

60. Mr. RUEDAS (Secretary of the Committee) read out the various amendments to the draft resolution appearing in document A/C.5/L.1207.

61. First, in the light of the Committee's decision on document A/C.5/L.1206, the reference in section IV to paragraph 28 of the report of the Advisory Committee should be deleted.

62. Secondly, in order to incorporate the French proposal, mention of paragraph 22 would have to be deleted from section IV and a paragraph 2 added to read as follows:

"Also endorses the observations of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 22 of its report, provided that the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board shall commence the review of the existing scheme of pension adjustment early in 1975 and shall make an interim progress report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session."

63. Thirdly, in order to incorporate the Argentine proposal, mention of paragraph 30 should be deleted from the enumeration in section IV and a paragraph 3 added to read:

"Further endorses the observations of the Advisory Committee contained in paragraph 30 of its report, provided that the maximum amount to which the Board shall be authorized to supplement voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund shall be set at \$100,000."

Mr. Caranicas (Greece) resumed the Chair.

64. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) said that his delegation could not support the proposal by Argentina and would therefore object to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

65. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation would accept the French proposal on the

understanding that it was only a progress report which was required for the thirtieth session of the General Assembly and not firm proposals regarding a new scheme of pension adjustment.

66. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that his delegation accepted the interpretation placed by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on its proposal.

67. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) requested a separate vote on the Argentine proposal.

The Argentine proposal was adopted by 43 votes to 17, with 25 abstentions.

68. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation would have voted against authorizing the Board to supplement the Emergency Fund by an amount of \$50,000, and was therefore even less inclined to authorize an amount of \$100,000.

69. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/L.1207, as amended by the proposals of Argentina and France.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 77 votes to 10, with 1 abstention.

70. Mr. McGOUGH (Chairman of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board) welcomed the constructive spirit in which all delegations in general, and the delegations of Algeria and Cuba in particular, had participated in the discussion of the report of the Joint Staff Pension Board.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

1686th meeting

Monday, 9 December 1974, at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Costa P. CARANICAS (Greece).

A/C.5/SR.1686

AGENDA ITEM 74

Review of the intergovernmental and expert machinery dealing with the formulation, review and approval of programmes and budgets (*continued*)* (A/9603 (chaps. VI, sect. A.1, and VII, sects. 1-3), A/9816, A/C.5/L.1205)

1. Mr. VAN DER GOOT (Netherlands), introducing a draft decision (A/C.5/L.1205), announced that the delegations of Belgium, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Japan,

Kenya, Pakistan and the Philippines had decided to join as sponsors of the draft.

2. The draft decision was intended to follow through on General Assembly resolution 3199 (XXVIII), and that it was a simple, balanced and non-controversial draft whose main objective was to keep the subject under review and have the *ad hoc* working group report to the General Assembly in 1975. It did not touch on the substance of the question. The size of the *ad hoc* working group, referred to in paragraph 1, was based on the size of previous working groups, such as the *ad hoc* group of 15 members to examine the finances of the United Nations in 1972, and the Working Group on Currency Instability with 13 members.

* Resumed from the 1683rd meeting.

A small group of representatives with a wide knowledge of the subject was the best way of studying such a question. The mandate of the working group, as stated in paragraph 1 (a), reflected the wording of resolution 3199 (XXVIII) and the title of the agenda item; thus, the subject to be studied was indicated clearly without prejudice to the position that would be taken. The mandate as proposed was general enough to accommodate varying approaches, and yet specific enough to give guidance to the working group. Since the Economic and Social Council had also been active in considering the question, he had felt it important that the working group should take account of the views expressed in the Council as well as in the Fifth Committee; thus, paragraphs 1 (b) (i) and (ii) were simply objective statements of facts. The intention was to place the question in the wider perspective of the United Nations system as a whole.

3. The purpose of paragraph 2 was to try to find a balance between the work of the Fifth Committee and the preparatory work authorized by the Second Committee for the preparation of the seventh special session of the General Assembly. All the threads would be brought together at the thirtieth session of the Assembly, thus contributing to a more integrated approach to the question.

