



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 73rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana)

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

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CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Performance report (continued)

Financial implications arising from the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

Establishment and operation of a special account for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Performance report (continued) (A/33/7/Add.26; A/C.5/33/25/Rev.1; A/C.5/33/CRP.10)

1. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that his delegation had voted against the additional appropriation of \$78 million requested in the first report on the performance of the programme budget, on top of the additional appropriation of approximately \$11 million approved in December 1978. Before the current session ended, a third series of additional appropriations could bring the extra resources requested for the biennium 1978-1979 to more than \$107 million, after only one year of budget performance. In net terms, the budget for the financial year 1978-1979 would not increase by 25 per cent, as had been predicted one year earlier, but by more than 39 per cent.

2. Belgium had supported the original biennial budget. After making its contribution for 1978, it was taking the necessary measures to pay its 1979 contribution on time. However, it could not accept an increase in the budget that would raise its contribution to approximately \$1 million. At a time when, at the national level, his Government was adopting a policy of reducing expenditures, it could do no less than condemn financial laxity or the absence of a rigorous search for ways to offset, through savings, more effective management, the reduction of non-essential outlays and the elimination of obsolete or unnecessary activities, the expenditures arising from exchange fluctuations, inflation and new programmes. To accept those increased costs would be tantamount to further aggravating the financial difficulties of the United Nations and would be detrimental to the budgetary practices of other agencies within the system, in addition to making major contributors reluctant to offer their support.

3. There was no question of eliminating programmes requested by developing countries, but only of preventing the proliferation of expenditures. To that end, the Secretary-General was asked to instruct the services and organs directly under his authority systematically to follow a policy of savings and moderation of expenditures.

4. Mr. GREEN (New Zealand) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the additional appropriation of \$77.7 million, as it had done in the case of the additional appropriation of \$10.5 million in December, despite its apprehensions at the continued growth in the regular budget. Although it shared the concerns expressed by several delegations in that regard, it did not attribute all the blame to the Secretariat. Member States should also consider carefully their attitude towards budgetary questions and the nature and clarity of the guidance they gave to the Secretariat in that field. Nevertheless, the Secretariat could do more in the interests of budgetary restraint, and it was to be expected that the numerous expressions of dissatisfaction at that session would be heeded in future.

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Financial implications arising from the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, as a result of the adoption of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the Secretary-General had submitted, in document A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1, estimates of expenditure amounting to \$1,711,800, of which \$421,700 related to conference services. The Advisory Committee had had some difficulty in analysing the Secretary-General's request, mainly because of a lack of clarity in the presentation of the estimates. Furthermore, it had not been able to establish a clear correlation between the request made in document A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1, and the resources already available to the Centre for Disarmament.

6. In making its recommendations, the Advisory Committee had borne in mind that, as the Secretary-General had indicated in the draft medium-term plan and confirmed to the Advisory Committee through his representatives, the staffing resources of the Centre were used with considerable flexibility so as to make allowance to changes in the workload and to make the best possible use of their expertise. In that respect, the Advisory Committee had noted that, with the posts which had already been authorized, the Centre would have 288 work-months available to it in 1979. The Advisory Committee had also taken into account the fact that the disarmament bodies which were to meet in 1979 would in a number of instances define more precisely the work to be carried out by the Centre.

7. The Secretary-General had calculated that, in 1979, 261 additional work-months would be needed, 45 of which could be absorbed by the 30 posts which existed in the Centre on 31 December 1978. The Advisory Committee, for its part, considered that the staff of the Centre could absorb a greater number of work-months and, consequently, was making the recommendations which appeared in paragraphs 11 to 16 of its report (A/33/7/Add.33).

8. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 18 of the Advisory Committee's report, which referred to the appointment of the Secretary of the Committee on Disarmament, and paragraph 19, in which the Advisory Committee noted that the establishment and maintenance of reference-material systems would be carried out in accordance with the procedures established by the Secretary-General for the Information Systems Board.

