

the revised estimates for 1974-1975. Real growth for the section was estimated by the Secretary-General at 5.9 per cent—a rate higher than that of the proposed programme budget as a whole. If extra-budgetary funds and apportioned costs were taken into account, the estimated requirements for international narcotics control would become \$9,900,000.

48. In its first report² on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 the Advisory Committee had already expressed its concern over the lack of co-ordination and the duplication which might result from the existence, side by side, of two secretariats in the field of narcotics control. The Economic and Social Council had itself requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts for the best possible co-ordination between the various organs. But little progress had been made in that direction. In paragraph 14.12 of the current report the Advisory Committee suggested that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination might be invited to study the problem. In the last analysis the decision rested with Member States, and the Fifth Committee's views on the matter would be useful.

49. In its consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals, the Advisory Committee had taken into account the justifications submitted and the current resources available to the programme. It concluded that the request to add 6 posts—2 Professional and 4 General Service posts—to the current manning table of the two secretariats could be reduced. If one took into account extra-budgetary resources, the current manning table stood at 88: 47 Professional and 41 General Service posts. The Advisory Committee believed that even with the slightly increased work-load referred to in the Secretary-General's estimates, the current staff should be able to handle that extra work. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended the addition of 1 P-4 post to the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board for the reasons given in paragraph 14.9 of its report. It was not convinced, however, that a case had been made to justify the request to reclassify the post of the Secretary of the Board from D-1 to the D-2 level and, as stated in paragraph 14.10, the Advisory Committee was unable to endorse it. The request for reclassification of a P-4 to a P-5 post was covered by the recommendation contained in paragraph 61 of the report.

² *Ibid.*, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 and corrigendum, para. 18.3.

50. Lastly, he drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 14.11 of the report of the Advisory Committee in regard to paragraph 14.16 of the Secretary-General's estimates.

51. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that his delegation did not wish to recommend any new cuts in the funds requested by the Secretary-General in section 14, because the money spent in the fight against those scourges of mankind which were the abuse of, and illicit traffic in, narcotic drugs was money well spent.

52. His delegation wished to make a renewed appeal for the merger of the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Control Board did, of course, have different functions and responsibilities, since the Commission's task was to help the Economic and Social Council, while the Board supervised narcotic-drug production, manufacture and trade and tried to identify leakages to the illicit drug traffic. But the staff servicing each of the two organs must be perfectly acquainted with the activities of the other in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that information was circulated in a satisfactory manner. It could be seen from the list of staff of the United Nations Secretariat³ that there were 29 persons working for the International Narcotics Control Board and 44 working for the Commission, plus 5 for field projects.

53. After a survey of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Administrative Management Service had concluded that from the administrative viewpoint there would be advantage in integrating the two secretariats in question. Furthermore, in its resolution 1935 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975 the Economic and Social Council had requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts for the best possible co-ordination in the struggle against drug abuse and it had also requested him to invite governmental assistance with a view to achieving the maximum results and avoiding overlapping and duplication of effort. His delegation submitted therefore that as a first step the Fifth Committee, in its report, should urge the unification of the two narcotic-drug secretariats.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

³ Document A/C.5/L.1224, dated 15 August 1975.

1703rd meeting

Wednesday, 1 October 1975, at 10.50 a.m.

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

A/C.5/SR.1703

AGENDA ITEMS 96 AND 97

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (*continued*) (for the documentation, see 1701st meeting)

Review of the intergovernmental and expert machinery dealing with the formulation, review and approval of programmes and budgets: report of the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery (*continued*) (for the documentation, see 1700th meeting)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that the form of presentation of the proposed programme budget for 1976-1977 showed a notable improvement over that for 1974-1975. The order of presentation of the sections was more logical, descriptive narratives had been replaced by an account of medium-term objectives, activities and even projects and, above all, the tabular material was more abundant and the breakdown of expenses more detailed. Other welcome developments were the inclusion of annexes accompanying the Secretary-General's foreword, the calculation of "real growth" by section and programme, the allocation of indirect costs to most programmes and the inclusion of information on extra-budgetary funds, even though the data on the sources of such funds were not sufficiently comprehensive. It was true that the presentation was not consistently satisfactory and that regrettable omissions and variants were to be found in some sections. On balance, however, the results of the Secretariat's work were constructive, and the Organization was clearly moving away from a "budget by operational unit" towards a real "programme budget". One of the aims of the reform had been achieved, at least in part: Member States could follow the distribution and allocation of funds appropriated.

