

the Fourth Committee, no additional appropriation would be required at the current stage for the biennium 1974-1975.

It was so decided.

56. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report to the General Assembly directly that should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/L.708, an additional appropriation of \$99,000 would be required under various sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975, as itemized in paragraph 16 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/9008/Add.30).

It was so decided.

57. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should

endorse the comments and observations of the Advisory Committee as set out in its report (A/9008/Add.30).

58. Mr. KITI (Kenya) associated himself with the comment made by the representative of Algeria. Endorsement of the recommendation in paragraph 13 of the Advisory Committee's report would have the effect of impeding implementation of draft resolution contained in document A/L.708. He suggested that action on the Chairman's last proposal be deferred until the following meeting.

59. The CHAIRMAN, observing that the question was to be taken up by the General Assembly in plenary session that afternoon, suggested that the Committee was free not to recommend that the General Assembly should endorse the Advisory Committee's comments and observations.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

1629th meeting

Friday, 14 December 1973, at 4.15 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. C. S. M. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania).

A/C.5/SR.1629

AGENDA ITEM 104

Inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the General Assembly, its committees and sub-committees (A/9008/Add.29, A/C.5/1564 and Add.1, A/C.5/L.1156)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegations of Guyana, Madagascar, Senegal and Upper Volta had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.5/L.1156).

2. Mr. MEGUID (Egypt) said that the United Nations was constantly proving to be an effective catalyst in world activities because it had always been able to adapt itself to the constructive changes occurring in the world. It had developed its role, expanded its functional machinery and increased its membership in order to accommodate new realities, new entities and new cultures. Only by applying such a spirit could the United Nations truly embody the causes and aspirations of all peoples. However, universality could not be achieved simply by increasing membership; there should be cultural universality as well. Languages were the expression of civilizations and the absence of Arabic in the United Nations represented a fundamental cultural lack. The languages contemplated by the authors of the Charter undoubtedly characterized the socio-political entities of the world as it had emerged from the Second World War. Since then, there had been many changes. The contributors to United Nations activities were today more varied than those using the five official or working languages of the Organization.

3. Arabic was spoken by well over 120 million people in an area extending over a great expanse. It was the official language of 19 Arab sovereign States and the language of a holy book held sacred by over 700 million people. The inclusion of Arabic within the machinery of the United Nations would render a great service to the Organization as well as to the entire Arab world. It would make the impact of the United Nations more widely felt and would enhance the necessary process of cultural universality to complement the drive towards political universality.

4. The Arab world was a dynamic part of the membership of the Organization. Some Arab States had been among the early founders, but all today were playing a major part in advocating the role of the United Nations and adhering to the principles of its Charter. The use of Arabic would strengthen the ties of that world with the United Nations. Arabic language and culture had played an impressive role in mediating between Eastern and Western cultures and in opening up new horizons before human knowledge. Many societies outside the Arab world had immeasurably benefited from Arabic lexicons, derivatives, terms and expressions. Arabic was an official and working language of the Organization of African Unity, which symbolized the profound cohesion between the sisterly African States and the Arab nations. Both were struggling for the same objectives and were united by the same values and principles which emanated from the Charter of the United Nations itself. Inasmuch as the African and Arabic States were united in fighting relentlessly the enclaves of occupation, colonialism and racism, they were equally united in embracing the same cultural aspects and manifestations.

Moreover, the General Assembly had latterly adopted the recommendation of the Founding Committee of the United Nations University that the Arabic language also should be used within the United Nations University.

5. In the light of all those considerations, he was pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 on behalf of its 36 sponsors. The use of Arabic in the United Nations would be a logical extension of its adoption by UNESCO and the other agencies mentioned in the second preambular paragraph. The last preambular paragraph recorded the commitment of the Arab Member States to meet collectively the costs of implementing the resolution during the first three years. It was to be hoped that more than one section of the budget would not have to bear the expenses on a permanent basis, for example, section 28, where \$75,000 was appropriated for the acquisition of equipment, and section 33, where \$238,000 was appropriated for alterations to premises. Such expenses could surely be absorbed ultimately, thus constituting saved items in later stages. He expressed appreciation of the note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1564 and Add.1) on the administrative and financial implications of the proposal and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/9008/Add.29).

