



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba)

later: Mr. HADWEN (Canada)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 118: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued) (A/41/30; A/C.5/41/L.14)

AGENDA ITEM 119: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (continued) (A/41/9; A/C.5/41/L.15)

1. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation, which was still awaiting instructions from its Government on the draft resolutions under consideration, wished to request that a decision on those draft resolutions be delayed until the end of the afternoon meeting.

2. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said he hoped, in view of the lengthy consultations which had been held in order to reach agreement on the text of the two draft resolutions, that a decision would not be postponed unduly.

3. The CHAIRMAN proposed that a decision on the draft resolutions under agenda items 118 and 119 be postponed until the end of the afternoon meeting.

4. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 140: CURRENT FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/850 and 901; A/C.5/41/61; A/C.5/41/CRP.3)

5. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the objective of the review referred to in document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 had been, as in 1986, to achieve a better and more even spread of meetings throughout the year. As indicated in document A/41/901, the only alterations proposed related to the timing, venue and possible duration of conferences and meetings and did not include the postponement beyond 1987 of any meetings listed in the report submitted by the Committee on Conferences. With regard to the question raised at a previous meeting by the representative of Jamaica, he noted that, since the General Assembly was currently in session, there would seem to be no legal requirement to convene the Committee on Conferences in order to obtain its decision on the proposed alterations. However, as indicated in document A/41/901, the relevant intergovernmental bodies would be consulted as necessary on all adjustments affecting programme activities. The Secretary-General was in frequent informal contact with the Committee on Conferences in connection with all adjustments to the programme of meetings.

6. In section B of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3, the Secretary-General had made it clear that economy measures adopted with regard to the provision of verbatim and summary records for 1986 should continue to apply in 1987 with the minimum adjustment. Finally, section C suggested that the reimbursement of travel costs incurred by Member States sending representatives to attend the General Assembly session should continue to be reduced as in 1986 and that such reimbursement should be provided only to the least developed countries.

7. Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to paragraph 18 of document A/41/850, inquired which of the publications mentioned in the first sentence of that paragraph had been deferred, which scaled down and which cancelled.

8. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that examination of documents A/41/850 and A/C.5/41/CRP.3 showed that in 1986 verbatim records had been provided only to a limited number of bodies. However, in the light of recent developments, including the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/41 A, it was the wish of his delegation that consideration be given to the provision of verbatim records to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. He understood from Secretariat sources that the staff responsible for such services were readily available and that no real savings would be achieved by withholding verbatim records from the Special Committee.

9. Mr. MORENO (Cuba) said that the General Assembly had, at a recent plenary meeting, adopted resolution 41/42, in which it requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide verbatim records to the Special Committee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/14 C. The proposal contained in document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 appeared to be inconsistent with that resolution. It was the view of his delegation that the minimum adjustment referred to by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management should include the provision of verbatim records to the Special Committee on decolonization, particularly in view of the fact that such a measure would have no financial implications.

10. Mr. KHAN (Saudi Arabia), expressing concern over the time-frame of changes to the programme of meetings, inquired whether there was not a contradiction between the reference, in paragraph 6 of document A/41/901, to the postponement of meetings beyond 1987 and the references in document A/41/850 to their deferment to 1987. He wished to know whether it was implied that the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories might not meet during 1987. It was also unclear whether the proposed deferment of the Latin American symposium on the question of Palestine had been implemented or not. In conclusion, he wished to know whether document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 implied that no records would be provided in 1987 to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices or the United Nations regional seminars or symposia on the question of Palestine.

11. Mr. KULAWIEC (Czechoslovakia), noting the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/42, said that his delegation could not accept a reversal of the decision to provide verbatim records to the Special Committee on decolonization. Since document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 omitted any reference to that resolution, the Secretariat should check whether any similar decisions taken in respect of other bodies during the current session of the General Assembly might also have a bearing on its proposals.

12. Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, during the debate on the financial implications of matters relating to decolonization, many delegations had requested that verbatim records should once again be provided in 1987 to the Special Committee on decolonization, and the General Assembly had since adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to do so. It was unfortunate that document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 ignored both the views expressed in the Fifth Committee and the relevant General Assembly resolution. His delegation was also concerned by the contents of paragraph 1 (m) of the document, which appeared to give the Secretary-General a free hand in adjusting the programme of meetings without recourse to a decision by the General Assembly. The Assembly should be kept fully informed as to which intergovernmental bodies would be affected by any such changes in 1987. He also noted that no details had been included of the timing, number or location of meetings of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices and requested clarification of its programme. His delegation reserved the right to make further comments on the agenda item under consideration at a later stage.

13. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) inquired whether verbatim records could be provided for the Special Committee on decolonization without additional expense being incurred.

14. Mr. Hadwen (Canada) took the Chair.

15. Mr. GORITA (Romania), referring to the meetings, listed in paragraph 1 (d) of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3, of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, the Special Committee on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Non-Use of Force in International Relations and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, scheduled between 19 January and 27 March 1987, inquired as to the order in which they would meet and the proposed dates and duration of each meeting.

16. Mr. ROY (India) supported the call for the continued provision of verbatim records for the Special Committee on decolonization. He requested additional information from the Secretariat with respect to paragraph 1 (m) of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 concerning intergovernmental and expert bodies not mentioned in paragraph 1 and serviced at locations other than New York Headquarters, in which it was proposed that adjustments should be made to achieve a reduction of 30 per cent in expenditure on temporary assistance. He also requested additional information with regard to the planning and prior consultation to be undertaken in connection with meetings held away from established headquarters and organized by the United Nations Council for Namibia and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; their programme of work should not be negatively affected by any measures adopted.

17. Miss DURRANT (Jamaica) said that her delegation would like more detailed information about the economy measures referred to in paragraph 12 of document A/41/850. She wondered whether a report on the impact of those measures on programmes would be submitted to the relevant intergovernmental bodies in 1987. Her delegation had been extremely surprised to read in paragraph 1 (q) of document

(Miss Durrant, Jamaica)

A/C.5/41/CRP.3 that the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea would hold both its sessions in 1987 in New York, since at the previous session of the Preparatory Commission it had been decided that its first meeting in 1987 would be convened in Kingston, and that decision had recently been endorsed by the General Assembly. She therefore proposed that the paragraph in question should be deleted from CRP.3.

18. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago) supported Jamaica's proposal to delete paragraph 1 (q) from document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 and requested confirmation of the observation of the representative of Fiji that the provision of verbatim records for the Special Committee on decolonization would pose no problem. He also requested that any programme disruptions resulting from the adoption of economy measures should be reported to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) at its meeting in May 1987.

19. Mr. WIJEWARDANE (Sri Lanka) regretted that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, of which he was the Chairman, did not appear in document CRP.3 in the list of bodies to which summary records would be provided. He urged that it should be included in paragraph 4 of that document.

20. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices, of which he was also Chairman, had held consultations with the Secretariat on financial aspects and had reduced the duration of its meetings held away from United Nations venues from three weeks to 10 days. It had also reduced the length of its report. He wished to receive the assurance of the Secretariat that the Special Committee would be allowed to continue its operations as mandated by the General Assembly without further encroachments on the privileges accorded to it.

21. Mr. VAN DEN HOUT (Netherlands) said that his delegation saw no problem with regard to the mechanism for consultations set out in paragraph 6 of document A/41/901 whereby the relevant intergovernmental bodies would be consulted as necessary on all adjustments affecting programme activities, provided that the relevant regulations and rules were fully respected, particularly by those governing programming contained in document ST/SGB/204. He noted that the involvement of CPC was not included in the mechanism for consultations. He hoped that the Secretary-General would submit a report on the implementation of the economy measures to CPC at its next meeting.

22. With respect to the calendar of meetings, he noted from paragraph 1 of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3 that the aim was to optimize the use of permanent staff and minimize the hiring of additional temporary assistance for the servicing of meetings. He wondered whether that would also affect meetings traditionally serviced by temporary assistance, for example human rights meetings in Geneva, and whether it was intended to reschedule such meetings so that they could be serviced by permanent staff. He would appreciate receiving a detailed reply on that point. The work of the Centre for Human Rights would be undermined unless the relevant meetings took place. If they were not held, it would amount to a violation of rule 105.2 (b) and (c) in document ST/SGB/204. His delegation felt that approval for any action concerning those meetings should be obtained from CPC.