2. On the other hand, other questions which the programme budgeting system was designed to elucidate—whether the estimates were justified, if they corresponded to activities decided upon by the legislative organs, if alternative, more economical means of attaining United Nations objectives existed—remained partially unanswered. As the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions observed in paragraph 9 of its report (A/10008 and Corr.2), the relation between requests for increased resources and additional activities was not always clear from the programme material. Generally speaking, no information had been given concerning activities which would be discontinued during the biennium or the way in which the resources thus released would be reallocated.

3. Those short-comings derived from the rather simplistic "incremental" approach employed by the Secretary-General which, in the words of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, at the 1700th meeting appeared to discourage "any meaningful inquiry into the utility, productivity, and performance of ongoing activities" (A/C.5/1686). The base to which activities had been added should not have been accepted without a careful examination. Furthermore, the soundness of the "full budgeting" approach, which made advance provision for such factors as inflation, was questionable. It provided a solution of convenience which was not conducive to achieving economies and which, moreover, had not been adopted by the more courageous organizations in the United Nations system. The rates of inflation selected by the Secretary-General were no more than working hypotheses, as were the forecasts of the parities of currencies other than the dollar.

4. Full budgeting had even more regrettable results when applied to a biennial budget. Logically, the contributions of Member States for 1976 should be lower than their contributions for 1977. However, in accordance with current practice, the two annual contributions were set at

the same level, even though the appropriations for 1976 would be greater than the expenditure planned for that year, while the contributions for 1977 would not be adequate to meet the needs of the second half of the biennium. The Secretariat should therefore specify the exact amount of resources required for 1976 without incorporating into the estimates a projected 1977 rate of inflation, and the contributions of Member States for the first year of the biennium should not exceed that amount.

5. In estimating the growth in expenditure, the Secretary-General had chosen to compare the initial estimates for 1976-1977 with the 1974-1975 revised appropriations. However, it was clear that that methodology underestimated the growth factor. Of the alternative methodologies for calculating "programme growth" and "real growth" described by the Advisory Committee in its report, his delegation was inclined to favour that outlined in paragraph 18 (b), because it showed the amount of growth in real terms by comparing comparable elements (the cost of new posts, less the delayed recruitment deduction for both biennia. His delegation also agreed with the statement in paragraph 13 of the Advisory Committee's report that the term "programme growth" as used by the Secretary-General really meant "growth in expenditures expressed in real terms". However, having heard the explanations of the Controller on that point at the previous meeting, he inclined to believe that the discrepancy lay in the choice of words and that there was no real divergence of opinions.

6. The medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (A/10006/Add.1) also showed considerable improvement over that for 1974-1977. Particularly noteworthy was the stimulating and innovative material to be found in the introduction and part one concerning the establishment of an effective planning system for the Organization. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had already expressed interest in the Secretary-General's suggestion that the point of departure for medium-term planning should be the determination of an average rate of growth in real terms for the period of the plan vis-à-vis the base period, programme growth being defined by the adoption of an original system of "incremental priorities" established on the basis of special criteria. The Secretary-General did not conceal the fact that the predominantly political character of United Nations activities gave rise to specific difficulties so far as planning was concerned because the orientations selected for the planning period might at any time be called into question by initiatives taken in the intergovernmental organs. The French delegation felt that all efforts to establish truly integrated programmes would be in danger of being jeopardized until some measure of discipline was shown in the matter of launching new unplanned and unbudgeted activities. The disorderly proliferation of bureaucracy and services would continue unless the conduct of Member States was sufficiently self-disciplined to ensure the necessary co-ordination at the different levels and to permit the choice of sensible options.