6. His delegation felt that by venturing to request that Arabic should be included among the official and working languages of the General Assembly it was seeking to enhance the Organization's efficiency and broaden its perspectives. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

7. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) thanked the Arab States for their prompt co-operation with the Advisory Committee when the issue had first been examined. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report, he said that the Advisory Committee had endeavoured to set out the position as it saw it, so as to help members understand what was involved and to avoid future misunderstandings. Paragraph 2 of the report explained the Advisory Committee's understanding of the term "Main Committees" which was borne out in the operative paragraph of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156. Paragraph 3 analysed the additional permanent staff required to implement the provisions of the draft resolution, and paragraph 4 referred to the costs of the additional temporary assistance that would be required. The last sentence of paragraph 4 referred to the method used in producing verbatim records on which the Secretary-General had based his estimates. It was one of three methods at present used in the Organization and was the least costly. Paragraph 5 dealt with provisions for interpretation and contained a warning that it might be necessary to recruit interpreters in advance of the General Assembly in order to train them. The estimates for interpretation were tentative and susceptible to adjustment, since the actual costs would only emerge in the course of time. Paragraph 6 referred to the estimates of costs relating to rental, maintenance and alteration of premises, including \$404,000 for the one-time costs of miscellaneous removal, acquisition of furniture and equipment and alteration to premises. Since the representative of Egypt had referred to the one-time costs, he wished to stress that the Advisory Committee had worked on the assumption that the costs

during the first three years would come under the amount to be reimbursed. Moreover the Advisory Committee's estimate included the figure of \$1.2 million, and not the \$238,000 which would be the cost of providing a channel and switch position for Arabic by eliminating the floor channel as suggested by the Secretary-General. As stated at the end of paragraph 6, the Advisory committee questioned whether the elimination of the floor channel would be generally acceptable to Member States. The Advisory Committee had included the higher amount of \$1.2 million in the figures used in succeeding paragraphs. Paragraph 7 referred to the direct conference servicing costs and paragraph 8 dealt with the indirect costs which the Advisory Committee thought would arise if the draft resolution was adopted. Paragraph 9 gave the over-all costs, net of staff assessment, for 1974-1975 and 1976. Paragraph 10 drew attention to the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution in which it was stated that the Arab States undertook to meet collectively the costs of implementing the provisions of the draft resolution during the first three years. An attempt had also been made to estimate the costs for 1977, to which the provisions of the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution did not apply. However, that estimate might well be subject to change in view of inflationary trends and the currency situation. Paragraph 11 drew attention to the method being considered by the Secretary-General for giving effect to the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. The Secretary-General intended to establish a special account into which the contributions of the Arab States could be paid. The Advisory Committee was of the opinion that such an arrangement would facilitate the carrying out of the purposes of the draft resolution.

8. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that when the United Nations had been established, its founders had chosen English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese as the languages of the Organization, but since then, the world has undergone considerable changes. The Arab nations had emerged as significant political and economic forces, and the proposal for the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the General Assembly and its Main Committees bore witness to the role played by the Arab States, both on the international scene and within the United Nations.

9. Brazil had the closest and friendliest relations with Arab States. The culture of his people was also tied to their culture, in so much as they shared part of the Arab heritage of the Iberian peninsula. Portuguese had thousands of words of Arabic origin. There were a few million Brazilians of Arab descent in all walks of life, making a valuable contribution to the spiritual and material enrichment of the country. He therefore took great pleasure in announcing his delegation's warm support for the proposals contained in draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156.

10. Mr. BISHARA (Kuwait) said that Arabic was the vehicle that had carried the torch of Islam to China, Europe and the heart of Africa. It had blended past and present thoughts and had not yielded to erosion. Moreover, it was the language of the holy Koran of the Moslems. It was a rich language which had been continually enhanced since the eighth century when the Arabs were at the apex of their scientific and literary achievements. It was now the

language of some 120 million people and had influenced many other languages, such as Persian, Swahili, Somali and Hebrew, and was the root of many languages in Asia and Africa.

11. The request of the 19 Arab States Members of the United Nations for the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the United Nations was legitimate, logical and entirely justifiable. It would add to the linguistic treasury of the United Nations a wealth of thought and new dimensions in human relationships. Furthermore, it would contribute to the process of *détente* in the Organization, because greater understanding of the authentic roots of expression of peoples would lead to greater comprehension of those peoples. He was sure that the introduction of Arabic within the United Nations would bring about greater harmony and comprehension and would further cement existing understanding.

12. The Arab States of the United Nations had already taken a decision to meet the expenses arising from the implementation of the provisions of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 collectively for the first three years. Consequently, there would be no additional costs for the United Nations resulting from the adoption of the draft resolution. On behalf of his country, which would bear the lion's share of the estimated expenses, he appealed to the Committee to adopt the draft resolution unanimously; in so doing, the Committee would express its appreciation of the role played by languages in bringing about greater cohesion within the community of nations.