4. Paragraph 3 requested the Secretary-General to provide assistance to the working group in the form of relevant documentation—such as the reports of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, the 1969 report of the Joint Inspection Unit on programming and budgeting,¹ and the UNITAR report on co-ordination in the United Nations system.²

5. He understood that, if the working group was organized on the same basis as the Working Group on Currency Instability, it would not involve any financial implications.

6. As the draft decision was short, balanced and non-controversial and its sponsors came from all geographical regions, he hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

7. Mr. LAVAU (Director, Budget Division) said that, assuming the *ad hoc* working group would submit one final report, and would arrange its meetings so that normal Secretariat services could be provided, it would not involve any additional expenditure.

8. Mr. STOBY (Guyana), noting that document A/9816 provided useful background information on the item under consideration, said that the Fifth Committee was not discussing the terms of reference of the bodies referred to in that document but was considering the bodies which assisted the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly through the Fifth Committee in determining programme priorities and programme approval, namely, CPC of the Economic and Social Council and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions which advised the Fifth Committee.

9. There was certainly a need for analysis and reform of the existing machinery. In the report on the form of

presentation of the United Nations budget and the duration of the budget cycle, which he submitted to the twenty-fifth session,³ the Secretary-General had stressed the need for central decision making at the governmental level, observing that Member States must take measures to concentrate the authority to approve programmes in as few governmental bodies as possible, ideally in a single body. The Advisory Committee had agreed in general with the Secretary-General but had taken a more cautious approach and suggested, in its report⁴ on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975, that existing machinery should be adapted, and a reassessment made only after experience had been gained from the initial programme budget. The Economic and Social Council had also expressed its concern and in 1966 had established the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, enlarging it in January 1970 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2579 (XXIV).

10. Before the introduction of programme budgeting, there had been a dichotomy between the Economic and Social Council, which approved programmes without being aware of their financial implications, and the General Assembly, which, through the Fifth Committee, approved the budget without being fully aware of its effect on programmes. Programme budgeting had been intended to resolve that dichotomy.

11. Member States must decide whether only one body was needed to advise the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. If a separate programme review body, such as CPC or some new body under the Economic and Social Council, was to be retained, he feared that such a step might intensify the rivalry between the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee, on the one hand, and the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee on the other. The alternative was to abolish CPC and not to establish any new body of the Economic and Social Council, allowing the Advisory Committee to continue advising the Fifth Committee. However, the Advisory Committee was not susceptible to influence by the Economic and Social Council and could be regarded as a hostile body. The Second Committee already felt that the Advisory Committee was very much under the influence of the great Powers and the Western world. Accordingly, his delegation felt it was essential to work towards establishing one body that would be associated with both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Any other approach would be contrary to the objectives of programme budgeting. The single body to be established should be an expert body and not an intergovernmental body because continuity was essential. The Advisory Committee, unlike intergovernmental bodies, did have continuity of membership. He recalled that when CPC had been established it had requested Members to name experts to represent them in order to ensure continuity; the system had not, however, been successful. The Advisory Committee was too small to retain the confidence of Member States. Only 5 of its 13 members were representatives of the Group of 77. If it was to have the necessary political respect and authority to play a central role, it must be

¹ Document A/7822 of 3 December 1969.

² Document E/5491 of 30 April 1974.

³ Document A/C.5/1335 of 19 November 1970, para. 16.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 and corrigendum, para. 16.*

expanded. He had no views on how far it should be expanded, but simply stressed that its current size was no longer acceptable as far as the political interests of the developing countries and the General Assembly as a whole were concerned.

12. Commenting on the draft decision before the Committee, he suggested that a few preambular paragraphs might be added to reflect developments leading to the establishment of the *ad hoc* working group. He also suggested that membership of 18, instead of 15, would allow for a better geographical balance. He found the draft decision, however, acceptable on the whole.

13. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that the draft decision was an acceptable procedural solution as the Committee could not take any useful decision on the substance of the item at the current stage. However, there was no reference to equitable geographical distribution in paragraph 1 of the draft decision. He also suggested that paragraph 1(b)(i) should refer to the views expressed in the Fifth Committee during the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly as well as the twenty-ninth session, as the question had been discussed more extensively the previous year. He supported the draft decision and trusted that the Fifth Committee would take up the question at the thirtieth session on the basis of the report of the working group and reach a decision on it.

14. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) expressed regret that the Fifth Committee did not have time to consider the important item on review of machinery dealing with the formulation, review and approval of programmes and budgets. In early discussions on the programme budget system, it had been the general feeling in CPC that some structural changes would be necessary in the wake of the new budgeting system and the biennial budget cycle. The Advisory Committee had agreed, but had recommended that in the early transitional period the *status quo* should be maintained. The Secretary-General had stressed the need for Member States to take concrete action to concentrate authority to approve projects and determine the organizational programme and budgetary policy in as few intergovernmental bodies as possible, ideally in a single body.

15. Under the current system, programmes in the economic, social and human rights fields were examined and approved by CPC after initial examination by relevant intergovernmental committees, and it then reported to the Economic and Social Council, which in turn reported to the Second Committee. On the budgetary side, after examination by CPC, the Advisory Committee reported to the Fifth Committee on the financial implications of the programmes. At the twenty-eighth session, the Advisory Committee had repeated its view that, after some experience had been gained in programme budgeting, a fresh look should be taken at the existing machinery of intergovernmental and expert organs.

16. Several representatives, including the representative of France, had pointed out that since the largest part of the human and financial resources of the United Nations was absorbed by activities in the economic, social and human rights fields, the Economic and Social Council was the best forum for Member States to assert their legislative will. In

that connexion, it had been proposed that a standing body of independent experts should be established to consider the programmes and budgets in the economic, social and human rights fields, selected in much the same way as members of the Advisory Committee, in order to strengthen the roles of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in examining the over-all programmes of the United Nations and in determining priorities and timing. It had also been suggested that a committee subsidiary to the Fifth Committee, endowed with sufficient authority to enjoy the confidence of Member States and have a close relationship with the Economic and Social Council, should be established. Another possibility was to strengthen the role of the Advisory Committee after changing its composition and character so as to enable it to provide the authoritative leadership in both programme and budgetary matters currently lacking in the United Nations.

17. His delegation felt that combining the functions of programming, budgeting and appraisal in one body such as the Advisory Committee would not be desirable, for no single organ could be expected to perform those functions adequately. It would be extremely difficult to change the attitudes acquired by the Advisory Committee over the preceding 29 years as a jealous watch-dog restraining programme expenditures. The best solution appeared to be the establishment of an intergovernmental standing body of independent experts which would strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council in regard to co-ordination and evaluation of programmes and the General Assembly's role in regard to the financial implications of those programmes. Membership of such a body could be the same as that of CPC. He suggested that joint meetings between the Advisory Committee and the proposed expert body would yield more fruitful results and expedite action.

18. As it would not be possible to resolve the complex problems at the current session, he supported the draft decision establishing an *ad hoc* working group to study the problems in depth and submit recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.

19. Mr. DIPP GOMEZ (Dominican Republic), noting that his delegation had co-sponsored the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1205), said that, because the United Nations system had expanded considerably, it was becoming increasingly urgent to co-ordinate programming and budgeting so as to avoid duplication and waste of resources. The draft decision was very pragmatic: it recommended that, instead of analysing the question at the current session, the Committee should establish a working group to study the question and report to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session. Commenting on the membership of the proposed *ad hoc* working group, he said that working groups should not be too large or too small and that he considered 15 an ideal number. He appealed to the representative of Guyana not to insist on increasing the membership. He hoped that the Fifth Committee would be able to adopt the draft decision.

20. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the procedure proposed in document A/C.5/L.1205 would enable the Committee to have before it, at the thirtieth session, a report on which it could base its discussion and decision on that important and repeatedly postponed question. Account should be taken of the views expressed

at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly and paragraph 1 (b) (i) of the draft decision should be amended accordingly. In connexion with paragraph 1 (b) (ii), consideration should be given to the views expressed by CPC. Certain documents, such as the statement made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee at the 1639th meeting of the Fifth Committee⁵ at the beginning of the session and the Advisory Committee's report on the form of presentation of the United Nations budget and the duration of the budget cycle,⁶ could also be made available to the proposed working group. According to paragraph 8 of that report, the Advisory Committee had assumed that Member States were not prepared to surrender their responsibility for determining the scope of the programmes or the size of the budget. The basic problem was the existence of a multitude of organs all of which claimed almost sovereign responsibility for the formulation and approval of programmes. In view of the Fifth Committee's past inability to comment on or change decisions taken in other committees he was pessimistic about the future.