7. His delegation associated itself with the comments of the Advisory Committee (A/10081) on the important report on medium-term planning in the United Nations system prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit and appearing in document A/9646 and it welcomed the fact that the latter's recommendation concerning the harmonization of

programme budget presentation was already under study. It hoped that the Committee would discuss and take a decision on both the report of that Unit and the observations of the Advisory Committee. As to the merits of a "rolling plan" versus a "fixed-horizon plan", his delegation, while acknowledging the superiority of the latter, was inclined to agree with the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee that it was preferable, at least for the time being, to adopt a "rolling plan", to be re-examined every other year, since that would allow some flexibility in the setting of priorities. Furthermore, in view of the Organization's relatively limited planning experience and its special difficulties, the four-year period for the medium-term plan should also be retained for the time being.

8. The report prepared by the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery (A/10117 and Corr.1) was objective and balanced, gave a penetrating analysis of existing machinery and needs, and proposed reasonable solutions. His delegation endorsed the ideas underlying the main recommendations, namely, that one body should be responsible for planning and programming and that the existing division of labour between programming bodies and budgetary bodies should be maintained.

9. It should be noted, however, that many of the issues dealt with in the report of the Working Group concerned the structure of the United Nations system—a subject examined in the report of the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System (E/AC.62/9), whose conclusions were to be considered by a Committee of the whole set up by the General Assembly at its seventh special session: that *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System. It would therefore be premature for the Fifth Committee to take a decision on those recommendations of the Working Group that concerned the structure of the United Nations system, which should be transmitted to the *Ad Hoc* Committee, although the Fifth Committee might wish to consider the procedural recommendations as, for example, recommendation 1 (A/10117 and Corr.1, para. 77).

10. His delegation trusted that the suggestion made by the Secretary-General during his statement at the 1700th meeting (A/C.5/1685) concerning prompt and full payment of assessed contributions would receive a favourable response. His Government had already endeavoured to speed up the payment of its contribution and trusted that other Governments would do the same. On the other hand, the Secretary-General's suggestion concerning the size of the Working Capital Fund would require study by his Government since it posed some thorny problems from the standpoint of both principle and practice. It would seem more appropriate to defer the enlargement of the Fund until after the finances of the Organization had been put in order. If the action were taken now, the resources of the Fund might be used improperly to liquidate the Organization's bad debts.

11. His delegation shared the views of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning personnel matters, particularly his comment on the increase in manpower and the so-called "grade creep" phenomenon. It was to be hoped that the International Civil Service Commission would

inject some order in the areas of job classification and the establishment of a proper career and promotion scheme.

12. His delegation would take a final position on the budget estimates once the readings of the different sections and the revised estimates had been completed.

13. Mr. SOKALSKI (Poland) said that at a time when many countries were facing grave economic crisis, the financial structure of the United Nations should correspond to the over-all financial situation of its Member States. Any increase of United Nations expenditures should therefore not exceed the average rate of annual growth of the national income of Members. The minimum level of expenditure provided for in the proposed programme budget, which would later be increased by the submission of revised estimates, meant that the United Nations would soon be spending over \$1 million a day. Poland's record of involvement in United Nations activities was well known and it would continue to support the Secretary-General in his successful efforts to give fresh impetus to the main fields of activity of the Organization. Nevertheless, it could not support budget estimates which involved such a high level of expenditure and towards which the Polish taxpayers would be required to contribute so heavily. The problem was to find a compromise which would properly safeguard the interests of individual States and at the same time preserve the possibility of collective decision-making. His delegation was ready to pursue that goal, provided that the Secretariat showed greater concern for real economy and financial restraint.

14. Biennial programme budgeting had been presented to Member States as a first step in the process of restructuring the United Nations system. To judge by the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977, it was not fulfilling its purpose of making the system more efficient and economical.

15. The major reason for the increased requirements was not inflationary pressures but the Secretary-General's request for 826 additional posts. Yet there were many instances of duplication, lack of co-ordination and low efficiency within the Secretariat. It would be useful to ascertain in greater detail why certain Secretariat units needed new posts and why the staff recruited for programmes now completed had not been reoriented to perform other functions. The elimination of "dead wood" would allow for considerable savings in manpower and would be an important indication of financial restraint on the part of the Secretariat.

16. While programme budgeting provided Member States with a clearer picture of the basic areas of work and of the utilization of resources, the biennial budget cycle made control of expenditure more difficult for Member States and unnecessary expansion of the budget easier for the Secretariat. An important omission was the lack of any meaningful inquiry into the utility, productivity and performance of ongoing activities.