13. Mr. NUR ELMI (Somalia) said that there was little he could add to the eloquent introduction of the item under consideration by the representative of Egypt. His delegation attached great importance to the proposal before the Committee and strongly supported it. Its support was, to some extent, based on the fact that Somalia was a Moslem country and Arabic was therefore the religious language of the Somali people. Centuries of trading and cultural relations with the neighbouring Arab countries had made Somalia familiar with Arabic, which had become its second language. The more objective reasons for his delegation's support were the contribution of Arabic to world civilization; the fact that a significant proportion of the world's population was conversant with Arabic, as a result of religious and cultural influences; and the fact that Arabic was already an official and working language of the Organization of African Unity and a number of specialized agencies of the United Nations, as stated in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. In his delegation's view, that was evidence enough of the utility of Arabic and the need for its use within the United Nations as an instrument for international co-operation and communication. The chief drawback in the past had been that the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the Organization would have imposed a heavy financial burden on the already scarce resources of the United Nations. Now that that difficulty had been overcome, there was no reason why the proposal should not be adopted unanimously. His delegation therefore hoped that the draft resolution would receive the overwhelming support it deserved.

14. Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan) said that in view of the eloquent introduction by the representative of Egypt, his

delegation had no hesitation in co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156. For centuries, Pakistan had shared with the Arab people a common faith, a common culture, a common heritage. Arabic was one of the great languages of mankind, indeed, it was the language of 19 States Members of the United Nations. His delegation appreciated the commitment of the Arab States Members of the United Nations to meet collectively the cost of implementing the resolution under discussion during the first three years. Even if that generous offer had not been made, his delegation would have seen every reason to support the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the United Nations. It had been argued that the addition of yet another language would place strains on the administrative services of the United Nations, complicating the work of the Organization and impairing its efficiency. In the view of his delegation, such fears were exaggerated. Objections of a technical nature should not be allowed to stand in the way of important policy decisions. His delegation hoped that the proposal for the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the United Nations would meet with the unanimous approval of the Fifth Committee.

15. Mr. BOYE (Senegal) said that he had little to add to the brilliant introductory statement of the representative of Egypt and the other statements explaining the various aspects of the question under consideration. The draft resolution, of which his country was a sponsor, would put into practice the principal of universality embodied in the Charter. The inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the General Assembly would bring about a better diffusion and understanding of the spirit and activity of the Organization and would broaden the concept of international co-operation which was essential for a world seeking a balance of peace and justice. He did not wish to take up the Committee's time by going into the history of the African continent and the role of Arabic as a vehicle for communication, trade and cultural relations in Africa, the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. That role had undoubtedly contributed and would continue to contribute to the building of what the President of Senegal called universal civilization. His delegation hoped that the Committee would adopt draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 by consensus.

16. Mr. FARRELL (New Zealand) said that his delegation had noted with particular appreciation the generous assurances of Arab States that they would meet the costs during the first three years of making Arabic an official and working language of the General Assembly. That was particularly important in a year when it had already been agreed that Chinese should become a working as well as an official language of the Assembly. Besides budgetary implications, communication and understanding were other vital considerations. The inclusion of Chinese among the working languages of the United Nations would be a welcome advance and the introduction of Arabic, the language of not one but of 19 Member States, was supported by his delegation.

17. Mr. AL-HUSSAMY (Syrian Arab Republic) said that 120 million people in the Arab world spoke Arabic, which had been the language of Islam for over 13 centuries and was a modern language which had lived up to the

requirements of technology and modern civilization. Arab scientists and intellectuals had made a valuable contribution for many generations. Five independent Arab States had been founding Members of the United Nations and, immediately after achieving independence, all Arab States had joined the Organization. The Arab States accounted for approximately one sixth of the Member States. The universality of the United Nations in the linguistic field necessitated the adoption of Arabic as an official and working language, as had been done in the case of other United Nations languages.

18. Spanish had set a good precedent for the Arab States as developing countries, for the right of expression was not knowledge of one of the languages of the major Powers. Arabic was the language of the League of Arab States and was one of the official and working languages of the Organization of African Unity, both of which were recognized by the United Nations, and was an official and working language of a number of United Nations specialized agencies. It had recently been accepted as one of the languages of the United Nations University, and it was the religious language of all Islamic Members of the United Nations.