9. In paragraphs 21 to 25, the Advisory Committee discussed the request for \$334,400 for the fellowship programme and made recommendations in that respect, taking into account the General Assembly's request at its tenth special session that part of the expenditure should be met through savings within the existing budgetary appropriations. It had also borne in mind the fact that at the current stage it was not possible to estimate the level of programme activities in 1979 or to envisage exactly what role would be played by UNITAR. The Advisory Committee had also noted that the \$275,000 requested by the Secretary-General included \$25,000 for interpretation, which could be absorbed under section 23 of the budget.

10. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee recommended an additional appropriation of \$831,900. It should be noted that the conference servicing requirements were submitted separately in the consolidated statement (A/C.5/33/100).

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11. Mr. MOSSBERG (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that their Governments attached the utmost importance to the implementation of the political decisions adopted at the tenth special session of the General Assembly. Among other things, that session had decided to increase the number of studies and information activities of the United Nations and to strengthen and activate the deliberating and negotiating machinery in the field of disarmament. Both those decisions substantially increased the demands that the United Nations Centre for Disarmament had to fulfil, and the General Assembly itself had stressed the importance of adequately strengthening the Centre.

12. Authorizing only a moderate increase in the staff and budget of the Centre did not strengthen it but on the contrary weakened it. Consequently, the Nordic countries could not agree to the substantive cuts proposed by the Advisory Committee but rather supported the proposals of the Secretary-General. In that respect, they trusted that delegations interested in disarmament would also have difficulties in accepting document A/33/7/Add.33.

13. If the proposals of the Advisory Committee were accepted, the result would be a net increase of one post in the professional staff of the Centre. It would probably be difficult to find someone who could undertake all the additional tasks that the General Assembly had assigned to the Centre. Another proposal of the Advisory Committee was not to designate one post at the P-5 level for the study of the relationship between disarmament and development. That study had already begun, and the Nordic countries were among the few to have made substantial voluntary contributions to the study activities of the Centre. It was disappointing that the proposal of the Advisory Committee did not take fully into account the importance of studies on that subject.

14. The Advisory Committee had also proposed eliminating the post required to carry out the fellowship programme, just when the programme must be very carefully prepared and would require at least one full-time officer. Moreover, the drastic cuts in the sums required for information activities, despite the elaborate decisions of the General Assembly in that area, were cause for concern. Among other things, the information activities in Geneva relating to non-governmental organizations were not reflected at all in the Advisory Committee's proposals.

15. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) said that his delegation attached great importance to the question of disarmament. It considered the role of the United Nations in that respect essential and hoped that it would progressively increase. His delegation had closely studied the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1) and had also given careful consideration to the Advisory Committee's report (A/33/7/Add.33), which caused it serious misgivings. In that regard, he pointed out in particular the probable implications of paragraphs 11-17 and 22. If results were to be expected from the activities of the Centre for Disarmament, steps must be taken to ensure that the Centre could function effectively and that it had the necessary resources available to it.

16. The Programme of Action enunciated at the tenth special session of the General Assembly had added to both the scale and the scope of the responsibilities of the

(Mr. Ramzy, Egypt)

Centre. His delegation would like to receive assurances from the representative of the Secretary-General that the reductions in resources proposed by the Advisory Committee would not adversely affect the work of the Centre. Those were only preliminary remarks, and his delegation reserved the right to intervene again and to make proposals after hearing the representative of the Secretary-General.

17. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that his delegation, like those which had spoken previously, attached the greatest importance to the question of disarmament and had taken an active part in the work of the First Committee and in that of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. In introducing his report (A/33/7/Add.33), the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had said that 288 work-months would be available; the representative of the Secretary-General should clarify that point and indicate to what extent the existing staff could carry out the functions assigned to the Centre. Clarifications by the representative of the Secretary-General would also be needed with regard to paragraphs 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 21 of the Advisory Committee's report. Another question might be what basis there was for the request that savings should be effected in the Centre's budget for carrying out the programme of work. Fellowships should perhaps have been made the responsibility of UNITAR. His delegation reserved the right to make additional comments and submit proposals after hearing the representative of the Secretary-General.