21. As far as the size of the working group was concerned, his delegation had an open mind. The working group would, presumably, report directly to the Fifth Committee. Finally, he noted that the Advisory Committee had not commented on the Secretary-General's report (A/9816) on the item at the current session; the Committee might wish to deal with the matter similarly at the thirtieth session.

22. Mr. VAN DER GOOT (Netherlands) said that he had consulted with the sponsors of the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1205), who accepted the suggestion to increase to 18 the number of Member States mentioned in paragraph 1, and to insert at the end of that paragraph, after the words "General Assembly", the words "on the basis of equitable geographical distribution". They also accepted the Brazilian proposal to insert the words "twenty-eighth and" before "twenty-ninth" in subparagraph (b) (i) of the same paragraph. The Tanzanian representative's suggestion that there was much relevant documentation available to be consulted was indeed true but the sponsors were reluctant to list documents in a text which they had tried to keep as short as possible; he hoped the Tanzanian representative would accept the addition of the words "*inter alia* by providing relevant documentation" at the end of paragraph 3. The Secretariat could consult the records of the current session when compiling the documentation in question.

23. The suggestion by the representative of Guyana that the text would gain by being drafted on the lines of a resolution, with preambular paragraphs, was of undoubted value in itself. However, the sponsors had tried to produce a simple, non-controversial and balanced text and feared that the addition of a preambular paragraph might introduce a note of controversy. He hoped therefore that the representative of Guyana would not press his suggestion.

24. Mr. STOBY (Guyana) said that he appreciated the fact that the sponsors of the draft decision had agreed to increase the suggested composition of the *ad hoc* working group to 18. He hoped, incidentally, that the proposed

group would maintain close liaison, including even joint meetings, with the informal group mentioned in paragraph 1 (b) (ii) of the draft decision. He would not press his suggestion concerning preambular paragraphs and hoped that the proposal would be adopted without a vote.

25. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should adopt by consensus the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1205) as orally amended.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 83

Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (continued) (A/9609, A/9879, A/9914, A/C.5/L.1626, A/C.5/L.1627 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1652, A/C.5/L.1208)

26. Mr. SETHI (India), introducing the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/L.1208, said that the sponsors had consulted with the representatives of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund in an attempt to reach a just and equitable solution to the question of pensions for members of the Joint Inspection Unit. As the Unit had been established in 1966 and the question of pensions had been discussed in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions since 1967, the time had come to take action. The sponsors had sought to separate the pension question from the over-all evaluation of JIU's work which was scheduled for the thirty-first session of the General Assembly. Operative paragraphs 1 and 2 were closely patterned on the suggestions made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 5 and 6 of his note on that question (A/C.5/L.1627 and Corr.1).

27. The sponsors had decided to prepare a draft decision, instead of letting the Committee merely adopt the Secretary-General's note or the Advisory Committee's report (A/9914), in order to highlight the question and dissociate it from the extension of JIU's mandate. The studies referred to in the draft decision could be started immediately and the pension question could be settled before the evaluation of the Unit was undertaken in 1977.

28. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that he was not very happy with the proposal to extend pension coverage to members of the Joint Inspection Unit as that would be a step towards integrating the Inspectors within the United Nations staff. When the Unit was established the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies had been at pains to differentiate between the inspectors and staff members. Moreover, the future of JIU was to be discussed at the thirty-first session and there was no reason to prejudice that future by taking steps at the current session. The Advisory Committee had taken the correct approach in paragraph 5 of its report by not rejecting the possibility of extending pension coverage to members of JIU but stating that, when it had certain information, the Fifth Committee could determine whether to consider the question on its own merits at the thirtieth session or in the broader context of the evaluation of the work of the Unit at the thirty-first session.

⁵ Document A/C.5/L.1615 of 4 October 1974.

⁶ Document A/8739 of 10 July 1972.

