

# 1570th meeting

Monday, 8 October 1973, at 10.45 a.m.

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

A/C.5/SR.1570

## 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 1565th meeting; A/C.5/1516, A/C.5/L.1109)

### *General discussion (continued)*

1. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that, if the Organization was to maintain its prestige and authority in the world, its financial policies must be rational and sound and its management and administration must be effective. That comment was particularly pertinent at the current time when there was once again clear evidence of the consequences of failure to implement United Nations resolutions on the Middle East. His delegation therefore welcomed the fact that in the proceedings of the General Assembly increasing attention was being attached to administrative and budgetary matters.

2. The 1974-1975 estimates were 19 per cent higher than the combined appropriations for 1972 and 1973. Inflationary trends and the devaluation of the dollar had been mentioned among the main reasons for the high rate of growth of the budget. In fact, however, inflationary trends in Western countries, particularly the United States of America, had affected the Organization's budget for years and could thus only partly justify the proposed increase in expenditure.

3. As an important contributor to the Organization's budget, Poland had for many years been calling for a reduction in, and stabilization of, its rate of growth and arguing that it should be based on rational and economically justified criteria. It felt, for example, that the Organization's financial situation should reflect the financial and economic situation of Member States and that the rate of growth of its budget should not exceed the average rate of growth of the national income of Member States. Yet the growth rate of the Organization's budget was three times greater than the average rate of growth of national incomes. Many countries, including Poland, found it difficult to tolerate the rapid growth of United Nations expenditures. The Polish people realized that the Government's contribution was paid by Polish taxpayers, in a currency which had to be obtained by means of exports to difficult markets. Consequently, they frequently asked why all countries, particularly the socialist and developing countries, should have to share the consequences of the West's monetary crisis; it would be fairer if the costs of inflation were borne by the countries which caused and, above all, profited by inflation. It seemed, therefore, that serious consideration should be given to the proposal made at the 1565th meeting by the Cuban delegation, that the United Nations consider the possibility of creating a new,

stable, unit of account for all its financial operations. The excessive growth of the United Nations machinery and the proliferation of its organs and agencies were also a source of concern to public opinion in Poland. The Government shared that concern and had for years been urging that the Organization's machinery should be rationalized.

4. His delegation had favoured the introduction of a biennial budget cycle in the hope that the reform would decrease and stabilize the rate of growth of the Organization's budget. Unfortunately, that hope had been dashed. As to the format of the budget, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 (A/9006) must be considered within the context of transition from one basic budget technique to another. It also endorsed the comments made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 16 to 22 of its report (A/9008). The Secretariat had certainly tried to make the programme budget as compact as possible, but in future there should be a shorter text and one less costly to produce.

5. The Organization's contribution to the solution of the problems facing the international community was by no means commensurate with the increase in its budget, the major part of which was earmarked for expansion of the Organization's bureaucratic machinery. Reference to page 109 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/9001) showed that as at 31 May 1973 the Secretariat had consisted of 12,389 staff members. In view of the Organization's financial situation, further unnecessary expansion of staff through the establishment of new offices and posts must be avoided. On the contrary, more attention should be paid to the redeployment and reassessment of existing resources in the Secretariat. In the proposed programme budget for 1974-1975, however, 523 new posts had been requested. His delegation could not accept that figure or the reduced figure proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 38 of its report. The policy of financial restraint introduced by the Secretary-General in 1972 had produced positive results and confirmed the existence of untapped reserves within the Secretariat. It should therefore be continued for the next two years.

6. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that his delegation shared the opinion expressed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraph 16 of its report on its fourteenth session (E/5364) that the form of presentation of work programmes and budget estimates in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 (A/9006), and the medium-term plan for the period 1974-1977 (A/9006/Add.1), although far from perfect, represented an important first step towards the achievement of an integrated programme, planning and budgeting system by

means of which Member States would be able readily to relate programmes and objectives to resources needed to carry them out. His delegation also endorsed the comments made in paragraph 13 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/9008). It congratulated the Secretary-General on having had the courage to embark on the right course and paid a tribute to the efforts made by the financial services, particularly the Budget Division, to move, despite the difficulties encountered, to the new system. Nevertheless, much remained to be done. The Organization would not benefit from the advantages of the new system until it had remedied the imperfections in the proposed programmes budget.