18. Mr. MIRCEA (Romania) said that implementation of the recommendations contained in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly was of great importance. The discussion had shown how concerned most States were about the arms race and its impact on economic and social progress. One consequence of the tenth special session had been an increase in the role of the United Nations, and therefore of the Centre for Disarmament, in efforts to achieve disarmament; the activities of the Centre should not be reduced for financial reasons. His delegation shared the concern expressed by other delegations in that respect. Savings should be effected in the United Nations, but drastic measures could not be taken in that particular field. There was a need for reductions in military budgets, and not in funds to promote disarmament. In the view of his delegation, the requests submitted in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1) should be accepted.

19. Mr. IYER (India) expressed appreciation of the structure of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1), in which an attempt had been made to establish a more precise correlation between the tasks assigned and the staff resources needed. One of the main results of the tenth special session of the General Assembly had been the promotion of the role of the United Nations in disarmament negotiations and the establishment of appropriate machinery. The various bodies involved in those activities must have adequate support. His delegation considered the studies on the relationship between disarmament and development to be of great importance and hoped that the appropriations requested for them would be approved.

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20. Miss COURSON (France) said it was doubtful whether, with the reductions proposed in paragraph 13 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/33/7/Add.33), the studies on disarmament assigned to the Centre could be carried out, and the Secretary-General should revise his estimates for those activities. It would also be desirable to hear the views of the representative of the Secretary-General on the reductions proposed in paragraph 20 of the Advisory Committee's report. By and large, her delegation considered that the additional established posts requested by the Secretary-General would be appropriate in view of the expansion of the Centre's functions as a result of the decisions of the tenth special session of the General Assembly.

21. Miss MUCK (Austria) said that her delegation attached great importance to the question of disarmament in general, and to implementation of the decisions of the tenth special session of the General Assembly in particular. It therefore shared the concern expressed by other delegations regarding the funds to be made available to the Secretary-General for those activities.

22. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) expressed agreement with the comments of other delegations concerning the importance of disarmament both politically and with regard to development. His delegation looked forward to the clarifications by the representative of the Secretary-General concerning the questions raised in the Advisory Committee's report (A/33/7/Add.33) and would like to know whether the recommendations contained in that report might delay the implementation of the decisions of the tenth special session of the General Assembly.

23. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that his delegation was favourably impressed by the report of the Advisory Committee and the additional comments made by its Chairman, and emphasized that, as stated in that report, the tasks assigned to the Centre for Disarmament would largely depend on the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission during the present year. In the light of the information submitted, the Advisory Committee's recommendations were very apt. If any action other than that recommended by the Advisory Committee were taken, consideration would have to be given to the problem of the possible submission of further requests for resources as a result of the work of the Disarmament Commission. His delegation hoped that the various questions raised during the debate would be given serious study.

24. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that his delegation attached great importance to disarmament, as could be seen from the relevant provisions of its Constitution and from the fact that it allocated less than 1 per cent of GNP to the armed forces. However, in the view of his delegation, no equation should be made between the importance of disarmament and the amount of resources to be allocated to activities relating to disarmament. Simply increasing the staff of the Centre for Disarmament would not necessarily have the desired effect so far as actual disarmament was concerned, especially when, as pointed out by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of its report (A/33/7/Add.33), it was not entirely clear that the absorptive capacity of the Centre was being fully utilized. The reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee were reasonable, and his delegation believed that the Centre would be able to carry out all the functions assigned to it with the resources that the Advisory Committee considered adequate.

