriate decision.

29. Mr. DIALLO (Guinea) said that, thanks to the wisdom and patience of the Chairman, a dynamic compromise had been reached although no delegation was entirely satisfied with the draft reports. He appealed to the Committee to adopt the draft forthwith.

30. Ms. BYRNE (Ireland) said that, although her delegation was not entirely comfortable with all the elements in the draft report, it would refrain from critical analysis. It recognized the central importance of the treatment of section VI; it was, however, confident that the presentation of the Committee's findings would fulfil the intended function of facilitating the work of the General Assembly.

31. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that his delegation was ready to accept the draft report as it stood, despite having some difficulties with parts of it. He fully supported the comments made by the representative of France. While the findings concerning section VI were the end-product of difficult negotiations, the way they were worded might be deemed to prejudge the deliberation in the plenary Assembly.

32. Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania) asked why section VII had not been referred to in the draft report. He recalled that, in informal consultations with regard to recommendation 70, the Committee had found that the Joint Inspection Unit would not be the appropriate body to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations relating to the intergovernmental machinery and its functioning. His delegation therefore felt that the role of the Secretary-General in implementing the recommendations should be reflected in the record in order to allow him to participate in the monitoring and co-ordination in accordance with Article 98 of the Charter. As to recommendation 71, the finding had been that the Secretary-General should report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the recommendations, and that there would be no need for two reports.

33. Miss ZWEIGREICH (Israel) said that her delegation reserved its position with regard to the part of the draft report dealing with section VI.

34. Mr. KALEVINSKI (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation did not object to taking a decision on the draft report. His delegation reaffirmed its position on recommendations 55 and 57 as explained by the Chairman of the Eastern European regional group. It confirmed its understanding that in accordance with the Committee's conclusions, if the General Assembly decided on a 15 per cent reduction in posts, that reduction would be carried out in strict accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, including the principle of the equitable geographical distribution of posts. It also confirmed its understanding that, in accordance with the Committee's conclusions, the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts would be fully observed in recruiting staff at

(Mr. Kalevinaki, USSR)

the P-1 to P-3 levels, and also by the Secretary-General in deciding on the recruitment of staff to posts at other levels, in which the Secretary-General must have the necessary flexibility. His delegation took note of the statement of the representative of the Secretary-General on the constant need for an influx of fresh specialists at all levels and the need to take into account the fact that various States used the method of secondment in nominating nationals of their countries for work at the United Nations. His delegation fully shared the views of the representative of Bulgaria on recommendation 43.

35. Mr. BROWNE (New Zealand) said that his delegation supported Australia's comments with regard to section VI, in particular concerning paragraphs 65 and 68 (a) of the draft report. It therefore wished to express its reservation in that regard.

36. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria) said that it would have been a miracle if the draft report had been endorsed without reservations. While not agreeing with everything in the report, his delegation was prepared to endorse it, without prejudice to any action it might take if other delegations chose to reopen the discussion.

37. Mr. NAKTARI (Yemen) said, with regard to paragraph 11 of the draft report, that the words "that the Assembly may approve" should be changed to "if the Assembly approves them".

38. Mr. BANGURA (Sierra Leone) said that in a spirit of compromise, his delegation would join in the adoption of the draft report. It reserved its position, however, if the document was subjected to protracted debate in the plenary Assembly.

39. Mr. EDON (Benin) said that his delegation did not share the view that the Fifth Committee had exceeded its mandate. A reference should have been made in the draft report to section VII of the report of the Group of Experts, since it was an integral part of that report.

40. The CHAIRMAN said, in reply to the comments made by the United Republic of Tanzania and Benin concerning section VII, that since no delegation had proposed to amend that section during the informal consultations, no reference to it had been included in the draft report.

41. Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Committee would recall that, in the informal consultations, the Chairman had been absent from the Chair during the discussion of section VII. It was at that time that his delegation had made some comments on that section.

42. Mr. COULIBALY (Mali) said that his delegation had also expressed reservations about recommendations 71 and 72 during the informal consultations.

43. The CHAIRMAN, referring to Austria's proposal to add a new paragraph after paragraph 41, asked whether those delegations which had expressed objections in the Enlarged Bureau still opposed its inclusion in the draft report. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee accepted the Austrian proposal.

44. It was so decided.

45. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the draft report as a whole.

46. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that his delegation felt that the draft report went beyond the Fifth Committee's mandate. With regard to sections I to V, some aspects were helpful, while others were more difficult to accept. As to section VI, his delegation had expressed reservations during the informal consultations, in particular with regard to paragraphs 65 and 68 (a), because it had difficulties with both the procedure followed and some of the substance.

47. Mr. ORLANDO (United States of America) said that his delegation had participated in all stages of the Fifth Committee's review of the report of the Group of Experts. It had indicated throughout the process that the Committee's appropriate role was to carry out a factual examination and to report its findings objectively. The Fifth Committee should not pre-empt action by the plenary Assembly by taking or recommending substantive decisions. As to the findings relating to sections II to V, his delegation believed that a great deal of useful information was being transmitted to the plenary Assembly which should assist that body in its deliberations. The Committee had rightly avoided making specific recommendations on courses of action. His delegation stressed, in that regard, that the Committee's findings concerning section VI were intended to describe only the points of agreement among the three options set out in section VI. It would be unfortunate and inaccurate if those points were construed as an agreed overall approach to the issue of the programme budget. In that respect, paragraph 69 contained an indicative list of points to be resolved during the plenary Assembly's consideration of the report of the Group of Experts. Those points were some of the central elements of the issue and would need to be discussed and negotiated in detail in the plenary Assembly.

48. The draft report was adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 11.20 p.m.