7. The form of presentation of the programme budget under consideration had given rise to various criticisms. In the first place, the fact that the proposed budget was based more on the activities of the various Secretariat units than on the programmes themselves meant that, for time being, the goals for which the reform had been introduced could not be fully achieved.

8. Secondly, the presentation suffered from obvious conceptual and practical defects. It seemed, for instance, that the Secretariat was not equipped to undertake large-scale programming, planning and evaluation operations. That explained why the Secretary-General's medium-term plan was, as CPC had noted, little more than a projection of the programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975. It also explained why greater attention had not been given during the preparation of the programme budget to analysing the base for the proposals to be made. Thus the Advisory Committee had found that it was not possible to determine what existing activities could be displaced in favour of new or more important ones or to examine alternative ways of accomplishing stated objectives. It had also found that, in the absence of such an approach, the legislative bodies were driven to accepting the existing base and accommodating new activities by the addition of new resources. The Secretary-General should therefore, immediately appoint persons well versed in programme budgeting techniques to the 2 posts in the Office of Financial Services for which the General Assembly had made provision at its twenty-seventh session. Moreover, the total cost of implementation of the programmes was not indicated, since indirect expenses relating to conference services, documentation and other overheads had not been distributed between the various substantive units but were dealt with in separate sections of the budget. In addition, the programmes should be individualized and more fully described. In that respect, the Organization could be guided by the form of presentation adopted by certain specialized agencies.

9. A third lacuna in the form of presentation of the programme budget concerned the question of the timetable in accordance with which policy-making organs and the expert organs dealing with the formulation, examination and approval of the programmes and budget carried out and co-ordinated their work in order to achieve satisfactory integration. The Committee would certainly give that most important question all the attention it merited. In the opinion of his delegation, the following basic principles should be established: first, responsibility for examining the Secretary-General's proposals lay first with the policy-making organs; secondly, the reports

prepared by those organs on economic and social matters should be examined by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, with the Economic and Social Council then being called upon to express its final opinion and thus play its co-ordinating role; thirdly, it was only then that the Advisory Committee should express its opinion and make well-founded recommendations.

10. Turning to the question of increased estimates as compared with previous years, he warned that comparisons might be imprecise and misleading. In times of inflation and currency realignments, such comparisons might lead to conclusions of relative value, and it would be even more difficult to reach valid conclusions since the budget under consideration had been prepared on a biennial basis. Estimates for 1974-1975 were 19 per cent higher than combined appropriations for 1972 and 1973. It should be noted, however, that if the comparisons were made between estimates for 1974 only and appropriations for 1973, the increase would amount to only 16.6 per cent. As the Advisory Committee had pointed out in paragraph 23 of its report, the appropriations for the 1972-1973 biennium reflected the austerity measures introduced by the Secretary-General in 1972, and inflationary pressures and monetary instability had a greater impact on the estimates for the 1974-1975 biennium. The comparisons to which he had referred were not definitive, being based on provisional figures. The Secretary-General had informed the Committee that he would be obliged to submit supplementary estimates in the amount of \$7 million for 1973. Furthermore, the initial estimates for 1974-1975 would be increased by revised estimates which the Advisory Committee assessed at \$25 million, \$17.5 million of which represented the difference between the current rates of exchange and those that had prevailed when the estimates had been calculated. Such growth prospects were a source of serious concern.

11. It seemed to his delegation that a large part of the additional costs resulting from inflation and currency instability could be absorbed and the need to request corresponding increases in estimates thus avoided. In paragraph 28 of its report, for instance, the Advisory Committee had suggested various measures which might usefully be adopted. In view of the fact that the 1972 austerity policy had yielded positive results, the passive approach adopted by the Administration was surprising and disappointing. There was a middle way between measures which might jeopardize implementation of essential programmes and mere resignation to a difficult state of affairs.

12. His delegation had learnt with interest that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had studied the question of currency instability. Indeed, it doubted that the Organization could continue to measure its expenses against a changing standard. It was therefore anxious to learn ACC's opinion on certain promising formulae such as plurality of budgetary currencies, establishment of the budget and scale of contributions in the currency of the host country, and a budget drawn up in invariable units of account. It would, however, be over-optimistic to imagine that a rapid and complete solution could be found to the problem. Thus, the ACC's study did not obviate the need for the budgetary overhaul which he had suggested. His delegation wished to emphasize, in that connexion, that the easy solution which consisted purely and simply of adding

to budgetary expenditures the additional amounts attributable to the effects of inflation and currency realignments was as simplistic as it was regrettable.