25. Mr. CORRADINI (Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament) said that he would try to answer the questions raised by the representatives of Egypt and Pakistan and to give general explanations that might dispel the other misgivings voiced in the Committee. In reply to the representatives of Egypt and Pakistan, he said that the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/33/7/Add.33), if approved, would make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the Centre properly to carry out the functions entrusted to it. For example, the Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$281,800, or more than 60 per cent, in the Secretary-General's estimate of \$488,100 for salaries and common staff costs. A reduction of that kind was bound to affect the Centre's programme, which consisted of three main elements, namely, ongoing tasks, the additional tasks assigned to it in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and the special tasks arising out of the 41 resolutions on disarmament adopted by the Assembly at its thirty-third regular session. It was important to note that, although the Secretary-General's report on the budget for disarmament activities (A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1) had been prepared prior to the adoption of those 41 resolutions, which had assigned new tasks to the Centre, no additional resources had been requested to carry them out.

26. In paragraph 9 of its report (A/33/7/Add.33), the Advisory Committee observed that there was no way of determining how much of the over-all programme of the Centre was covered by the material in document A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1 and how much was additional to it. In fact, all the funds requested in document A/C.5/33/64 and Corr.1 were needed to carry out work additional to the programme of the Centre, which had been entrusted to it at the tenth special session. For example, in 1979 the Centre would have to cope with a meeting schedule of unprecedented scope: 18 bodies concerned with disarmament would meet for a total of 33 sessions. Nevertheless, no additional funds had been requested, except with regard to the First Committee, since in that case totally new activities had been scheduled with the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament, which on 24 January would begin a new stage in its negotiating activities.

27. In paragraph 10 of its report, the Advisory Committee expressed the belief that the Centre had the capacity to absorb more additional work. He emphasized that with the full programme of activities scheduled for 1979 the Centre would be utilizing its capacity to the full. The Advisory Committee also stated in paragraph 6 of its report that the level and scope of the activities of the Centre in 1979 could not be fully determined in advance of the forthcoming deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, the Committee on Disarmament and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies. In that connexion, it should be noted that the Disarmament Commission had organized its work for 1979 in October and December 1978 and that the Advisory Board had met in October 1978 and submitted a preliminary report to the Secretary-General, who had transmitted it to the Assembly. Although the Committee on Disarmament had not met, it was known that in 1979 it would be undertaking more activities, since in addition to its own functions it would have to perform those of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The Centre was therefore aware of the main components of its programme for 1979.

(Mr. Corradini)

28. In paragraph 11 of its report the Advisory Committee recommended that the request for certain staffing resources, including 12 P-5 work-months, be rejected. The latter resources were particularly important, since they were required for the work of the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee and the Committee on Disarmament. Since the chairmanship of the latter body was rotated every month, the Secretariat had to maintain the continuity of the work. The Secretariat prepared verbatim records of the meetings of the Committee on Disarmament and in general all the necessary documents. Given the scope of its work, the Secretariat should be represented by an officer of appropriate rank and it was essential that the P-5 post be retained.

29. In paragraph 12 of its report the Advisory Committee referred to the support provided to the Centre by the Department of Public Information. Although it was true that the Department of Public Information publicized the work of the Centre, the latter often revised or even produced substantive material on disarmament, and the Department of Public Information merely disseminated it.

30. In paragraph 13 of the report reference was made to the study on the relationship between disarmament and development. That important study had been begun in 1978 and should be completed in 1981. It was essential that the P-5 official who had been participating in the work should continue to do so.

31. With regard to the information in paragraph 15 of the Advisory Committee's report, it should be noted that the posts mentioned between brackets (1 P-4, 1 G-5 and 1 General Service) were posts belonging to the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs and were not assigned exclusively to the Centre.

32. In the table in paragraph 16, a G-5 post which had been requested had been eliminated. That post was needed for the Geneva Office in order to meet the growing need for reference and information material.

33. In paragraph 24 of its report the Advisory Committee recommended that the expenditure on the fellowship programme should be reduced. In fact, the Centre might have underestimated requirements with regard to interpretation and instruction. Some 300 hours of instruction had to be provided and to that end it was essential that the nine work-months of temporary assistance requested be granted. The Centre had no resources which could be assigned to the fellowship programme, and since that programme was experimental in nature, only temporary assistance had been requested. The Secretary-General was to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the implementation of the programme.

34. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) inquired whether the Secretariat maintained that the forthcoming deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, the Committee on Disarmament and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies would not provide any additional information about or understanding of the future level and scope of the Centre's activities and whether the Secretariat therefore contended that the first sentence of paragraph 6 of document A/33/7/Add.33 was incorrect.

35. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that according to the Secretariat only the general outline of the Centre's programme for 1979 and not the specific details thereof were known. However, the Secretariat had found a way of transforming that lack of detail into a request for specific posts. With regard to the assertion that the Secretariat prepared verbatim records for the Committee on Disarmament, it should be remembered that the General Assembly was encouraging the replacement of verbatim records by summary records and had suggested that in some cases even summary records might be dispensed with. In the case of the Centre it was clear that no effort had been made to apply those Assembly guidelines or even to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Disarmament; that was very regrettable.

36. At the current session of the General Assembly the Committee of 41 had been established to supervise and co-ordinate the public information activities of the United Nations. In the document submitted by the Secretary-General there was no reference to any efforts along those lines with regard to disarmament. As a result of all those considerations, the members of the Fifth Committee were disappointed with the document of the Secretary-General. On the other hand, they had every reason to believe that the Advisory Committee had done praiseworthy work.

37. Mr. AKASHI (Japan), referring to the information on additional work-months provided in table 1 of document A/C.5/33/64, observed that the report gave no specific indication as to the extent of the Centre's absorptive capacity. The table gave only approximate figures for the additional work-months requested. For that reason his delegation shared the misgivings expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of its report regarding the lack of objective criteria regarding that absorptive capacity in the Secretary-General's report. According to table 1 of that report, the Secretariat was prepared to absorb five additional work-months without additional staff. He was impressed by the fact that 5 work-months out of 12 could be absorbed; if the same degree of absorption were applied to the rest of the staff, even the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would be very generous. The calculations were based on the theory that productivity standards were uniform, which was not the case in practice. Application of the criterion of more intensive work would have produced very different results.

38. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) said that during the course of the meeting his serious misgivings about the Advisory Committee's recommendations had been confirmed. The tenth special session devoted to disarmament had probably been the only gathering devoted to disarmament in which there had been universal participation, and at that session the importance of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament had been stressed. The Programme of Action adopted at the special session had generated an array of new activities to be undertaken by the Centre for Disarmament. Member States had requested that those activities be undertaken, and it was therefore necessary to ensure that the Centre could carry them out effectively.

39. The Secretary-General had requested 18 additional Professional and General Service posts, of which the Advisory Committee had recommended 9, as shown in the table on page 8 of document A/33/7/Add.33. Of the three Professional posts rejected by the Advisory Committee, two were in the P-5 category. One of them was for the

(Mr. Ramzy, Egypt)

purpose of assisting in deliberation and negotiation activities, which had multiplied and become more important after the tenth special session. The other P-5 post was required for the study of the relationship between disarmament and development, which was the subject of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session. The two P-5 posts had been authorized by the Advisory Committee on a temporary basis until the end of 1978 to prepare for the tenth special session and he could not understand why, the posts having been authorized from the start, the Advisory Committee should now be opposing the continuation of those posts on a permanent basis despite the fact that the tenth special session had generated more work for the Centre. The same could be said of one of the G-5 posts rejected by the Advisory Committee, established originally on a temporary basis to service the Centre at Geneva, since it was hardly conceivable that the workload there had decreased. Of the other three G-5 posts rejected by the Advisory Committee, the only one which was really urgent was that which was requested for administrative support to the Centre in New York and it was to be hoped that the Centre would be able to absorb the remaining work-months. A General Service post at the G-4/3 level and six work-months on a temporary basis at the D-1/P-5 level for the fellowship programme were also necessary.