17. His delegation was concerned about the recurrent practice of submitting supplementary estimates every year and suggested that the General Assembly should work out

specific criteria and conditions governing the submission of requests for additional funds. It believed that, in principle, supplementary estimates should be used to meet extraordinary needs which could not have been foreseen at the time when the budget had been approved and should be substantiated by the Secretariat. The task of preparing guidelines on the submission of supplementary estimates might be entrusted to the Advisory Committee, the Joint Inspection Unit or the Board of Auditors.

18. His remarks should not be construed as an expression of total disapproval of the Secretariat's financial policies because, while the Secretariat bore major responsibility for programming and utilizing budget funds, Member States, by their decisions and actions, were also responsible for unnecessary budget growth. Although the Fifth Committee, like all the Main Committees of the General Assembly, was composed of representatives of sovereign States, its financial decisions had more serious implications for the Member States who were the main contributors to the budget, with the result that majority decisions were often taken more expeditiously than was the case in other Committees where money was not involved. That special aspect of the Fifth Committee's work should be seen against Article 18, paragraph 2, of the Charter, which provided that decisions on budgetary questions required a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly. Since, with the expansion of United Nations activities, the budget increasingly reflected the financial implications of most decisions of the principal organs, the Charter reference to "budgetary questions" should be interpreted to apply to all the individual expenditures comprising the budget total. Enforcement of the principle of the two-thirds majority vote on budgetary questions was an important means of reconciling the need for greater economy with the requirements of collective decision-making. More frequent recourse to consensus in reaching financial decisions in the Fifth Committee might also result in greater economies. Savings could also be made by correcting certain practices such as delays in starting meetings, poor organization of work and the proliferation of conferences and meetings of all kinds of bodies, many of which should long ago have been dissolved by their parent organs. In its report to the Fifth Committee, the Committee on Conferences should give special attention to the unreasonable growth in the number of meetings and conferences. Finally, substantial amounts could be saved by reducing the volume of documentation. Unfortunately, efforts to achieve that end were often frustrated. For example, the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Charter of the United Nations, after being denied summary records, had adopted a report which was likely to cost more to produce than verbatim records of its proceedings. Similarly, the proposed programme budget, once it had been adopted, would apparently be reproduced in print at even greater cost.

19. His delegation would not be prepared to endorse any of the financial proposals before the Committee in the programme budget until it had a better picture of the extent to which financial policies and expenditure were justified in the interest of sound management. Even the Advisory Committee had apparently experienced much hesitation in endorsing some of them and had been shy in exercising its restraining powers. In order to obtain that clearer picture, the Polish delegation would submit a

working paper¹ for circulation to the members of the Committee containing some of the questions about the proposed programme budget for 1976-1977 which it would like to see clarified.

AGENDA ITEM 96

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (*continued*) (for the documentation, see 1701st meeting)

First reading of individual sections of the programme budget (continued)

SECTION 14. INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL (*continued*) (A/10006, A/10008 AND CORR.2)

20. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria) said that there was considerable overlapping and waste under section 14 because there were two secretariat units engaged in identical activities: the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board and the secretariat of the Division of Narcotic Drugs. The increased expenditure estimates under the section were obviously the result not of inflation but of the Secretary-General's request for 3 new posts and the upward reclassification of posts. He would welcome an explanation from the Director of the Budget Division to account for the reappearance of the heading "narcotic drugs control" in the programme of technical assistance detailed in table 15-3 under section 15 of the proposed programme budget (A/10006). His delegation supported the reduction recommended for section 14 by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/10008 and Corr.2, para. 14.13).

21. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that estimated expenditure under the section for the 1976-1977 biennium showed an increase of approximately \$1 million or 33.9 per cent over the 1974-1975 revised estimates because of inflation, requests for additional posts and the reclassification of posts. The Advisory Committee had quite rightly recommended a reduction in expenditure for additional staff but had failed to follow through by recommending strict economies and had tolerated certain staff increases. The Soviet delegation did not agree with that position. It did, however, agree with the Advisory Committee that the secretariats of the International Narcotics Control Board and the Division of Narcotic Drugs could be merged to eliminate duplication. On the other hand, he could not support the additional expenditure due to inflation and currency fluctuations; those costs should be offset by maximum economies in general budget expenditure. He formally requested detailed information in writing on the method used for computing the inflation component of \$343,000 for section 14. If a separate vote was taken on the Secretary-General's figure for the inflation component and the expenditure for additional staff, the Soviet delegation would vote against those items. If the section was voted on as a whole, it would abstain.