13. In conclusion, his delegation hoped that the improvements which would be made to future programme budgets would enable members to have a clear idea not only of how much was being spent but also of why and how it was being spent. The main objective should be to reduce unproductive expenditure in order to be able to devote an increasing amount to "positive" activities without thereby incurring expenditures out of proportion with the capacity to pay of Member States as a whole. The programme budget seemed a tool well-adapted to such tasks as unearthing instances of duplication, redefining priorities and removing the dead wood of useless posts or outdated programmes. Once the programme budgeting procedure had been perfected, such adjustments should be made not only in the Organization itself but also in the wider framework of the United Nations system, where effective co-ordination was essential if waste of funds and efforts was to be avoided. While it was the responsibility of the Secretary-General to strike a suitable balance between strict control of expenditure and a reasonable expansion of effective programmes, it was the duty of Member States to help the Administration to reconcile needs which were conflicting in appearance only. Thus, before taking decisions, delegations to policy-making organs would be well advised to consider the budgetary and financial implications of their recommendations and to examine critically the justification for proposed new measures and the manner in which such measures would fit into the existing arrangements. In the search for balance, the Fifth Committee had a most important role to play. In the course of its impartial discussions, every programme should be considered rationally and unemotionally. The concept of neutrality on which the authority of the Committee was based must remain inviolate.

14. Mr. TARDOS (Hungary) said that, although the Fifth Committee would have difficulty in considering the proposed programme budget because of the new form of presentation, he hoped that the following year it would be able to begin its work later, around 20 October, and thus have better documentation, be better organized and also save some conference costs.

15. The proposed programme budget under consideration represented approximately a 17 per cent increase over the budget for the 1972-1973 biennium; if additional expenditure not included in the original estimates was taken into account, the increase would amount to 20 per cent. He did not regard that as a moderate increase, even in the light of the devaluation of the dollar, and his delegation would be unable to vote in favour of the proposed programme budget.

16. A major short-coming of the new presentation of the budget was that it still was not derived from a zero base, so that the Secretary-General tried to justify only the increment of the budget and not the existence of the whole establishment. That failing, although not new, could be seen more clearly in the programme budget than in the old form of presentation of the budget. He hoped that, in preparing the programme budget for the next biennium, the Secretary-General would undertake a critical analysis of the

work programme of the whole Secretariat from a hypothetical zero base.

17. The various subsidiary organs, particularly those working in the economic and social fields, should take a greater interest in the work programmes of the Secretariat units that serviced them. If the General Assembly fully exercised the financial and budgetary power entrusted to it under the Charter, and if resolutions with financial implications were not automatically regarded as items to be included in supplementary estimates, the subsidiary organs would take more interest in the priorities of the Secretariat's work programme. The new presentation of the budget should encourage that interest. The report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (E/5364) contained many useful observations in that connexion, but CPC had not been invited to discuss which tasks should have highest priority in any specific unit of the Secretariat. Where those who used the services of a given Secretariat unit were not involved in the process of programme evaluation, inertia prevailed. One example of that inertia was to be found in paragraphs 9.22 and 9.23 of the proposed programme budget, which announced the completion of a survey of contemporary trends in local government in the ECAFE region and at the same time the initiation of a second identical survey. The budgetary authority of the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee should be strengthened so that the subsidiary organs would be obliged to play an active role in establishing priorities in the work programmes of the Secretariat units that serviced them.

18. The addition of even the 300 new posts recommended by the Advisory Committee was unwarranted. He endorsed proposals for new posts in the language sections, but in most other cases he saw no valid justification for new posts. In that connexion, he requested an explanation of the discrepancy between the statement in the proposed programme budget that the United Nations had 10,173 posts, 8,915 of which were financed from the regular budget and 1,258 from extrabudgetary resources, and the statement in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/9001, p. 109) that the total number of United Nations employees was 12,389, 9,758 of which were financed from the regular budget.

