

# 1732nd meeting

Thursday, 6 November 1975, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Christopher R. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago).

A/C.5/SR.1732

## AGENDA ITEM 101

### Publications and documentation of the United Nations: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/10003, chap. VI, sect. G; A/10299, A/C.5/1670)

1. Mr. KHOKHAR (Pakistan) expressed appreciation for the constructive and reasonable proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1670) and for the useful comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its related report (A/10299).

2. With regard to the suggested criteria for the provision of meeting records, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that, under criterion 1, the Secretary-General should pursue his studies on technological innovations with greater vigour. His delegation endorsed criteria 2 and 3 and, in addition, supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the review and selection exercise should be entrusted to the Committee on Conferences. While the Advisory Committee's suggestion that the proposal in criterion 5 should be applied also to the Main Committees of the General Assembly and the sessional committees of the Economic and Social Council might achieve substantial savings, the experiment might not succeed unless special efforts were made by delegations and précis-writing staff alike. On the whole, however, the benefits of criterion 5 and its further elaboration by the Advisory Committee outweighed the possible drawbacks. His delegation endorsed the suggestions in criteria 6 and 7 and agreed that the question of providing records for the committees of UNCTAD should be reviewed, as suggested in criterion 8. It also endorsed criteria 9 and 10, provided that the suggestion in criterion 9 was not used as a pretext to avoid the holding of conferences and meetings in developing countries. It supported criterion 9 not only because of the savings that would be achieved but also because of the disruption to the other work of an organization that the preparation of meeting records inevitably caused.

3. His delegation was confident that the application of the 10 criteria would bring substantial savings, although it regarded the estimate of some \$2 million as rather optimistic. Determined efforts to reduce the flow of documentation would undoubtedly benefit all Member States, particularly those which were unable to maintain large Missions. At the same time the quality of documentation should be improved by the greatest possible attention to brevity, conciseness, relevance and simplicity.

4. Mr. NORBURY (United States of America) said that one very effective way of reducing the volume of meeting records and of increasing efficiency would be to talk less.

5. The meeting records were only part of the documentation problem and the Secretary-General's proposals, although commendable, represented the bare minimum as far as reforms were concerned. His delegation fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee and suggested that the next step should be to examine more closely the actual needs of the various bodies and subsidiary bodies and to establish more stringent criteria for the provision of verbatim and summary records. The Committee on Conferences had a vital role to play in that regard. His delegation supported in particular the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General should be requested to submit a performance report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, describing the progress made in the implementation of his 10 criteria and stating the savings which had thereby been achieved.

6. Mr. HOLMES (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was in general sympathy with the proposals and recommendations in the well-conceived reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee. While meeting records were convenient for delegations, they were extremely expensive to produce, and his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that there must be a cheaper way of enabling delegations, particularly the smaller ones, to keep track of the actions of bodies that they were unable to attend. In any case, summary records, even in provisional form, were by no means always issued in time for delegations to keep abreast of proceedings in, for example, the Main Committees of the General Assembly.

7. Turning to the Advisory Committee's suggestions in its report, he noted that the principal recommendation was that criterion 5 should also be applied to the Main Committees of the General Assembly, the sessional committees of the Economic and Social Council, the Trade and Development Board, the Industrial Development Board, the Executive Board of UNICEF, the Governing Council of UNDP and, possibly, the committees of UNCTAD. The savings from issuing the meeting records of those bodies in initial general distribution, subject to the issuance of corrigenda, were estimated at \$948,000 altogether. As the Secretary-General pointed out, the main use of meeting records was at or shortly after the session at which they were issued; as the Advisory Committee aptly stated in paragraph 8 of its report, the utility of a system which deprived delegations and the Secretariat of access to corrected meeting records during the period of greatest usefulness of such records was questionable.

8. The Advisory Committee had also suggested that the Committee on Conferences should be entrusted with the task of reviewing the list of subsidiary bodies entitled to meeting records and monitoring the application of the various proposals, which should be implemented on an

experimental basis in 1976-1977. His delegation fully supported those suggestions. It was logical that the Committee on Conferences, which ensured that adequate resources were available for conferences and meetings, should also deal with the provision of meeting records.