23. Mr. KHALEVINSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed with those delegations which believed that the Special Committee on decolonization should be included in the list of bodies entitled to verbatim records, particularly since that Committee did not meet during the busy period of the year. Given the political significance of the United Nations Council for Namibia it would also be appropriate to ensure that that body was included in the list of bodies entitled to summary records.

24. Referring to paragraph 1 (m) of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3, he asked whether the important meeting on social welfare to be held in Vienna, in September 1987 would be adversely affected by the recommended reduction in temporary assistance. Given the significance of that meeting, the Secretariat should ensure that the Conference was able to conduct its work without hindrance.

25. Mr. DANUS (Chile) associated his delegation with the Jamaican proposal to the effect that subparagraph 1 (g) of CRP.3 should be deleted or at the very least amended, so as to bring it into line with the calendar of conferences annexed to the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/41/32), which the Fifth Committee had already approved.

26. Mrs. COHEN-ORANTES (Guatemala), Mrs. CUCALON (Colombia) and Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen) also expressed support for the Jamaican proposal.

27. Mr. GREGG (Australia) sought assurances from the Secretariat that the working groups of the Commission on Human Rights, notably the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Sub-Commission, would be able to hold an adequate number of meetings in 1987 and that adequate support would be provided for the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and for the work of the Special Rapporteurs, including those on country situations. If such assurances could not be given, his delegation would request that staff be redeployed to those priority activities. He expressed serious concern at the suggestion, in paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3, that the General Assembly should request the relevant bodies to dispense with summary records for the substantive work of the human rights treaty bodies, particularly given the recent reaffirmation by the General Assembly of the importance of retaining summary records for the substantive proceedings of bodies responsible for supervising the implementation of United Nations human rights instruments.

28. Mr. HARAN (Israel) said that, since there was no mention in the document under consideration of the intergovernmental group which was about to be established to monitor the supply and shipping of oil and petroleum products to South Africa, he assumed that the group would be able to meet as requested by the General Assembly. That group would be composed, inter alia, of oil-importing and oil-exporting States, and it might wish to meet in one of those States to see what measures could be taken to encourage compliance with the embargo. He asked whether, should that prove to be the case, such meetings could be adequately serviced despite the recommendation for a 30 per cent reduction in expenditure on temporary assistance.

29. Mr. GITSOV (Bulgaria), noting the proposal in paragraph 1 (h) to the effect that only one team of interpreters should be provided to cover the last week of the session of the Disarmament Commission, said that the final week was always a very busy one. Accordingly, full services should be maintained to the end. He also noted that no provision had been made for records of the Commission's meeting. Prior to 1986, records had been routinely provided and he urged that the practice should be reinstated.

30. Mr. KOULIK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), supported by Mr. JOSHI (Nepal), said that the Special Committee against Apartheid should be included in the list of bodies entitled to summary records. Since one of that Committee's important tasks was to mobilize the opinion of the international community, summary records were very important. Indeed, the fact that the Committee had had to dispense with such records in 1986 was having an adverse impact on its work.

31. Mr. KASTOFT (Denmark) said he assumed that the Commission on Human Rights would be affected by the proposed 30 per cent reduction and asked the Secretariat to what extent the human rights activities of the United Nations depended on temporary assistance. He reminded the Committee that it had already reduced the appropriation for the Commission on Human Rights, on the proposal of the Advisory Committee, and that the Advisory Committee had stated that, if further cost-cutting measures were introduced, full account should be taken of the reductions already made.

32. Mr. DE CLERCK (Belgium) said that he shared the concern expressed by the representatives of Denmark, Australia and the Netherlands concerning the impact of cost-cutting measures on human rights activities, which had already been adversely affected by the measures to restrict meetings. While his delegation agreed that such measures were necessary, it would oppose any cost-cutting measures in respect of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies.

33. Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that he did not see how the Secretary-General proposed to consult the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on the subject of a change in the venue for its first meeting in 1987. He agreed that paragraph 1 (q) should be deleted.

34. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) and Miss LAMELA (Spain) said that, while cost-cutting measures were needed, every effort should be made to ensure that human rights activities were provided with the necessary services.

35. Mrs. de RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) felt that the Preparatory Commission itself should decide the venue of its session. In her view, the Special Committee on decolonization should be provided with verbatim records. Finally, no effort should be spared to provide human rights bodies with the necessary services.

36. Mr. TILLET (Belize) said that the Preparatory Commission had decided to hold its next session in Kingston, as noted in the tenth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 41/34. Accordingly, his delegation would object strongly to any change of venue and supported the Jamaican proposal.

37. Mr. TETTAMANTI (Argentina) asked which bodies would be affected by the recommendation in paragraph 1 (m). Like other delegations, his delegation was concerned about the impact of that recommendation on the meetings of human rights bodies. It was also concerned that no provision had been made for records for the Special Committee on decolonization.

38. Referring to paragraph 1 (a) of document CRP.3, he suggested that the exact duration of the forty-second session of the General Assembly should be left to the Assembly to decide.

39. Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia) said that, although the Secretary-General had not intended to deny delegations information by instituting economy measures, that was to some extent the effect of the curtailment of radio programmes, press releases and summary records. Human rights activities were central to the Organization and human rights bodies should be provided with summary records, as should the Special Committee against Apartheid and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Summary records were useful to the smaller delegations and should be retained.

40. Mr. LI Yong (China) said that, while his delegation basically supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General regarding the continuation of the cost-cutting measures adopted in 1986, it believed that further postponement of the construction project at ESCAP headquarters would be inadvisable, since it would adversely affect the Commission's work.

41. Mrs. DVITIYANANDA (Thailand) supported the position of the representative of China. While appreciating the gravity of the financial crisis, her Government would like to see the construction project undertaken, even if work progressed at a slow pace.

42. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the request in paragraph 1 (c) of CRP.3 that ACABQ should make a reduction in its number of meetings in 1987 similar to that made in 1986, said that ACABQ was well aware of the need for economy measures. Indeed, the Advisory Committee on its own initiative had decided in autumn 1985 to curtail its meetings in 1986. However, it would not be possible to shorten the spring 1987 session, because of the need, inter alia, to consider the proposed 1988-1989 programme budget and the proposed voluntary fund budgets for a number of agencies. As to the fall 1986 and 1987 sessions, the Secretariat had been informed that, unless the programme of work of the General Assembly itself changed, it was not foreseen that any alterations could be made to the schedules of the Advisory Committee for those sessions.

43. Mr. FORAN (Controller), in reply to a question asked by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on the previous day, said that the cost of providing drinking water in conference rooms, involving three full-time staff members and two additional temporary staff members during the General Assembly session, amounted to \$100,000 annually. By phasing out that service in April and May 1986, the Secretariat had saved between \$40,000 and \$50,000 in 1986. As to the scaling down or cancellation of publications, referred to in paragraph 18 of

(Mr. Foran)

document A/41/850, he said that the Yearbook on Human Rights and the annual bound volumes of the documents of the Human Rights Committee had been cancelled. The printing of 50 out of an envisaged 80 volumes of the United Nations Treaty Series had been deferred, and the publication of the Yearbook of the United Nations had been further delayed.

44. The delegations of Trinidad and Tobago and the Netherlands had asked, in connection with the forthcoming session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, whether the relevant intergovernmental bodies would be consulted as necessary on all adjustments affecting programme activities. The effect of the economy measures was being discussed in all the regional commissions, the Trade and Development Board, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and related intergovernmental bodies on an ongoing basis. The Secretariat would thus be in a position to make a preliminary report to CPC at its May session, when it would undertake its detailed examination of the 1988-1989 programme budget. The final performance report for 1986-1987 would be submitted to the 1988 session of CPC.

45. With regard to the work programme of the Centre for Human Rights, the Fifth Committee, as the representative of Denmark had pointed out, had already considered revised estimates for the Centre on the basis of an ACABQ recommendation, and had endorsed the view that no further cuts should be made. That decision would be honoured when allocations were made to the Centre. Moreover, it was his understanding that the economy measures would not affect the number of special rapporteurs, although they might restrict the amount of time available to them.