19. With regard to the question of post reclassifications and up-grading, he maintained his earlier opposition to the practice of filling junior Professional vacancies with General Service staff who were close to retirement age and held no university diploma. In spite of criticism from the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had continued that practice. He could not accept the proposal in paragraph 63 of the Advisory Committee's report that only a 50 per cent reduction should be made in funds requested for post reclassifications. The only way to force those responsible to work out proposals for improving the promotion system was to authorize no appropriation at all for post reclassifications.

20. As a result of the increase in voluntary contributions to assistance funds, the role of the United Nations as an executive agency for assistance projects was expanding. Accordingly, the book-keeping method for overhead contributions had been changed the previous year and a number of staff members, with salaries amounting to \$2 million,

had been removed from the regular budget. That was a reasonable measure, but account should also be taken of communications, public utilities, office equipment, office space and other elements of overhead expenditure. The additional secondary expenditures on staff financed from extrabudgetary sources should also be covered by the overhead funds and the expenses removed from the regular budget. The decentralized administration of extrabudgetary funds was having a negative effect on planning office space needs.

21. The increase in voluntary contributions for assistance in the economic and social fields also supported his delegation's argument that the technical assistance programmes should be removed from the budget and combined with existing voluntary funds and UNDP. Technical assistance could not be obligatory and Article 55 of the Charter could not be interpreted as meaning that a token assistance fund should be provided in the budget. The principles of efficient utilization of funds and of efficient management were being disregarded in respect of the small United Nations regular programme of technical assistance.

22. His Government regarded expenditure on the United Nations bond issue, UNCURK and the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea as unlawful, took no responsibility for it and continued to refrain from contributing to it.

23. Commenting on the problem of the fluctuation of exchange rates and its effect on the United Nations budget, he suggested that the United Nations and the specialized agencies should make proper administrative arrangements and submit proposals for legislative action with a view to ensuring the normal functioning of the rules and regulations governing budgeting, financing, personnel management and salary matters. The best solution would be to use another currency than the dollar. An alternative solution would be that suggested by the representative of Cuba (1565th meeting). The contributions of Member States should be assessed in more than one currency and, in addition, expenditures should be planned as far as possible in the currency in which they were to be made. That was the only way to evaluate the performance of the various Secretariat units and avoid distortions in the post adjustment system. He could not accept the solution which the Secretariat seemed to favour, namely, that almost all financial consequences of inflation and of the devaluation of the United States dollar should be covered by supplementary estimates. He awaited with interest the report of the ACC and the comments of the Advisory Committee on that question.

#### *First reading (continued)*

#### SECTION 23—UNITED NATIONS COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA (A/9006, A/9008)

24. The CHAIRMAN said that in his initial estimates, contained in document A/9006, the Secretary-General had requested an amount of \$864,000 for section 23. In its corresponding report (A/9008, para. 23.8), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary questions had recommended a reduction of \$29,000 in the initial estimates. The Secretary-General had estimated that, of the total reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee

for reclassifications, (*ibid.*, para. 63), an amount of \$8,000 corresponded to section 23. The total amount recommended for section 23 by the Advisory Committee for the biennium 1974-1975 was thus \$827,000.

25. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that in considering part V, sections 21 and 22, the Fifth Committee had agreed that political considerations should take preference over other considerations. The same might be held to apply to section 23. The Advisory Committee's recommendations were however based on an evaluation of the workload, administrative efficiency and economic resources of the United Nations Council for Namibia. In paragraph 23.3 of its report, the Advisory Committee had described in some detail how the provisions relating to Namibia had been dispersed in several different sections of the proposed programme budget; that showed clearly how far the proposed budget was from true programme budgeting. It was therefore difficult for the Advisory Committee or the Fifth Committee to review the estimates in a completely programmatic way.

26. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria) suggested that more generous estimates could have been provided for the United Nations Council for Namibia, in view of the likelihood that the situation of Namibians would deteriorate still further in the future. He drew attention to a seeming confusion in paragraphs 23.14 to 23.17 of the proposed programme budget between the Commissioner for Namibia who, as far as he understood, did not exist, and the Commissioner's Office.

27. He could not accept the observation in paragraph 23.6 of the Advisory Committee's report that the workload involved in issuing travel documents was not increasing significantly. He trusted that the Advisory Committee had not reached its decision lightly, since a considerably more extensive organization for assisting Namibians should be established.

28. The dispersion of provisions relating to Namibia in various sections of the budget had an adverse effect on work relating to Namibia. The whole question of Namibia should be approached within the framework of section 22 (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization).

29. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana), commenting on the various sections of the budget dealing with Namibia, drew attention to part II, section 3—which covered the Special Committee on *Apartheid* and the International Conference of Experts for the Support of Victims of Colonialism and *Apartheid* in Southern Africa—part II, section 4—which covered the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa and the Trust Fund for South Africa—and part V, sections 21, 22 and 23—which were all closely related to activities concerning decolonization. Since all those activities were related to decolonization, they should be placed in future in part V, which could be entitled "Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization".

30. He drew attention to paragraph 23.6 of the Advisory Committee's report in which it rejected the proposed

reclassification of the post of officer-in-charge of the Travel Documents Office in Lusaka from P-4 to P-5; since the staff member in question had been informed in 1971 that he would be promoted to a P-5 position, he urged the Committee to approve the requested reclassification.

31. Mr. LUSAKA (Zambia) associated himself with the comments made by the representatives of Algeria and Ghana. The vote on estimates under section 22 at the 1568th meeting had shown that the United Nations was determined to make available the necessary budgetary resources to enable bodies dealing with decolonization and the supporting Secretariat staff to undertake their tasks in the best possible conditions. Decolonization was one of the top priority questions at the United Nations, and the Fifth Committee should take that into consideration in considering sections of the budget relating to decolonization.

32. In his capacity as President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, he was aware that the Council required greater financial support and more staff; it had to initiate a wide programme of publicity to make people in all parts of the world aware of the problem of Namibia. If the Council was to fulfil its mandate to assist Namibians wherever they were and to challenge South Africa in international bodies, it must have financial support. In that connexion, he recalled that in its negotiations with those specialized agencies in which it was seeking participation, the Council had raised the question of payment of contributions; unless the specialized agencies agreed to waive contributions from the Council, it would have to resort to the regular budget of the United Nations. An additional expenditure would be a visit by the Council to Namibia, as strongly recommended by the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity. The estimates for the Council in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 were based on the 1973 appropriation and would have to be revised, since the Council's programme for 1974 as outlined in its report to the General Assembly would involve expenditure of over \$169,000.<sup>1</sup>

33. Mr. RASOLONDRAIBE (Madagascar) noted that, had his delegation been present at the 1568th meeting, it would have voted in favour of the appropriations under sections 21 and 22. He wished to stress, too, that insufficient amounts were being budgeted for the purpose of inviting representatives of liberation movements to attend United Nations meetings. As the representative of Zambia had said, the Fifth Committee should take greater account of the political attitudes and priorities favoured by the plenary.

34. He agreed with previous speakers that the amount allocated for decolonization activities was insufficient and, furthermore, that it was inconvenient and illogical for such activities to be dispersed throughout the various sections of the budget.

35. With regard to section 23, he noted that the Fourth Committee was in the process of considering decolonization questions and asked whether the Fifth Committee should

not postpone its decision on that section until it had received any relevant proposals that the Fourth Committee might wish to make.

36. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Fifth Committee was merely approving appropriations in first reading and would not be bound by its earlier decisions when it took up the different sections of the budget in second reading. Any decisions taken by the Fourth Committee involving financial implications would be scrutinized by the Advisory Committee, which would submit its recommendations to the Fifth Committee in the normal way.

37. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana), replying to a question by the Chairman, said that at the present stage he was merely making a suggestion, not a formal proposal.

38. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) assured the representative of Ghana, as well as the members of the Advisory Committee, that the Secretariat would do its best in future years to improve the format of the programme budget and, in particular, would endeavour to bring together the expenditures relating to Namibia, which at present appeared in a number of different sections.

39. Expenditures for policy-making organs were placed in section 3 of the programme budget whereas expenditures for the secretariats serving those organs and for substantive programmes were contained in section 4. Thus the cost of the meetings of the Special Committee on *Apartheid* had been included in section 3, whereas the cost of the secretariat servicing the Special Committee and the cost of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa were shown in section 4. The reason why expenditures connected with the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa were to be found in section 4 (Department of Political and Security Council Affairs) was historical and dated back to a General Assembly resolution adopted in 1967, when it had been considered that the activities of the Programme were more closely related to peace and security than to decolonization. In the same way, the Special Committee on *Apartheid* was regarded as a body which carried out work affecting peace and security. The decision as to how to allocate expenses among the different sections was extremely difficult. Items of expenditure assigned to section 22 (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization) were always items which clearly affected the populations of colonial Territories. However, where the population of a Member State was concerned, items of expenditure had been assigned in the past to section 4.