9. Another interesting suggestion to reduce the volume of documentation had been made by the representative of Italy (1731st meeting) to the effect that the Main Committees of the General Assembly, led by the Fifth Committee, should consider dispensing with summary records for part of their work, particularly for procedural and organizational business.

10. His delegation agreed with the representative of France who had said (*ibid.*) that any savings likely to be achieved if the Assembly agreed to the Secretary-General's proposals should be reflected in the estimates for 1976-1977; it would like assurances on that point from the Secretariat and would welcome updated estimates.

11. His delegation had reservations about two points in the Secretary-General's proposals. Although the general idea of criterion 6 was pleasing, implementation should await a careful consideration of the full implications. Certain subsidiary bodies of subsidiary bodies, such as the Legal Sub-Committee and Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, did some highly valuable work; moreover, the former performed legal preparatory work which was frequently important to the understanding of the final legal instrument subsequently produced. It might be preferable, therefore, simply to have one general category of subsidiary bodies and to refer the list of all such bodies to the Committee on Conferences; in that way, the needs of each could be considered on their own merits.

12. While his delegation would not object to a review of the question of providing meeting records for closed meetings, it strongly endorsed the Advisory Committee's suggestion in paragraph 24 of its report that the question should be examined in the light of the requirements of the three bodies concerned. For at least one of those bodies, meeting records had proved their worth, since both the participants and the Secretariat staff constantly referred to them.

13. On the wider issue of United Nations documentation in general, he endorsed the remarks of the representative of Italy, namely, that United Nations reports and action documents should be as short as possible, well written and to the point.

14. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that, like many others, his delegation had serious doubts regarding the value and digestibility of the documentation issued. It was undoubtedly necessary to work out methods and criteria for measuring the usefulness of individual publications. Such an analysis would no doubt reveal that many publications were outdated, unnecessary or of marginal interest and could be discontinued or merged with other publications. A constant review of United Nations documentation was all the more necessary when one considered the continuous expansion of the Organization and the frequent establishment of new subsidiary bodies.

15. The tendency towards a proliferation of documentation was exemplified by the seven volumes of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977. While the need for comprehensive information could not be disputed, more regard should be paid to the limits of the human mind's ability to read and digest material. Greater selectivity should be shown in, for example, the choice of material for annexes to reports and, wherever possible, the repetition of facts and opinions already stated in existing documentation should be avoided. When asking the Secretariat to prepare reports, committees should give clear guidance as to the character of the report and the range of information expected.

16. The proposals of the Secretary-General concerning meeting records, as modified by the Advisory Committee, were very commendable and should be implemented on an experimental basis in 1976-1977. It was alarming to learn that the savings achieved by the Secretariat thanks to the otherwise successful quota system had been eroded as a result of the increase in meeting records. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Committee on Conferences should be asked to monitor the application of the Secretary-General's proposals and looked forward to considering the Secretary-General's performance report at the thirty-second session.

17. Mr. STOFOROPOULOS (Greece) agreed with the representative of the United States of America that the volume of meeting records would be substantially reduced if there was less talk.

18. His delegation hoped that attention could be given to a suggestion that it had originally made at the twenty-ninth session (1650th meeting), namely, that the regular recipients of United Nations documentation should be asked periodically to state their requirements, especially with regard to numbers of copies and languages. The Greek Mission to the United Nations continued to receive, together with indispensable material, some documents that were of no interest to it. Moreover, the number of copies supplied was frequently greater than was necessary.

19. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) requested the Committee to endorse the suggestions made by the Advisory Committee and, in particular, to recommend the adoption of the 10 criteria.

20. The Committee on Conferences should be entrusted in the first instance with the task of achieving a reduction in the volume of meeting records. Subsequently, it might profitably turn its attention to other meeting documentation. In that regard, the Fifth Committee should take into account the interesting comments made by, among others, the representatives of Italy and the Soviet Union.

21. His delegation would like the Secretariat to verify the minimum savings estimated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 23 of its report, totalling approximately \$2 million in direct costs, and to inform the Fifth Committee during its consideration of section 23 of the proposed programme budget, relating to conference and library services, whether the Advisory Committee's calculations were correct. If they were, the estimates for section 23 should be reduced correspondingly.