19. In view of the increasingly complex relations between the United Nations and its specialized agencies, on the one hand, and the Arab Member States, on the other hand, it was essential that Arabic should be included among the languages of the Organization. Difficulties which Arab representatives and States encountered because they used other languages in communicating with various United Nations bodies could not help but reflect negatively on the activities of the United Nations in the Arab world and therefore on the familiarity of the Arab masses with the aims and accomplishments of the United Nations. The acceptance of Arabic as an official and working language would facilitate the translation of official United Nations documents into Arabic.

20. His delegation appreciated the thorough report in document A/C.5/1564. His Government would pay its full share to meet the costs of implementing the provisions of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156. In principle, Arab countries should not have to underwrite the expense of including their language among the official languages of the United Nations. However, they had decided to do so for three years in the light of the deficit facing the United Nations budget. Lastly, his delegation hoped that the support manifested by many delegations, for which his own was deeply grateful, would make it possible to adopt the draft resolution unanimously.

21. Mr. HSING Sung-yi (China) said that the Arabic language had greatly contributed to preserving and disseminating world culture and to promoting human progress. Nineteen States Members of the United Nations with a population of 120 million used that language. The Arab countries were exerting growing influence and playing an increasingly positive role in international affairs. The United Nations should accord the Arabic language its due status, as a number of the specialized agencies had already done. The inclusion of Arabic among the official working languages of the General Assembly and its Main Committees would enhance the efficiency of the work of the United Nations.

22. His delegation welcomed the co-operative attitude of the Arab States in offering to meet all the costs of the inclusion of Arabic for the first three years and was pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156, which it hoped would command the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

23. Mr. JIMENEZ (Philippines) said that his delegation welcomed the significant changes that had taken place in the United Nations, which represented a positive trend in world understanding. It believed that Arabic, as one of the languages that preserved civilization, should be an official working language of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. The importance of Arabic was underlined by its use in some of the specialized agencies and in the Organization of African Unity. The adoption of the proposal before the Committee would go a long way to achieving greater international co-operation and understanding.

24. His delegation expressed its appreciation to the Arab States for their undertaking to meet collectively the costs of implementing the provisions of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 during the first three years, thus obviating any charge to the United Nations budget.

25. Arabic culture had influenced Philippine culture throughout the centuries. Indeed, the national language of the Philippines—Filipino—had been enriched by the accretion of words and expressions from the Arabic language. Arab civilization had had a subtle but significant influence on the way of life of the Filipino, whether Moslem or Christian; Arabic legends and folk tales, part of Philippine culture, were studied in schools either in the original or in Filipino or English translation. Arabic was equally authentic, along with Filipino, English and Spanish, in the new Philippine Constitution. Those and other measures were in line with the national policy of promoting the indigenous culture of the Moslem community of the Philippines, which constituted over 10 per cent of the population. That policy also accorded with the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the preservation and further development of minority indigenous cultures, which had recently been considered in the Third Committee, and in the implementation of which the Philippine delegation had co-sponsored the draft resolution on human rights and scientific and technological developments just adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 3148 (XXVIII).

26. Those important considerations had weighed heavily in his delegation's decision to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 and he trusted that it would be adopted by the Committee either unanimously or on a no objection basis.

27. Mr. ÇOMO (Albania) said that, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156, his delegation appreciated the importance of Arabic, which met all the requirements for inclusion as an official and working language of the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

28. As the language of 19 Member States, and of more than 120 million people, Arabic had made a significant contribution to the progress of world culture and civilization. The Arab peoples, with their long and glorious

history, enjoyed the well-deserved esteem of the entire international progressive community, which highly appreciated the unceasing efforts of those peoples to attain their freedom and defend their sovereign rights.

29. The inclusion of Arabic would be in full conformity with earlier General Assembly resolutions and would contribute to United Nations activities.

30. His delegation accordingly gave its full support to the just demand of the Arab countries and, as a sponsor, was fully convinced that the draft resolution would be unanimously adopted.

31. Mr. STOTTEMYER (United States of America) said that his delegation would support draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156, and also agreed with the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in its report (A/9008/Add.29).

32. His delegation's support was based on several considerations. As the language of 19 Member States, Arabic was considered by them as more than just a means of communication. It was the principal art form of the Arab peoples, the language of the prophet Mohammed and the Koran, which Moslems considered to be the word of God. Arabic also had a special religious significance for over 300 million Moslems. It had also served as a vital cultural link between modern Western civilization and the ancient Western heritage of Greece and Rome, and many works of antiquity would have been lost had they not been translated into Arabic and then later retranslated into European languages. Arabic thus had preserved—and enriched by its own original contribution—many of the foundations of modern science, medicine and the humanities.

33. His delegation also supported the draft resolution in recognition of the co-operative spirit with which the Arab States had agreed to pay the cost of Arabic language services.