46. Mr. SCHLAFF (Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination) reminded the Committee that the Secretariat proposals had been made in the context of a cash crisis. Since temporary assistance for meetings was a major budgetary item, an attempt had been made to ensure that meetings were held and serviced with a minimum of expenditure from temporary assistance funds. The requirements for verbatim and summary records, therefore, had had to be reduced. He assured the representative of Fiji and other concerned delegations that verbatim records would be provided for the Special Committee on decolonization on an "as available" basis or, if there was a conflict with other statutory bodies, on the basis of later transcription from sound recordings.

47. With regard to requests made by the delegations of the Soviet Union and Australia that the Secretariat should give assurances that the suspension of records to certain meetings and organs would not have a negative effect on the work of those meetings and organs, he pointed out that a difficult choice had had to be made between ensuring full services to organs and conferences and maintaining summary records but having fewer meetings. In that context, the Secretariat had felt justified in proposing the curtailment of summary records.

48. As to the Jamaican proposal to delete paragraph 1 (q) of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3, the Secretariat felt that the change of venue to New York would not in any way impede the work of the Preparatory Commission. He pointed out that the net additional cash cost of holding the meeting in Jamaica would be at least \$400,000.

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(Mr. Schlaff)

49. Some delegations had requested more information and details about paragraph 1 (m) of document A/C.5/41/CRP.3. The working groups and ad hoc groups of the regional commissions, UNEP and UNHHSF were not included in the calendar of conferences and were not covered by General Assembly decisions concerning the total number of meetings held. Accordingly, those bodies should review their own programmes with a view to reducing the number, duration and frequency of some meetings, in order to achieve a net reduction of 30 per cent in expenditure from temporary assistance funds. The meetings of the principal organs would not be affected in 1987. In Geneva, the meetings of subsidiary bodies which had not been specified in the calendar of conferences, or were not listed there at all, could be handled if the burden of summary records was lightened, as the Secretariat proposed.

50. He assured the representative of Saudi Arabia that the United Nations regional seminars or symposia on the question of Palestine would be held in 1987 as scheduled. The objective of the Secretariat proposals was to minimize the cost of those meetings, not to cancel or defer them.

51. With regard to the question raised about the meeting of the Disarmament Commission, he noted that, although 76 meetings had been scheduled over the past four or five years, there had actually been an average of only 42 meetings per year. The Secretariat proposal meant that there would be neither more nor fewer meetings than in the past.

52. In response to the concern expressed by some delegations at the lack of summary records for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, he pointed out that the proposal was simply a continuation of the one adopted by the General Assembly in 1986.

53. In answer to the Romanian representative's question about paragraph 1 (d), he said that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries had been scheduled to meet from 19 January to 6 February; the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization would meet from 9 to 27 February; and the Special Committee on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Non-Use of Force in International Relations would meet from 9 to 27 March.

54. With regard to the Israeli representative's question, he said that a meeting away from Headquarters of the intergovernmental group to monitor the supply and shipping of oil to South Africa would be covered by General Assembly resolution 40/243 concerning payment of additional costs by the host country.

55. Lastly, he said that one of the major causes of the financial crisis was that the decisions of the General Assembly and the rules and regulations of the Organization had not been respected. All the Secretariat could do was to make the choices which would have the least adverse impact on the Organization.

56. Mr. ENGO (Cameroon) said that it had been agreed from the beginning that the principal meeting of the Sea-Bed Preparatory Commission should be held in Kingston, the seat of the International Sea-Bed Authority. The Preparatory Commission should therefore have been consulted about any change in venue. He pointed out, moreover, that meetings of the Preparatory Commission held in New York were not as productive as those held in Jamaica. In New York, the participants were unable to give their full attention to negotiations and sometimes lacked the necessary expertise. Besides, if an office had been set up in Jamaica as envisaged, there would be no need to transport staff and machines from New York. For reasons of economy, his delegation would support the holding of the second, more informal meeting of the Preparatory Commission in New York; it would not, however, be in favour of holding the first meeting there.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.