22. Mr. MINCHEV (Bulgaria) said that the measures recommended by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee were very reasonable and should lead to considerable savings and improved control over the volume of meeting records. The criteria should be tried out and carefully evaluated in order to ensure that the smaller delegations were not hampered in their work by any of the innovations. Subject to that proviso, his delegation was in favour of implementing the Secretary-General's proposals on an experimental basis in the forthcoming biennium.

23. Mr. HART (Australia) noted that the Secretary-General had concentrated on only one aspect of documentation, namely the preparation of meeting records. The Secretary-General should be encouraged to pursue his studies of the possible use of technical innovations in the preparation of meeting records. The use of computerized editing coupled with printing from computer tape was a real possibility for the preparation of the more significant meeting records. His delegation looked forward to considering a report by the Secretary-General on the progress made in implementing that and other innovations.

24. While his delegation believed that the Advisory Committee's recommendations in respect of criteria 2 to 9 should be adopted unless there were compelling reasons to the contrary, it had certain reservations about criterion 6. Where a subsidiary body of a subsidiary body was concerned with the formulation of a convention or other international agreement with legal force, the records of its debates were of permanent value as part of the preparatory work and, as such, would frequently be used to interpret the text of the agreement. Reference to such material was permitted by article 32 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, of 22 May 1969. If records were to be discontinued for such discussions, either reference to the preparatory work would be incomplete or some other approach would have to be developed. Of the nine committees that would be affected under criterion 6 at least three were likely to be concerned with the formulation of an agreement with legal force: the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the *Ad Hoc* Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights. He asked whether the Office of Legal Affairs had been consulted about the impact of depriving legal committees of their records and, if so, what opinion it had expressed. Would the sound recording, which was not necessarily an adequate substitute for a written record, be provided in the various languages or only in the language in which the statement had been made? While not making a formal proposal, his delegation would see value in merging criterion 6 with criterion 2. For the same reasons, his delegation had some difficulty with criterion 9 and suggested that special consideration should be given to subsidiary bodies whose work had legal implications.

25. Despite the foregoing comments, his delegation agreed with both the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on the need to reduce the volume of meeting records. To that end, he suggested that the Committee on Conferences should explore a broader application of the practice of replacing summary records by minutes, already adopted by a number of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and

Social Council. His delegation concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Committee on Conferences was well placed to consider the question of meeting records. Furthermore, subject to solutions being found to the problems he had raised, it agreed that the proposals should be tried out on an experimental basis in the biennium 1976-1977 and that the Secretary-General should be requested to report on their implementation to the Assembly at its thirty-second session.

#### AGENDA ITEM 99

##### Joint Inspection Unit: reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (continued)\* (A/C.5/1676, A/C.5/1693 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1223)

26. Mr. Natwar SINGH (India) said that the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit were of outstanding value. He noted that of the 9 reports listed in paragraph 7 of the Unit's annual report (see A/C.5/1676) only 2 had been initiated by the Unit itself, while all but 1 of the rest had been prepared at the request of the principal organs of the United Nations.

27. Over the years the functions of the Joint Inspection Unit had, of course, broadened; in its previous annual report<sup>1</sup>, it had mentioned the difficulties it was encountering because of the increasing demands made upon it by the legislative bodies. His delegation still felt that the Unit should be resorted to only when appropriate, either to study cases of real or suspected deficiencies or where the expected results warranted it and that the Unit's activities should be based as far as possible on a convergence of its views and those of the legislative organs. Naturally the implications of the broadening functions of the Joint Inspection Unit in terms of budget and staff requirements would have to be studied in the context of the general review of the future of the Unit at the thirty-first session.