22. Mrs. DERRÉ (France) said that her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Committee for

¹ Subsequently circulated as conference room paper A/C.5/XXX/CRP.1.

Programme and Co-ordination should study the secretariat arrangements in narcotics control with a view to eliminating duplication. Pending the results of that study, it shared the Advisory Committee's views on the request for additional posts and the reclassification of one post and would support the recommended reduction under section 14. Drawing attention to the inflation figures given in the last two columns of table 14-8 in the proposed programme budget, she observed that they appeared exaggerated and asked the Director of the Budget Division to explain them.

23. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 14.12 of its report that CPC should advise the Economic and Social Council on the possible merging of the two narcotics secretariats, but raised the question whether the Fifth Committee should authorize any additional posts for either secretariat pending the outcome of that consultation.

24. In connexion with the question of transferring posts previously financed from extra-budgetary funds to the regular budget, dealt with in paragraph 14.11 of the Advisory Committee's report, he requested the Advisory Committee to study the level of posts which would be financed from those voluntary funds and report whether the level was determined by the Secretary-General alone or in consultation with the Advisory Committee. In his view, it was questionable whether the Fifth Committee could be asked to recommend the transfer to the regular budget of high-level posts established with financing from extra-budgetary sources.

25. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said he agreed with the Advisory Committee (A/10008 and Corr.2, para. 62) that no further reclassification of posts should be requested by the Secretary-General until the International Civil Service Commission had made its recommendations on promotions; the Fifth Committee should not be asked to approve promotions through reclassification. He further agreed with the Advisory Committee that the study requested of CPC would be helpful in determining whether the two narcotics secretariats should be combined, and he supported the recommended reduction under section 14.

26. Mr. LAVAU (Director of the Budget Division), replying to the representative of Algeria, said that the reference to narcotics control under section 15 did not imply any duplication between sections 14 and 15, and that he would provide more specific information on that point later.

27. He would provide an answer in writing, as requested, to the question asked by the Soviet representative concerning the estimated \$343,000 to compensate for inflation.

28. In reply to the representative of France, he said that the inflation figures in table 14-8 did not in fact represent only inflationary growth, but also the increase in the representation allowance for the one high-level post involved. It had been put under the inflation component for convenience only; an explanatory note should have been added.

29. All who had spoken on section 14 had referred to duplication within the Secretariat; the Secretary-General had no objection to the suggestion made by the Advisory

Committee that CPC should be invited to study the programme aspects of the existing secretariat arrangements in narcotics control. Economic and Social Council resolutions adopted in 1973 had approved separate secretariats for the Board and the Division, but those arrangements could of course be reconsidered.

30. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should suspend its consideration of section 14.

SECTION 16. OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (A/10006, A/10008 AND CORR.2)

31. The CHAIRMAN said that, in his initial estimates for the biennium 1976-1977 (A/10006) the Secretary-General had requested an appropriation of \$14,822,000 under section 16. The Advisory Committee had recommended no specific reduction in the initial estimates, but, pursuant to its comments in paragraphs 63 to 65 of its report (A/10008 and Corr.2) on representation allowances, that amount should be reduced by \$800. The total appropriation recommended under section 16 by the Advisory Committee was thus \$14,821,200.

32. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the estimates for section 16 had been prepared in conformity with the policy decision agreed on jointly by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General in 1973 and endorsed by the Advisory Committee, whereby the regular budget of the Office of the High Commissioner for 1974 to 1977 was to be maintained at a constant level in real terms, changes being made only to take account of rises in prices and wages. Accordingly, it was one of the few sections where the Advisory Committee had not made any specific recommendation on reductions, the only reduction being consequential on its recommendation on representation allowances.