34. When the question was considered in its broadest context, it should be recognized that there were other languages not at present used in the United Nations which various Member States might wish to have introduced. His delegation therefore urged the Secretary-General to undertake a study of the use of languages as measured against the burden of the cost to the membership. It should be borne in mind that the addition of further languages raised the total expenses of the language service by an almost geometrical progression.

35. Accordingly, in order to avoid discriminating against any particular language—but account being taken of the burden that would be brought about by a proliferation of language services in the United Nations—his delegation believed that the most equitable procedure would be to institute a “pay-as-you-go” system. In that way, all delegations would bear the cost of the language service they chose to utilize, including English. Such a procedure would allow any delegation to use its national language and share the costs with others which chose to join in using it. His delegation believed that that was the spirit behind the generous offer of the Arab States to underwrite the costs of the new language service that they were seeking.

36. Mr. JALIL (Ecuador) said that the inclusion of Arabic would do justice to the 19 Member States representing over 120 million people whose language had contributed greatly to world civilization. Support for draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 would serve the just cause of universality. The assurance given by the Arab States regarding the cost of implementing the provisions of the draft resolution were of particular significance for the Fifth Committee. His delegation would support the draft resolution and hoped that it would be adopted unanimously.

37. Mr. MANGAL (Afghanistan) said that the importance of Arabic in world civilization and culture was beyond doubt. It had been an effective instrument in man's creative endeavours to meet the challenges of time and to contribute to the cultural heritage of mankind.

38. The inclusion of Arabic, the language of 19 Member States and one of the working languages of the conferences of non-aligned countries, would further strengthen international understanding and contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter.

39. For those reasons, his delegation had become a sponsor of the draft resolution, which it hoped would be adopted unanimously.

40. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that his delegation welcomed the initiative of the Arab delegations and noted with appreciation their generous offer to meet the initial costs of implementing the provisions of the draft resolution. If adopted, it would greatly further the cause of universality. His delegation supported it and hoped it would be unanimously adopted.

41. Mr. MARRON (Spain) warmly supported draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156, since his delegation considered the inclusion of Arabic to be just, appropriate and necessary. Arabic had had a profound influence on the language and culture of the Spanish people.

42. As a firm supporter of efforts to broaden the linguistic and cultural basis of the work of the United Nations, his delegation was proud to co-sponsor the draft resolution, and hoped that it would be unanimously adopted.

43. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), referring to paragraph 11 of the Advisory Committee's report, said that, in the light of the undertaking by the Arab States to meet the costs of implementing the provisions of the draft resolution during the first three years, he could confirm that it was the Secretary-General's intention to establish a special account for the receipt of the related contributions and the disbursement of the related funds under financial regulations 6.6 and 6.7. As soon as the Secretary-General received the General Assembly's authorization, he would discuss with representatives of the Arab States the amount required to finance the first three years, so that the recruitment of staff and modifications to premises could be commenced as early as possible. He drew attention to the very substantial work that would be involved in adapting the various conference chambers to accommodate Arabic in time for the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The conversion of seven of the main conference chambers of the

Assembly building would be involved, with the construction of additional interpretation booths in the General Assembly Hall and seven conference chambers. The work would involve the rebuilding of control equipment for those rooms, the installation of 6,740 seat switches for the receipt of all the languages, the rewiring of the audio-visual booths and work on the conduits linking the interpreters booths and seat places in each room.

44. That work would have to be carried out during the early months of 1974, coinciding with a very substantial number of meetings. It would therefore take the best efforts of the Secretary-General and his colleagues to carry out the necessary conversion in the time available. He felt sure that delegations which thereby found themselves inconvenienced would exhibit the necessary patience.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that it had emerged from consultations that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 by consensus. If he heard no objection, he would assume that that was the Committee's wish.

It was so decided.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that it was his understanding that, in adopting the draft resolution, the Committee approved the financial implications indicated in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/9008/Add.29 para. 9), as well as the assumption set forth in paragraph 10 of that report that no additional appropriation would be required for the biennium 1974-1975.

47. In reply to a question from the representative of Kuwait regarding the estimate of \$5.6 million referred to in paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report, he confirmed that that sum related to the biennium 1974-1975.

48. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) pointed out that expenses would be higher in the initial year owing to the substantial costs of conversion. He hoped to discuss arrangements for an agreed and appropriate distribution of the \$5.6 million over the period concerned to enable the Secretariat to carry out the necessary alterations for which one-time costs would be incurred.