28. However, there was no need to delay consideration of how best to ensure that full use was made of the Joint Inspection Unit reports. His delegation had noted the comments made in section E of the annual report of the Unit now before the Committee concerning the handling of reports. Indeed, that had been a subject of concern almost since the Unit's establishment, and supplementary arrangements for the handling of the Unit's reports had been considered by various bodies. It was pointed out in paragraph 12 of the report that, while most participating organizations distributed the Unit's reports to all Member States, together with the comments of executive heads and governing bodies, in other organizations the reports went no further than the governing bodies. Yet Member States should see the reports at the earliest possible time and there was no reason why procedures should differ from one organization to another. The procedures approved by the General Assembly in 1970 for the handling of Joint Inspection Unit's reports to make them available to Member States as soon as practicable after issue<sup>2</sup> should be implemented by all organizations in the system. His

\* Resumed from the 1729th meeting.

1 See document A/C.5/1598, of 6 September 1974, para. 21.

2 See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 28* and corrigendum, p. 120, item 80.

delegation fully endorsed the views on the procedure for examination of the reports within the United Nations expressed by CPC in paragraph 52 of its report on the second part of its third session.<sup>3</sup>

29. Economic and Social Council resolution 1457 (XLVII) of 8 August 1969 provided clear guidelines for the handling of Joint Inspection Unit reports concerning the activities of the United Nations and those guidelines had been endorsed by the General Assembly, *inter alia*, in paragraph 8 of its resolution 2924 B (XXVII).

30. Another problem was the delay between the submission of reports and the comments by executive heads, the delay in the circulation of the reports with those comments and the time-lag between the date of submission of the reports and their consideration by the legislative bodies. While some delay in the comments was inevitable, particularly when the reports concerned several organizations, such delays should be minimal.

31. It was, of course, better to circulate Joint Inspection Unit reports together with the comments of executive heads and governing bodies, so as to present a complete picture. However, lack of timely comments should not be an excuse for delaying or failing to send reports to Member States. For, as the Unit had rightly pointed out, if consideration of a report was delayed too long, the report tended to lose its topical interest and some of its value. His delegation therefore agreed with the view of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions expressed at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly<sup>4</sup> that comments of executive heads should be submitted to intergovernmental bodies not later than three months from the date of receipt of a report. In the case of the United Nations, the Advisory Committee's comments should be made available within three months of the comments of the Secretary-General and, in other organizations, the executive or legislative bodies should consider the reports at the first practicable session after receipt of the executive head's comments.

32. With regard to the Joint Inspection Unit's functions in the field of evaluation, which was an element in all of the Unit's reports, his delegation associated itself with the views expressed in chapter II, section D, of the report of the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery.<sup>5</sup> While agreeing with the Working Group that CPC should be the intergovernmental focal point for reviewing evaluation reports, it felt that the Unit's evaluation function should and would be increased. While it did not wish to prejudge the issues to be decided in 1976, his delegation would be in favour of increasing the role of the Joint Inspection Unit in the evaluation of programmes and operational functions without prejudice to its basic function of investigation.

33. Finally, referring to paragraph 17 of the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning the importance of a

dialogue between the executives of organizations and the inspectors, he pointed out that such a dialogue was necessary both before and after reports were prepared, so that the misinterpretations referred to in that paragraph would be avoided.

34. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) shared the views expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee at the 1729th meeting—regrettably orally and not in writing—on the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1693 and Corr.1). Under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2924 B (XXVII), the report should have included comments on major Joint Inspection Unit recommendations which had not been implemented, together with the reasons therefor. Yet it commented more on those recommendations which were under consideration and dealt very cursorily with recommendations that had not been implemented, such as the reports on how organizations in the United Nations system dealt with the questions of treatment of water resources development, personnel problems and communications. As for the report on the capacity of the regional economic commissions for a unified approach to development, he was surprised that it had even been mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General as it had not yet been considered at all. It was vexing to have to repeat criticism which his delegation had already voiced at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, but the Secretary-General was still not reporting on major recommendations of the Unit which had not been implemented and the reasons for failure to implement them.

35. The Unit's annual report also suffered from some substantial short-comings. There was no analysis or information on implementation to demonstrate the role of the Unit's recommendations in achieving economies and enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations system. Such information was of interest to delegations and should be included in future reports, not by expanding the reports but by eliminating superfluous material. He shared the concern expressed by other delegations over the unsatisfactory situation with regard to distribution of the reports, described—rather more lengthily than necessary—in paragraphs 11 to 17 of the Unit's annual report. The delay in distributing the reports to Member States meant that much of the value and relevance of the reports was lost.