40. The Secretariat would certainly reconsider sections 3 and 4 in future programme budgets, with a view to making a more rational grouping of expenditures. However, he doubted whether items unrelated to decolonization could be included in section 22.

41. The reason that part V was entitled "Equal rights and self-determination of peoples", rather than "Political affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization", was also historical. In 1972 the Secretary-General had submitted to the Fifth Committee an outline of a portion of the programme

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 24*, para. 335.

budget<sup>2</sup> in which that title had been used, and it had not been objected to.

42. The representative of Ghana had raised the question of the Secretary-General's proposal, referred to in paragraph 23.6 of the Advisory Committee's report, to reclassify the post of officer-in-charge of the Travel Documents Office in Lusaka from P-4 to P-5. The procedure followed each year in connexion with the promotion of staff members was that the Appointment and Promotion Board, through the Appointment and Promotion Committee, examined lists of candidates recommended for promotion—and at the same time lists of other staff members to ensure that no one had been overlooked—and at the beginning of every year drew up a promotion register on which it placed candidates who were considered eligible for promotion. The fact that a name appeared on a register did not automatically mean that the candidate would be promoted that year. It was only when a suitable post at the right level became available that the promotion actually took place. In the case referred to, he assumed that the individual concerned was occupying a post graded as P-4 and that his name had appeared on the register as a candidate eligible for promotion to P-5 as soon as an appropriate post became available.

43. So far as the Advisory Committee's suggestions on section 23 were concerned, the Secretary-General did not feel inclined to oppose the reductions it was recommending in view of the fact that the opening of a new United Nations Information Centre in Lusaka would lighten the workload of the Travel Documents Office. However, should there be a sufficient increase in the workload of the Office over the coming year, the Secretary-General would not hesitate to request the Fifth Committee to approve a supplementary appropriation.

44. The reason why no provision for the United Nations Fund for Namibia had been included in the regular budget was, as paragraph 23.27 of the proposed programme budget indicated, that the Secretary-General intended to submit a report at the current session on the operation of the Fund and, at the same time, to make proposals with respect to the continuation of the Fund and its requirements during 1974 and 1975.

45. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), noting that there had been several references by members of the Committee to the "decisions of the Advisory Committee", pointed out that the Advisory Committee did not take decisions. It made recommendations to the Fifth Committee which the latter might adopt, reject or ignore, as it saw fit.

46. In connexion with the Algerian representative's inference that the Advisory Committee had reached an opinion "lightly", he would stress that the Advisory Committee had made a number of inquiries in the course of the discussions which had led to the recommendation contained in paragraph 23.8 of its report. The request for the strengthening of the Travel Documents Office in Lusaka had been based on the fact that the workload had increased as

activities in connexion with publicity, the issue of travel documents and negotiations with Member Governments in connexion with travel documents expanded. With regard to publicity, the Advisory Committee had felt that the opening of a new Information Centre in Lusaka would relieve the Office of some of its current information tasks. With regard to the issue of travel documents and negotiations with member Governments, the Advisory Committee had been told that 70 travel documents had been issued to date and that negotiations were being conducted currently with three Governments. The Advisory Committee did not therefore feel that it had reached its conclusions lightly.

47. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) thanked the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management for his explanations. He expressed the hope that the Secretariat would consider in the future the possibility of consolidating sections 3 and 4 of the programme budget into one section in part II (Political and peace-keeping activities).

48. Notwithstanding the Under-Secretary-General's explanations with regard to the link between the Special Committee on *Apartheid* and section 3 of the proposed programme budget, the situation in South Africa was a clear-cut case of colonization in which the minority régime had imposed its will on a majority of different racial origins. Consequently, the activities of the Special Committee on *Apartheid* would be more appropriately placed under section 22 (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization). He intended to formulate a proposal to that effect.

49. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to facilitate the work of the Committee, the representatives of Ghana and Algeria should formulate a joint proposal.

50. He invited the Committee to vote on the Advisory Committee's recommendation (A/9008, paras. 23.8 and 63) for an appropriation in the amount of \$827,000 under section 23 for the biennium 1974-1975.