40. Consequently, his delegation, on its own behalf and on that of the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, India, Libya, Mexico and Pakistan, proposed as a compromise solution that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee should be accepted with the following amendments: (1) restoration of two P-5 posts mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the Advisory Committee's report; (2) restoration of two G-5 posts mentioned in paragraphs 12 and 15; (3) restoration of one G-4/3 post mentioned in paragraph 14; (4) restoration of six work-months on a temporary basis at the D-1/P-5 levels mentioned in paragraph 21 in connexion with the scholarship programme. It was hoped that the partial restoration proposed would help the Centre to carry out its activities efficiently.

41. Mr. CORRADINI (Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament), replying to the questions of the United Kingdom representative, said that the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, the Committee on Disarmament and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies would increase knowledge of the permanent function of the Secretariat in relation to those three bodies. The Secretariat had tried to provide information which would indicate that some idea of what was expected of the Centre had been formed. The first sentence of paragraph 6 of the Advisory Committee's report was not incorrect inasmuch as it was obvious that the level and scope of activities of the Centre could not be fully determined at the present time, for more would be known a posteriori than a priori.

42. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that the reply of the Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General seemed to indicate that the Advisory Committee was right in affirming that the level and scope of activities of the Centre could not be fully determined at the present time, but it was mistaken in invoking that fact as a reason for rejecting the Secretary-General's requests. It would then appear that what the Secretariat was asking was that everything which had been requested should be approved now so that more could be requested later.

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43. Mr. CORRADINI (Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament) said that in document A/C.5/33/64 an effort had been made to reflect as realistically as possible what the activities of the Centre in 1979 would be. No one knew exactly what would happen, but all the members of the Committee could appreciate that the Secretariat had done everything possible to present a credible picture within the available resources.

Establishment and operation of a special account for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/33/117, A/33/552)

44. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the General Assembly had approved in principle the establishment within the United Nations of a special account for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and noted, in that respect, that regulation 6.6 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations made no provision for the establishment of special accounts by the General Assembly itself. In his report, the Secretary-General drew attention to the conditions which governed the establishment of special accounts. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposals of the Secretary-General should be accepted. It further recommended that the Governing Council of UNEP should provide over-all policy guidance in respect of the account.

45. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) said that his delegation had been and still was in favour of the principle of establishing a special account and urged Member States to support the Secretary-General's request in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

46. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that his delegation would have no difficulty in supporting the Advisory Committee's recommendations and asked what would be the advantages of a special account as distinguished from a trust fund.

47. Mr. FALL (Senegal) supported the Secretary-General's recommendations with the conditions specified by the Advisory Committee with reference in particular to the role of UNEP and the procedure for auditing the special account. He suggested that the Secretary-General should consider the possibility of convening a pledging conference as soon as possible or should invite Governments to make proposals in that regard.

48. Mr. HAQUE (Bangladesh) said that the special account should receive a substantial contribution from the regular budget of the United Nations.

49. Mr. MILLS (Budget Division) drew to the attention of the United States representative paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/33/117), in which a clear conceptual distinction was drawn between a "special account" and a "fund". For example, it might be said that the possible sources of financing would include loans and various forms of taxes on defence expenditures, which would not reflect the concept of "funds". For that reason, the Secretary-General preferred to speak of a "special account".

50. Mr. HAQUE (Bangladesh) asked if that meant that there would be no contributions from the regular budget.

51. Mr. MILLS (Budget Division) said that the reply to that question was categorically in the negative; all the funds in question would be derived from various sources under the regular budget. Therefore, the matter would not entail any financial implications.

52. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had studied carefully the reports of the Secretary-General (A/33/117) and the Advisory Committee (A/33/552) on the establishment and operation of a special fund for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and that it was fully prepared to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation, on the understanding that neither at present nor in future would that special account entail financial obligations for Member States in connexion with the regular budget of the United Nations.

53. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the Secretary-General's report on the establishment and operation of a special account for financing the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, appearing in document A/33/117 and the related report of the Advisory Committee appearing in document A/33/552, and that it should approve the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report, taking into account the observations and recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 4, 10, 11 and 12 of its report.

54. It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.