36. His delegation intended to speak in more detail on the question of the Joint Inspection Unit at the thirty-first session, when the future of the Unit would be under consideration. At the current time, he had simply wished to draw attention to the short-comings in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Secretary-General.

37. Miss VRECH (Argentina), commending the Joint Inspection Unit for the effective and important work it was doing, welcomed its continuing consultations with the Advisory Committee, the Panel of External Auditors, the secretariats of the participating organizations and more recently the International Civil Service Commission. Her delegation shared the views expressed in the Unit's annual report.

38. In connexion with the report on the decentralization of United Nations economic, social and related activities

<sup>3</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-seventh Session, document E/4716/Rev.1-E/AC.51/36/Rev.1.

<sup>4</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 8 and corrigendum, para. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Document A/10117 and Corr.1, of 17 June 1975.

and the strengthening of the regional economic commissions, she reaffirmed the views her delegation had already expressed at the 1719th meeting during the first reading of section 8 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977. She also supported the suggestions made in the reports on the utilization of office accommodation at United Nations Headquarters and at the headquarters of WHO, WMO and ITU, and the suggestions for rational utilization of space. She shared the view expressed by the Unit in its report on the regional structures of the United Nations system that a unified, integrated and concerted approach was needed at all stages of the development assistance process, and felt that the new international order should not be restricted to economic matters in respect of planning, programming, execution and evaluation of programmes and projects at the country level, and then at the subregional and regional levels in order to facilitate co-ordination at the global level.

39. She drew attention to the need to remedy certain short-comings in the current procedures for distributing Joint Inspection Unit reports, so that the value, relevance and correct interpretation of them would not be adversely affected. In that connexion, she supported the suggestions made by the representative of India.

40. She agreed with the representative of the Soviet Union that the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/1693 and Corr.1 did not explain why certain recommendations had not been implemented. Some method to monitor the implementation of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations was necessary. The Secretary-General should comply with the provisions of paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 2924 B (XXVII) and report annually on those major recommendations of the Unit which had not been implemented, giving the reasons therefor.

#### AGENDA ITEM 96

**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (continued)** (for the previous documentation, see 1718th meeting; A/10008/Add.4, A/10279, A/10280, A/C.5/1688/Corr.1, A/C.5/1701, A/C.5/L.1238-1240, A/C.5/L.1241/Rev.2, A/C.5/L.1242, A/C.5/L.1243, A/C.5/L.1245, A/C.5/L.1246)

#### *Financial problems of the United Nations (continued)* (A/C.5/L.1240)

41. The CHAIRMAN invited delegations which so desired to explain the votes which they had cast at the preceding meeting.

42. Mr. SETHI (India) said that he had voted in favour of the Iranian representative's motion for adjournment of the debate under rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. When that motion had been rejected, he had voted in favour of the Bulgarian proposal at the previous meeting to adjourn it, which had also been rejected. Accordingly, he had voted against the motion for closure of the debate. When that motion had been adopted, he had abstained in the vote on the Argentine proposal to forward

the questionnaire in the note before the Committee (A/C.5/L.1240) to the Secretary-General. He had spoken once in opposition to the motion for closure of the debate to state that, if the proposal was adopted, some delegations might wish to amend or add to the text of that note. For instance, the questionnaire could have included the following questions: If the financial situation of the Organization continued to deteriorate at the current rate, when was it estimated that the normal operations and payment of salaries would stop? How long could that moment be postponed if the Working Capital Fund were increased to \$80 million? What were the factors which the Secretary-General had taken into account in recommending that the Working Capital Fund be doubled? Assuming that the Committee on Contributions had examined the question, what conclusions had it reached? To what extent had factors related to inflation and currency instability aggravated the cash flow situation of the United Nations?

43. In his statement opposing the closure motion, he had asked whether adoption of the proposal would involve any financial implications. It appeared that there would be none. Yet at its 1702nd meeting the Committee had been told that just to translate and reproduce the text of a statement by the Controller in all the official languages would cost about \$2,000. The work involved as a result of adoption of the Argentine proposal was much more than just translation and reproduction.