33. Mr. STOFOROPOULOS (Greece) commended the Office of the High Commissioner for adhering strictly to the principle of financial austerity in its field programmes and for its high level of efficiency. He drew attention to the fact that the regular funds did not cover special operations, such as humanitarian assistance to Cyprus. He expressed great appreciation for the indefatigable efforts made by the Office of the High Commissioner to alleviate the suffering of the Cypriote refugees and also thanked Governments which had made contributions. Continuing assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner would be indispensable until the plight of the Cypriote refugees was brought to an end, which the Greek delegation earnestly hoped would not take long.

34. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on an appropriation under section 16 for the biennium 1976-1977 in the amount of \$14,821,200.

An appropriation in the amount of \$14,821,200 under section 16 for the biennium 1976-1977 was approved in first reading by 61 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

SECTION 18. HUMAN RIGHTS (A/10006,
A/10008 AND CORR.2)

35. The CHAIRMAN said that, in his initial estimates for the biennium 1976-1977 (A/10006) the Secretary-General had proposed an amount of \$5,299,000 for section 18. The Advisory Committee, in its report (A/10008 and Corr.2, para. 18.10), had recommended a reduction of \$315,000 and, pursuant to paragraphs 63 to 65 of its report, a further reduction of \$400 with regard to representation allowances, and, pursuant to paragraph 61 of its report, a reduction of \$8,000 in connexion with reclassification. Accordingly, the total amount recommended for section 18 by the Advisory Committee for the biennium 1976-1977 was \$4,975,600.

36. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's estimates under section 18 for the biennium 1976-1977 were 15.2 per cent higher than the revised appropriations for the biennium 1974-1975, as adjusted. The Secretary-General had estimated real growth at 5 per cent on the assumption that several international instruments relating to human rights would soon enter into force, leading to added responsibility for the Division of Human Rights. Part of that responsibility would be to service the Human Rights Committee to be established pursuant to the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. To that end, the Secretary-General proposed to establish a small unit in the Division of Human Rights, comprising 3 Professional and 2 General Service posts. The Advisory Committee felt that it would be better to wait until those instruments had entered into force, the proposed committee established, and the workload involved clarified, before taking action. The Secretary-General could then review the situation and submit revised estimates if necessary. The stand taken by the Advisory Committee was a technical one, and it did not imply opposition in principle to the request by the Secretary-General. A report of the Secretary-General (A/10196) had been issued, under agenda item 84, on 9 September 1975—that is, after the Advisory Committee's report—indicating that as at 1 September 1975 34 States had signed or acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, while 33 States had signed or acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the required number for their entry into force was 35. The Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been signed or acceded to by 11 States. Although the required number was 10, it could not enter into force before the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights became operational. Accordingly, the view stated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 18.7 of its report remained valid.

37. The Secretary-General had requested \$153,000 for preparations for a proposed world conference to combat racism and racial discrimination scheduled for 1978, but the Advisory Committee saw no reason why much of the preparatory work could not be carried out by existing staff and recommended accordingly a reduction of \$74,000.

38. The additional P-2 post for programme support at Geneva had not been approved by the Advisory Committee on the grounds that adequate justification for it had not been provided; there were already 72 posts, including 42

Professional posts, in the Division at Geneva. The proposed reclassification to D-1 of the P-5 post in the New York Liaison Office was covered by the observations in paragraph 61 of the Advisory Committee's report.

39. Mr. STOFOROPOULOS (Greece) said that he could not accept the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 18.7 of its report that the composition proposed by the Secretary-General for the unit that would service the projected Human Rights Committee should not be approved at the current stage. It was to be a small unit, and he believed that adequate funds should be allocated at the current stage, so that it could operate effectively as soon as it was called upon to operate.

40. Mr. LELLKI (Sweden) pointed out that, according to figure 4, appearing on page 19 of the Advisory Committee's report, human rights activities accounted for only 3 per cent of the total allocation requested for economic, social and humanitarian activities, and less than 1 per cent of the total budget. His delegation considered human rights activities one of the most important United Nations activities, regarding respect for human rights as essential to friendly relations and co-operation between States. Accordingly, he welcomed the fact that only a very few ratifications were still needed before two important Covenants on human rights would enter into force. He hoped that the Covenants would be accepted in time for a decision to be taken at the current session to establish the projected Human Rights Committee and that revised estimates to cover costs for that committee would be submitted before the second reading of section 18.

41. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) requested clarification as to whether the request by the Secretary-General for the reclassification to D-1 of the P-5 post in the New York Liaison Office had been approved by the Advisory Committee or not.

42. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta) endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations on section 18. In connexion with the proposed reclassification, he expressed concern at the trend towards inflating Professional posts, and requested information on the level of posts in liaison offices of specialized agencies in New York, for comparison. Another comparison could be made with the UNDP resident representatives, who were not all at the D-1 level.

43. Referring to paragraph 18.9 of the Advisory Committee's report on the request for an additional P-2 post, as well as to paragraph 18.5, he said the Secretary-General had not provided adequate justification for those posts. If the Secretary-General did not provide further information on those posts, he would be obliged to oppose them.

44. Mr. KOBINA-SEKYI (Ghana) called for approval of the \$153,000 requested by the Secretary-General to prepare for the world conference on combating racial discrimination scheduled for 1978. The Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been proclaimed as of 10 December 1973, and 1978 would be the mid-point of the Decade and thus an excellent opportunity to assess the achievements and short-comings of the Decade. The conference was important and the importance of the preparatory work for it should also be recognized.

Another factor was that the conference might be held in a developing country with limited resources; reducing the appropriations for preparations might impose additional financial burdens on the host Government.

45. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should suspend its consideration of section 18.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

Question of including summaries of the debates in the Committee's reports to the General Assembly

46. Mr. ABoul GHEIT (Egypt), Rapporteur, recalled that at its 1651st meeting, at the twenty-ninth session, the Committee had decided, during its consideration of the item on United Nations publications and documentation, to dispense with an account of the general discussion on certain items in its report to the General Assembly. That decision was pursuant to paragraph (f) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII), and, the con-

clusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly. The Committee had decided that summaries of its debates on only certain substantive items—corresponding to items 97, 102 and 104 to 107 on the agenda of the current session—should be included in its reports to the General Assembly. The decision had been a provisional one, and the Fifth Committee must now reconsider the matter and decide whether it wished to continue the practice and also include a summary of its debate on item 96 (Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979) in its corresponding report.

47. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee take note of the Rapporteur's statement and take a decision on the matter later.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

1704th meeting

Thursday, 2 October 1975, at 11 a.m.

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

A/C.5/SR.1704

AGENDA ITEMS 96 AND 97

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (continued) (for the documentation, see 1701st meeting)

Review of the intergovernmental and expert machinery dealing with the formulation, review and approval of programmes and budgets: report of the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery (continued) (for the documentation, see 1700th meeting)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the attitude of his delegation to administrative and budgetary questions in the United Nations had been constantly determined by the principled support rendered to the Organization by the Soviet Government through active participation in its activities, and the constant desire to increase its effectiveness as an important instrument for the maintenance of peace and security.

2. In his statement before the General Assembly on 23 September 1975 (2357th plenary meeting), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, had stressed that the successful fulfilment of its lofty mission by the United Nations, as an important instrument for consolidating international security, presupposed constant enhancement of the effectiveness of its work.

3. In the examination of budgetary questions, his delegation proceeded from the assumption that budgetary

appropriations must be utilized rationally and be directed, first of all, towards carrying out the basic tasks of the United Nations set forth in the Charter, and towards contributing to the further development of détente so as to make it irreversible. In its concern to consolidate international peace and security, the Soviet Union had brought before the General Assembly at its current session two most important questions, namely, prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and the conclusion of a treaty on complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. His delegation was hopeful that the General Assembly would endorse those proposals.

4. Proceeding from its principled position, the Soviet Union, as one of the major contributors to the budget, could not agree that the contributions of Member States should be utilized for purposes other than those for which the Organization had been created and, moreover, for aims contrary to the Charter.

5. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 totalled \$737 million, which represented an increase of \$131 million, or 21.6 per cent, as compared with the biennium 1974-1975. If one also took into account the potential additional requirements which might arise owing to decisions of intergovernmental bodies and which, as the Secretary-General had reported, might be of the order of \$45 million, then the increase in the United Nations budget could reach 29 per cent as compared to the previous period and could set a record in the entire history of the United Nations. It must be noted in particular that the United Nations budget was growing at a much faster