*The Advisory Committee's recommendation for an appropriation in the amount of \$827,000 under section 23 for the biennium 1974-1975 was approved in first reading by 74 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.*

#### SECTION 25—LEGAL COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND CONFERENCES (A/9006, A/9008)

51. The CHAIRMAN noted that, in his initial estimates (A/9006), the Secretary-General had requested an amount of \$1,097,000 for section 25. In its corresponding report (A/9008, para. 25.10), the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$100,000 in the initial estimates. The total amount recommended for section 25 by the Advisory Committee for the biennium was therefore \$997,000.

52. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that section 25 included estimates for meetings of the International Law Commission, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, and for the convening of the United Nations Conference on Prescription (Limitation) in

<sup>2</sup> Document A/C.5/1429 and Corr.1 and 2, of 20 April 1972.



the International Sale of Goods. The Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of \$100,000 in the initial estimates related to the activities of three of those bodies. A reduction of \$20,000 in the estimate for the International Law Commission had been recommended in the belief that the provision for documents and other supporting staff was over-generous and also that some allowance should be made for the probability that not every member of the Commission would be able to attend its sessions in their entirety. The Advisory Committee had also suggested that the Commission should consider the possibility of a tighter schedule of meetings with a view to shortening the over-all duration of the annual session, although it was not recommending any reduction in the estimate on that ground. With regard to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the Advisory Committee felt that savings of \$10,000 could be achieved by placing greater reliance on the established language staff at Geneva. The largest reduction recommended concerned the United Nations Conference on Prescription (Limitation) in the International Sale of Goods. The Advisory Committee felt that the estimate for summary records was premature, in view of the fact that they must be authorized first by the General Assembly, and had consequently decided to recommend the deletion of \$70,000 from the initial estimates.

53. Mr. NAUDY (France) noted that in paragraph 25.5 of its report the Advisory Committee had stated that the request for the United Nations Administrative Tribunal had been adjusted to exclude the provision of \$15,000 in 1972 for the printing of volume IV of the *Judgements of the Administrative Tribunal*. He asked what was the status of that publication, and expressed the hope that it had not been suspended since it was of great value to jurists.

54. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations in connexion with section 25. In particular, it agreed that the International Law Commission should endeavour to meet twice a day and in that connexion, regretted that the Advisory Committee had refrained from recommending a reduction in the estimate for the Commission's annual session.

55. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), speaking in connexion with the statement by the representative of France, said that the individual volumes of the *Judgements of the Administrative Tribunal* were published only when the number of judgements so justified. The last volume—volume IV—had been published in 1972. No budgetary provision had been made for the printing of a volume in 1973, 1974 or 1975. Until such time as the publication of volume V seemed indicated, jurists would be able to refer directly to the Administrative Tribunal for copies of individual judgements.

56. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the Advisory Committee's recommendation (A/9008, para. 25.10) for an appropriation in the amount of \$997,000 under section 25 for the biennium 1974-1975.

*The Advisory Committee's recommendation for an appropriation in the amount of \$997,000 under section 25 for the biennium 1974-1975 was approved in first reading by 69 votes to none.*

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*

## 1571st meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 1973, at 11 a.m.

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

A/C.5/SR.1571

### 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 1565th meeting; A/C.5/1516, A/C.5/L.1109)

#### *General discussion (continued)*

1. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed that his delegation's attitude to financial and administrative questions had always been inspired by his country's support, as a matter of principle, for the Organization, by its active participation in United Nations activities and by its constant concern to increase the Organization's effectiveness.

2. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, had stressed during the general debate in the

General Assembly on 25 September (2126th plenary meeting) that favourable changes in the world were expanding opportunities for the United Nations to make a valuable contribution to consolidating *détente*. The Soviet Union would be a reliable partner at all times and in all activities opposing the danger of war and promoting peace. Clear confirmation of that position was provided by the fact that, each year, the Soviet Union submitted for consideration by the General Assembly the most urgent questions related to the strengthening of peace and international security.

3. Budgetary contributions should be used first and foremost to meet the basic purposes of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter. The Soviet Union, as a major contributor to the budget, could not agree that any contributions from Member States should be spent on purposes other than those set out in the Charter—still less for activities which violated the Charter.