44. Although the list of sponsors of the note had been impressive, the proposal might have been adopted by consensus or at least have won greater support, had the Committee not acted in such haste. Rules of procedure should be invoked in a constructive spirit; the invoking of rule 117 at the previous meeting had been a misuse of the rules. In moving the adjournment of the debate, the representative of Iran had said that he was doing so in order that the voice of democracy might prevail. Unfortunately that had not happened and his delegation could only express its regret.

45. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the comments on the financial implications of reproducing texts such as the statement made by the Controller, pointed out that the provision of documents for the Fifth Committee was not considered separately from the provision of conference services in general. Naturally, any decision involving publication of a document had some financial implications, since extra paper and manpower were needed. The adoption of the Argentine proposal would involve minimal costs for manpower, since the work would be done mainly by Secretariat staff in the Professional category, who were not paid overtime. In any case, there were temporary assistance funds provided by the General Assembly for that purpose.

46. Mr. KIVANÇ (Turkey) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the Argentine proposal. An effective solution to the financial problems of the United Nations would depend on maintenance of sufficient cash flow and balanced liquidity. A remedy was urgently needed since the United Nations was increasingly threatened by bankruptcy, particularly in view of the cash-flow projection for the next six-month period.

47. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote

on the Argentine proposal because it felt that to request the Secretary-General to provide information on the financial problems of the United Nations would merely distract the Secretariat staff from their other responsibilities. Moreover, the information was already available, as the representative of France had pointed out at the preceding meeting, in other United Nations documents. Finally, presentation of such information would do nothing but increase the United Nations expenses, although the Chairman had just explained that only paper and personnel costs would be involved.

48. His delegation shared the concern expressed by other Member States concerning the financial situation of the United Nations and had long ago put forward proposals for solving the problem. It had proposed that expenses for the payment of interest and principal on the United Nations bond issue be excluded from the regular budget, that the Western Powers who held United Nations bonds should waive repayment of the loan, which had been used to finance military operations imposed illegally upon the Organization. It would be unfair to ask the same of the developing countries and the bonds they held should be redeemed through voluntary contributions. Technical assistance expenditure should not be included in the regular budget. Those States which felt that technical assistance should be financed from the regular budget should increase their contribution to the United Nations Development Programme. The currency in which contributions were made should be left to the discretion of the State making the voluntary contribution. Finally, the imposition of strict financial discipline and control of expenditure could help to solve the financial difficulties.

49. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the proposal to forward the questionnaire (A/C.5/L.1240) to the Secretary-General because, even though his delegation had spent much time studying the available documentation and talking with members of the Secretariat in an attempt to understand the latest facts about the short-term deficit, it felt that the problem still required further elucidation. The answers to the questionnaire would provide an admirable basis for a fully up-to-date understanding of the subject and would serve as an invaluable preliminary to constructive negotiations. It should not be assumed that there was no further scope for negotiations simply because previous attempts to solve the problem had failed.

50. In a spirit of conciliation, he suggested that the Committee should consider whether further contributions by the Soviet Republics in non-convertible roubles to section 15 of the budget (Regular programme of technical assistance) should not be spent in the Soviet Union on the objectives of that section 15. That could be one element in a package solution to the short-term deficit. It should not, however, be assumed that his delegation had abandoned its objection of principle concerning section 15, namely, that technical assistance was not a proper expenditure for the regular budget. Because it believed that such new ideas should be explored in negotiations on all aspects of the problem, his delegation had voted for the essential first step, the forwarding of the questionnaire to the Secretary-General.

51. Mr. WHANNOU (Dahomey) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote on the proposal to forward the questionnaire. It was opposed to many hasty actions, since they merely led to confusion.

52. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) asked the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management when the Committee could expect to receive the information requested.

53. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the information would be provided as soon as possible.

54. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) recalled that at the 1711th meeting he had asked for a statement on the status of the Working Capital Fund and for an account of the Fund's activities since the beginning, showing the ratio of the Fund to Members' contributions.