49. He added that there might be some minor additions to the cost arising from the application of staff assessment.

50. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) warmly welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution. That important event was a worthy recognition of the role and significance of the Arab States in United Nations activities and their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

51. Mr. HUMAIDAN (United Arab Emirates), speaking as the current Chairman of the group of Arab States, expressed his profound gratitude to all those who had helped to ensure the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1156 by consensus. He gave his assurance that the Arab States Members of the United Nations would always uphold friendship among peoples and the cause of peace and justice in the world.

AGENDA ITEM 79

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 and medium-term plan for the period 1974-1977 (continued) (for the earlier documentation, see 1589th meeting; A/9008/Add.9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25 and 28, A/9444, A/C.5/1509/Add.2, A/C.5/1540, A/C.5/1543 and Corr.1 and 2, A/C.5/1544, A/C.5/1545, A/C.5/1547, A/C.5/1554, A/C.5/1566 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1571-1573, A/C.5/1590, A/C.5/L.1146, A/C.5/L.1155, A/C.5/L.1158, A/C.5/L.1159, A/C.5/L.1163-1166)

Proposals concerning the draft report of the Fifth Committee (concluded) (A/C.5/L.1166)

52. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) said that the sponsors felt that the draft paragraph contained in document A/C.5/L.1166 should be adopted by consensus.

53. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that that was the wish of the Committee.

It was so decided.

[Before continuing its consideration of proposals concerning the draft report, the Committee considered the organization of work, the revision of the Financial Regulations and the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/L.1163 (see paras. 59 to 94 below).]

54. Mr. PASHKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) proposed the following paragraph for inclusion in the Committee's report on agenda item 79:

"The Fifth Committee proposes that the Secretary-General should implement further measures aimed at maximum economy of electricity and steam used at United Nations Headquarters, with a view to achieving a 10 per cent reduction in the use of electricity and steam in comparison with the amount used in 1973."

Despite the commendable efforts of the services responsible and the results achieved to date, he was convinced that further reductions in the use of electricity and steam could be made. The inclusion of the paragraph he proposed in the report of the Committee would help the services responsible for such expenditure to persuade staff members to be more economical, particularly in view of the current fuel shortage in the United States.

55. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria) said that the point raised by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was not a matter to be dealt with by the Fifth Committee. He therefore asked that representative to withdraw his proposal.

56. Mr. PASHKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that he hoped his proposal would be reflected in the summary records and in the report of the Committee as the view of one delegation.

57. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) suggested that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and the Assistant Secretary-General for General Services, both of whom were present, should

take note of the Byelorussian proposal and take the necessary measures.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that the views of the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic would be reflected in the records. He assumed that the Secretary-General would take into account, in his management of the programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975, the sentiments expressed during the meeting on the question of ensuring that the funds for which he was responsible were spent in the most economical manner, in accordance with the directives laid down by the General Assembly.

[See the note following paragraph 53 above.]

Organization of work (A/C.5/L.1165)

59. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to consider the draft decision proposed by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (A/C.5/L.1165) under agenda item 79.

It was so decided.

60. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that his delegation had carefully studied the draft decision in document A/C.5/L.1165 and would support it. However, he hoped that the Ukrainian delegation would be willing to add the words "in all the working languages" after the words "the timely distribution of documents".

61. Mr. ARBOLEDA (Colombia) proposed that the final part of the first sentence should be amended to read "requests the Secretary-General to take strict measures to ensure the timely distribution of documents at future sessions of the General Assembly in accordance with the above-mentioned decisions".

62. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) noted that the English version called for the distribution of documents "not later than six weeks before the closing date of the session" whereas the French version referred to the opening of the session. He asked which wording was correct.

63. Mr. YEREMENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), replying to the question put by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, said that "closing date" was correct and that the French version should be brought into line with the English. Both the French and the Colombian amendments were acceptable and would be incorporated into the final text. He thanked the many delegations which had submitted suggestions during informal consultations and expressed the hope that the decision would be adopted by consensus. He also thanked the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management for his constructive contribution.

64. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) said that his delegation fully supported the spirit and intent of the proposed decision, but felt that the Committee might be asking the impossible of the Secretary-General. He would therefore like to hear the Under-Secretary-General's comments regarding it.

65. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said he believed that the proposed decision was a healthy one and assured members that, although problems would undoubtedly arise, the Secretariat would do its best to comply with the directive, if it was adopted. Before submitting the proposal, the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic had discussed every detail with him, and the Under-Secretary-General had urged the inclusion of the last sentence, calling upon the Secretary-General to report to the Fifth Committee on the status of documentation at the beginning of each session. In that way, if delays in the issue of documentation were anticipated, explanations could be furnished well beforehand, and the Fifth Committee could either recognize their validity or suggest alternative solutions. He was glad to see that certain kinds of documentation had been exempted, including the revised budget estimates and notes on financial implications of draft resolutions of the Main Committees. In his opinion, there was a further category of documents which deserved a special status, namely the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit. He hoped that the Fifth Committee would agree that, in the case of such reports, it would be considered that the Secretary-General had observed the deadline if he arranged for his own comments on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit to be transmitted to the Advisory Committee six weeks before the closing date of the session.

66. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that in order further to improve the organization of its work, the Committee might wish to consider whether at the twenty-ninth session it would avoid a general discussion and concentrate on important issues of substance only, on the understanding that the right to freedom of speech of all delegations would remain unimpaired.

67. Mr. OUÉDRAOGO (Upper Volta) said that, although the suggestion of the representative of Pakistan had merits, it would be unwise for the Fifth Committee to enter into a long debate on its virtues or shortcomings so late in the session.

68. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) said that he fully supported the spirit of the Pakistan suggestion. He had reluctantly to agree with the representative of the Upper Volta that it was inappropriate to consider it at the present time.

69. The CHAIRMAN observed that the Pakistan suggestion might give rise to a very long discussion, since delegations were divided in their views about the usefulness of the general discussion. He therefore suggested that it might be taken up at the beginning of the twenty-ninth session.

70. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that he would not press his suggestion at the current session. However, he wished to point out that if it was a question of choosing between the general discussion and several important items which would have to go unconsidered because of lack of time, the majority of delegations would, he believed, prefer to sacrifice the general discussion.

71. The CHAIRMAN thanked the representative of Pakistan. He said that, if he heard no objection, he would take

it that the Committee agreed to adopt the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1165), as orally amended, by consensus.

It was so decided.

**Revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations
(A/9008/Add.28, A/C.5/1539)**

72. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/C.5/1539) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/9008/Add.28).

73. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that all the amendments to the Financial Regulations proposed by the Secretary-General flowed from the change from annual budgeting to programme budgeting on a biennial basis. They were mainly of a technical nature and did not involve the substance of the Regulations. The Secretary-General had made a few alternations as possible and the Advisory Committee had adopted the same approach, making only a few further suggestions for the sake of clarity or consistency.

74. Mr. HARAN (Israel) proposed that, in regulation 3.9 (A/C.5/1539, annex), the words "if necessary" should be added after the words "the Secretary-General shall" and the word "annually" should be added after the words "the General Assembly".

75. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that from the Secretary-General's standpoint, he had no objection to the first Israeli amendment. However, he doubted whether it would be wise to encourage the Secretary-General to submit estimates more often than necessary by including the word "annually".

76. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), supported by Mr. ELKHATIM (Sudan), said it was his understanding that, in view of the time factor, the Committee would adopt the revised text of the Financial Regulations, as amended by the Advisory Committee, without suggesting any further alterations. If the delegation of Israel was unwilling to withdraw its amendment, he wished to propose that it be put to the vote.

77. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the first Israeli amendment to regulation 3.9 of the Financial Regulations.

The Israeli amendment was rejected by 28 votes to 13, with 20 abstentions.

78. Mr. KITI (Kenya) said he assumed that, the new wording of regulation 3.9 notwithstanding, the Secretary-General would continue to submit supplementary estimates on an annual basis even though there was now a two-year budgetary cycle.

79. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it approve the revised text of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, as set out in the annex to document A/C.5/1539,

and as amended by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/9008/Add.28).

It was so decided.

80. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) noted that earlier in the session his delegation, supported by the delegations of the United States of America and the Netherlands, had asked whether it would not be logical for the Board of Auditors to conform with the new biennial arrangement. The Secretariat had undertaken to consult the Board of Auditors and to report back to the Fifth Committee.

81. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that consultations with the Board of Auditors had taken place. The Secretariat had suggested two possible alternatives to the Board, which had been of the unanimous view that it would be advisable to defer a decision on the periodicity of audits until the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Postponement of the decision would have no material effect on the situation, since the audit for 1973 would necessarily be carried out in accordance with the existing Financial Regulations. It was, of course, up to the General Assembly to decide whether to maintain the existing system or to adopt biennial auditing. The Board of Auditors had consulted the Panel of External Auditors, which consisted of the auditors responsible for the audits of the specialized agencies and had learned that many of the specialized agencies preferred annual audits even though they had gone over to the system of biennial budgeting.

82. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) thanked the Under-Secretary-General for his clarifications. He hoped that the Board of Auditors, when it considered the review, would take into consideration the views expressed by members, which would, of course, be reflected in the Committee's report.

***Draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/L.1163
(continued)***

83. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) expressed the Secretary-General's appreciation of the purpose and content of draft resolution A/C.5/L.1163. He wished, however, to draw attention to a number of points concerning the draft resolution in order to ascertain whether his interpretation of them was correct.

84. With regard to operative paragraph 1, although the representative of Guyana had interpreted the reference to "impediments" to mean only the lack of resources, he himself assumed that, if the Secretary-General encountered other serious impediments to the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium, he would be free to include a reference to them in his report to the General Assembly.

85. In paragraph 3, he interpreted the words "redeploying resources where necessary" to mean that, in preparing the medium-term plan for 1976-1979, the Secretary-General should also include proposals for redeploying resources where necessary.

86. With regard to paragraph 4, in which no reference was made to any particular session of the Economic and Social Council, he wished to emphasize that, since the Secretary-General would be commencing on 1 July 1974 the first steps connected with the medium-term plan for 1976-1979 and the programme budget for 1976-1977, it would be most helpful if he could have some indication from the Council as early as possible of the order of priorities in the economic, social and human rights fields. In that way, the Secretary-General would not be required to undo any of the work he had already set in motion.

87. Turning to paragraph 5, he said that the Secretary-General would do his best to comply with the request to present the plan by programme rather than by organizational unit. However, a distinction was apparently made between the requests given in paragraphs 5 and 6 with regard to the programme budget. Whereas paragraph 5 requested him to present his plan by programme rather than by organizational unit, paragraph 6 (b) would have him provide information on the allocation of indirect costs of programmes to which those costs related. The implication was that, while the Secretary-General in his programme budget might have to continue in certain areas to base his programme breakdown on organizational units, he was being requested to provide information on the allocation of indirect costs of programmes to which they related. Thus, in accordance with paragraph 6, reference to organizational units would continue. He wished to be sure that his interpretation was correct.

88. He was somewhat concerned over the request in paragraph 6 (d). If it meant that the relative weight of each programme was to be stated in relation to each of the other programmes, and that the relative weight of each programme component was to be stated in relation to each of the other programme components within the programme, complicated calculations would be involved. The Secretary-General would endeavour to state the relative weight in percentages of each programme and programme component in so far as they were relevant.

89. Finally, he pointed out that paragraph 7 contained no instruction to the Secretary-General to prepare a document in connexion with the item referred to in that paragraph.

90. Mr. NEUFELDT (Federal Republic of Germany) thanked the representative of Guyana for his initiative in submitting the draft resolution, of which his own delegation was a sponsor. He felt that it would be appropriate to sum up the discussions held in the various competent bodies involved in the first programme budget exercise, namely the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

the Economic and Social Council, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, and to give guidelines to the Secretary-General and to the Economic and Social Council on the way in which to improve the form, content and structure of the programme budget and the medium-term plan.

91. His delegation shared the view that in both content and language, the draft resolution was a carefully-balanced compromise that took account of most of the views expressed during the debate, especially in connexion with section 7 of the programme budget. The draft resolution rightly emphasized the programme side. The need to discuss the content and priorities of the programme budget had become evident. So had the necessity to evaluate more thoroughly the effectiveness of programmes, since it was wrong to keep adding new programmes to existing ones. The real growth in important programmes mentioned in operative paragraph 3 had to be achieved to a large extent by a redeployment of resources. That was a difficult task, but nevertheless a necessary one. If the machinery for programme evaluation was insufficient, it should be strengthened.

92. The improvement of the medium-term plan as a parameter for the long-term programme had been of concern to most delegations. Only if the plan was presented by programme, rather than by organizational unit, was it possible to obtain a complete picture of the Organization's activities in specific sectors.

93. Turning to paragraph 7, he said that, in view of the short time available to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the programme budget and the medium-term plan, and to CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the Advisory Committee for reviewing and commenting on them, they had done well. The Advisory Committee, in particular, had dealt very thoroughly with the programme budget and had warranted the confidence placed in it. There was, however, no question that the preparation of the programme budget for 1974-1975 and the medium-term plan for 1974-1977 had proved that the present machinery had to be overhauled. Paragraph 7 had therefore been included in the draft resolution.

94. His delegation was convinced that the draft resolution was a considered and balanced effort to improve the work of the Organization, and hoped that it would be accepted on a consensus basis. Finally, the Indian amendment contained in document A/C.5/L.1164 was acceptable to his delegation.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.