55. Mr. ZIEHL (Deputy Controller) said that of the original \$40 million of the Working Capital Fund only \$600,000 were still available. An account of all the funds from all sources used to finance current expenditure would be provided in the reply to the questionnaire, either together with the other information or in a separate document, for the matter was interrelated with the questions of cash flow and financing of operations.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF DRAFT RESOLUTION I SUBMITTED BY THE THIRD COMMITTEE IN DOCUMENT A/10320 CONCERNING AGENDA ITEM 68\* (A/C.5/1680)**

56. The CHAIRMAN said that, in his statement (A/C.5/1680), the Secretary-General had indicated that the adoption of draft resolution I submitted by the Third Committee in its report (A/10320, para. 27) would necessitate an additional appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 under section 18 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 (A/10006).

57. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered and accepted the Secretary-General's statement of administrative and financial implications.

58. The CHAIRMAN proposed to the Committee that it request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution of the Third Committee, an additional appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 would be required under section 18 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977.

*It was so decided.*

\* Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination:

- (a) Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination;
- (b) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- (c) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General.



59. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the delegations of the nine States members of the European Economic Community, said that he had no objection to the data and calculations used in the Secretary-General's statement. The nine delegations would, however, have abstained if a vote had been taken on the ground that it was related to the draft resolution against which they had voted in the Third Committee for reasons stated in that Committee.

60. Mr. LADOR (Israel) said that in the Third Committee his delegation had opposed the draft resolution linking Zionism to racism (A/10320, para. 27, draft resolution III) and had consequently voted against draft resolution I. The sponsors of the former resolution had introduced an extraneous question, thus destroying the consensus on racism and jeopardizing the success of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It seemed unclear whether the programme of action would be approved by the General Assembly, as some delegations were giving further consideration to the draft resolution, and he consequently considered it premature to earmark funds for it. Had it not been for the draft resolution linking Zionism to racism, he would have supported the statement by the Secretary-General.

61. Mr. BACHE (United States of America) said that he did not question the statement that \$10,000 would be required if the draft resolution of the Third Committee were adopted by the General Assembly. He was, however, concerned over the future of the programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination because of the adoption by the Third Committee of a draft resolution linking Zionism and racism, which put his Government's participation in question. Had a vote been taken on document A/C.5/1680, his delegation would have abstained.

62. Mr. LELLKI (Sweden) said that his Government had always condemned racism and racial discrimination and had consistently acted accordingly; its policy in that respect would remain unchanged. His delegation had voted in the Third Committee in favour of its draft resolution, but had voted against draft resolution III which had political overtones. If a vote had been taken on document A/C.5/1680, he would have abstained.

63. Mr. STOFORPOULOS (Greece) said that, had a vote been taken, he would have voted in favour of the appropriation in document A/C.5/1680. It was not unreasonable to decide that \$10,000 would be required under section 18 if the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution of the Third Committee.

64. Mr. EDWARDSSEN (Norway) associated his delegation with the views expressed by the representative of Sweden on the draft resolutions adopted by the Third Committee relating to the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and on document A/C.5/1680. Had a vote been taken on that document, he would have abstained.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE FIRST COMMITTEE IN DOCUMENT A/10304 CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS 32\* AND 33\*\* (A/C.5/1696)

65. The CHAIRMAN said that, in his statement (A/C.5/1696), of the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee in its report (A/10304, para. 14), the Secretary-General had indicated that the adoption of that draft resolution would not give rise to additional appropriations at the current time, but could require supplementary appropriations of up to \$16,000 at a later stage.

66. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, as the Secretary-General had indicated in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/1696, a provision of \$194,000 had been included under section 2C of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 (A/10006) for the space applications programme of work. Of that amount \$94,000 had been estimated for 1976. The Secretary-General now indicated that adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution of the First Committee would lead to financial requirements for 1976 of \$110,000-\$16,000 more than the original estimate of \$94,000. While the Secretary-General was not requesting additional credits at the current stage, he had indicated that the \$16,000 might be required later. The estimates were based on assumed full attendance at the meetings and seminars to be held, and the Advisory Committee accordingly felt that the requirements for the space applications programme of work for 1976 might prove less than was currently estimated. An amount of \$100,000 had been estimated for 1977, but as the programme of work was approved annually by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the requirements for 1977 would be reviewed at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly.

67. The Advisory Committee accordingly recommended to the Fifth Committee that it report to the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution of the First Committee, there would be no additional financial requirements at the current stage.

68. The CHAIRMAN proposed to the Committee that it request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it approve the draft resolution of the First Committee, no additional appropriation would be required at the current time for the programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977, on the understanding that the Secretary-General would report further, in 1976, on the progress of the space applications programme.

*It was so decided.*

## ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK (A/C.5/L.1225/REV.2)

69. The CHAIRMAN outlined the programme of work of the Committee for the following day; it included the

\* International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

\*\* Preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

consideration in first reading of section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977.

70. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) requested the Chairman to arrange for agenda item 100, relating to the pattern of conferences, and section 23 to be considered together.

71. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to the fact that the revised programme of work in document A/C.5/L.1225/Rev.2 indicated that item 100 would be considered before the first reading of section 23, a procedure he approved. If the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was not available, the Committee could consider other items on its agenda first.

72. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the 1727th meeting he had explained that, while he had intended item 100 and section 23 to be considered together, one document—the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial implications of the report of the Committee on Conferences—was not available. Accordingly, he had invited the Committee to take up section 23 on the afternoon of Friday, 7 November, and item 100 on Monday, 10 November.

73. Mr. SETHI (India) said that he had understood that the Advisory Committee would be commenting on the report of the Committee on Conferences. Administrative and financial implications were normally commented on by the Secretary-General on the basis of a decision by a legislative body before being submitted to the Advisory Committee.

74. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was submitting observations on the report of the Committee on Conferences because that

Committee had requested it to do so. The Advisory Committee had no intention of calling into question any recommendation made by the Committee on Conferences, which was an intergovernmental body.

75. Mr. SETHI (India) said that much of the work of the Committee on Conferences could be facilitated by help from the Advisory Committee, particularly as the former had to take decisions on questions which were of a fundamentally financial nature. The draft resolution contained in the report of the Committee on Conferences, approved in great haste by the Committee just before the end of its recent session, did call for comments by the Advisory Committee, but only after certain intermediary steps had been taken; those steps had apparently been omitted.

76. He suggested that the Fifth Committee might consider the report of the Committee on Conferences, which was authorized to report directly to the General Assembly, without waiting for the report on it by the Advisory Committee. It could consider the report of the Advisory Committee once it was available.

77. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) reiterated his earlier observation that the Advisory Committee had taken up the report of the Committee on Conference pursuant to the contents of the draft resolution in that report, which envisaged comments from the Advisory Committee. It was, of course, the prerogative of the Fifth Committee to decide to dispense with the comments of the Advisory Committee on the current or future reports of the Committee on Conferences.

*The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.*

## 1733rd meeting

Friday, 7 November 1975, at 10.55 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Christopher R. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago).

A/C.5/SR.1733

### AGENDA ITEM 101

**Publications and documentation of the United Nations: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/10003, chap. VI, sect. G; A/10299, A/C.5/1670)**

1. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) commended the Department of Conference Services on reducing the total documentation under the control of the Secretariat by 22 per cent in 1974 from the 1970 total. Yet such documentation accounted for only one quarter of all United Nations documentation. Accordingly, he welcomed the current consideration of the control of meeting records, in which the self-discipline of all delegations was essential, and he suggested that consideration should also be given to documentation issued at the specific request of intergovernmental organs and material submitted by delegations.

2. He endorsed the 10 criteria suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/1670), as modified by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/10299), and suggested that they should be introduced on an experimental basis in January 1976.

3. In connexion with criterion 3, he suggested two additional factors that might be applied in selecting the bodies which would dispense with summary records: summary records could be dispensed with if the membership of a body consisted of experts acting in their individual capacity, and not of representatives of Governments; and also if the purpose of a meeting was primarily to register conclusions or agreements reached rather than to record the process of reaching them. In some cases subsidiary bodies of subsidiary bodies might require meeting records because