29. The Committee should content itself with the Advisory Committee's recommendations. With regard to the term of office, he pointed out that the possibility of rotation after four years had been discussed. That question was important too, in view of its impact on pension participation and should be taken up at the thirty-first session. If the Committee wished to adopt the Advisory Committee's conclusions, as he felt it should, it would reserve its position on the merits of the proposal. If the draft decision was put to the vote his delegation would have to vote against it on the grounds that the consolidation of the inspectors' position at the present time would be inappropriate.

30. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta) said that his delegation had no objection to the draft decision, adoption of which would not mean that the right to pension should in fact be extended to inspectors. His delegation would reserve its position on the substance until the information to be provided by the Joint Staff Pension Board and the Secretary-General was before the Committee. There was much truth in what the representative of Brazil had said. Whatever decision was taken regarding the inspectors, would probably affect the status of the members of the International Civil Service Commission whenever that Commission was set up.

31. Turning to the text of the draft decision, he said that it should have an introductory paragraph stating that the Committee was making a recommendation to the General Assembly; otherwise it might appear that there was no need to refer the decision to the Assembly. The last phrase of operative paragraph 1, following the word "Fund", might be amended to read "and to make proposals, if necessary, amending the Regulations accordingly". As it now stood, the paragraph might imply that the Joint Staff Pension Board could amend the Regulations whereas it could only make recommendations to that effect to the General Assembly.

32. Mr. SETHI (India) said that he accepted the amendments suggested by the representative of Upper Volta. The absence of an introductory paragraph had been an oversight which he was sure the Secretary could correct. Referring to the comments made by the representative of Brazil, he pointed out that the sponsors had striven to make a distinction between pension coverage and the extension of JIU's mandate. Adoption of the draft decision would not prejudice the content of the reports by the Joint Staff Pension Board or by the Secretary-General. The question of rotation was a technical one which would be taken into account in both reports. Paragraphs 1 and 2 corresponded closely to the proposals made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 5 and 6 of his note (A/C.5/1627 and Corr.1). Although they were not identical with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee it should not be considered that they were not consistent with the recommendations. He could not withdraw the draft decision.

33. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) said that his delegation was somewhat perplexed by the draft decision. For, although it was called a draft decision it was in fact in the form of a draft resolution. In any event, his

delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and had reservations regarding the procedure that the Committee was now following.

34. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) suggested that, as there were two texts before the Committee, the Committee should take them in the order in which they had been presented. Accordingly it should vote first on the report of the Advisory Committee (A/9914) which predated the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1208) by five days.

35. After a procedural debate in which Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil), Mr. SETHI (India), Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria), Mr. RHODES (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta), Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) and Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) participated, the CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on a motion of priority as suggested by the representative of the Upper Volta.

The motion to give the draft decision (A/C.5/L.1208) priority over the report of the Advisory Committee (A/9914) was adopted by 55 votes to 7, with 9 abstentions.

36. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) pointed out that he had not participated in the vote as he had felt that it was contrary to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The draft decision (A/C.5/L.1208), as amended, was adopted by 57 votes to 2, with 17 abstentions.

37. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that, according to the decision taken by the General Assembly, the Joint Staff Pension Board was supposed to submit data on the geographical distribution of members of the Board and their alternates. That information had not been provided in the report before the Committee (A/9609), and he would therefore like to have it orally.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that, if the representative of the Soviet Union had no objection, the information would be supplied to him in writing.

39. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his request had not been made for his personal information. It was information which the General Assembly had decided should form part of the Board's report. He asked that the information be provided orally at a meeting of the Committee, and in writing as a text annexed to the Board's report.

40. Mr. STOTTLEMYER (United States of America) said that the Joint Staff Pension Board had provided all the information it was required to provide. The representative of the Soviet Union was asking for additional details which he did not think should be provided.

41. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representative of the Soviet Union might bring the matter up at a subsequent meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 81

Personnel questions (*continued*)* (A/C.5/L.1172):

(a) Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)* (A/9120 and Corr.1 and 2, A/9603 (chap. V, sect. D, paras. 479-486), A/9724, A/C.5/L.1170 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1192, A/C.5/L.1200/Rev.1, A/C.5/L.1203, A/C.5/L.1204; Economic and Social Council resolution 1857 (LVI))

42. Mr. GHERAB (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that the representative of Guyana had asked whether posts not included in the regular budget had been taken into account in calculating the numbers of Secretariat staff, and whether "staff in senior posts" included staff in the grades D-1 and D-2. The answer to the first question was that, while the Charter principle of geographical distribution applied to the Secretariat as a whole, the system of desirable ranges covered only professional and higher level staff in posts financed from the regular budget, including extrabudgetary posts such as Trust Fund posts. Only staff in posts with special language requirements and those appointed for mission service or technical co-operation projects were excluded. In reply to the second question, the expression "staff in senior posts" meant all staff members in grade D-1 and above.

43. The representative of Kenya had asked why recruitment to posts with special language requirements was limited to candidates whose mother tongue was an official language of the United Nations and had inquired whether the Organization could not train other candidates for such posts. The answer was that all staff appointed to "linguistic" posts, such as interpreters, translators and editors, had to pass an examination. In many cases, a successful candidate's mother tongue was an official language of the United Nations but that was not necessarily always so. There were notable exceptions which showed that some people could master a language given suitable instruction. However, the process took a long time and the necessary training could not be provided from the Secretariat's limited resources.

44. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago had asked whether the last two sentences of paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/9724 meant that the "regional reserve" was absorbed into the 10 per cent allowance above the medium of the desirable range. The purpose of the proposed modification of desirable ranges was not to alter the principles on which the system had been established, but rather to adapt it more closely to the requirements of the long-term recruitment plan. Thus, the regional reserve represented, in a sense, an addition to national quotas as an element in the determination of equitable geographical distribution. The proposal to introduce a more precisely defined desirable range was intended to build into the system the same degree of flexibility for each nationality, calculated from the median of the range. The proposed change would also introduce the regional reserve as an element in the population factor.

45. Finally, the representative of Guyana had asked whether age was an important factor in determining the grade of a candidate for appointment to a post in the

Secretariat. The practice of the Secretariat was to match the qualifications of the candidate with the specific requirements of the post. To the extent that experience could only be acquired over a period of time, age might be a factor, but it varied considerably from one candidate to another. Thus, staff members appointed during the previous year at the P-5 level ranged in age from 33 to 54, and at the D-1 level from 34 to 59, so that it was the candidate's over-all competence that determined his recruitment at a particular grade.

46. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that the sponsors of the draft decision under discussion (A/C.5/L.1200/Rev.1) accepted the second of the Soviet Union's amendments (A/C.5/L.1203) with a slight change; paragraph 2 (c) of the draft decision would thus read:

"(c) Bearing in mind the need for equitable geographical distribution, increased effort should be made to recruit a greater number of qualified women candidates for professional and senior-level posts".

The adverb "well" had been dropped in the interest of striking a balance between geography and qualifications. He thanked the representative of the Soviet Union for not insisting on his first and third amendments.

47. The representative of Guyana at the 1683rd meeting had proposed that the phrase "international civil service" in paragraph 2 (a) of the draft decision should be amended to read "international career civil service". He hoped that the representative of Guyana would not press the amendment, which the sponsors had felt unable to accept since they feared that it would upset the delicate balance of the draft. The sponsors' intention was the development of an international civil service, including career staff but not excluding fixed-term staff.

48. The sponsors agreed with the representative of Trinidad and Tobago that existing guidelines determining desirable ranges should be maintained, pending any new decision based on the report which the Secretary-General had been asked to make to the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. They therefore agreed to replace the words "should be preserved" at the end of the fourth sentence of paragraph 1 of the draft decision by the words "should be maintained at this time".

49. Their attitude to the first of the amendments proposed by the delegations of Colombia and Ecuador (A/C.5/L.1204) was thereby made clear. With regard to the second of those amendments, the sponsors felt that paragraph 2 (b) of the draft decision adequately reflected their concern at the lack of representation of certain Member States at the senior levels and their opposition to privileged status for any Member State or region. With regard to the third amendment, paragraph 4 of the draft decision referred only to the official languages of the United Nations. The sponsors were not against the concepts of linguistic diversity or language incentives, but they felt that professional competence and quality of work should also be taken into account in promotion, as the Fifth Committee had stated during the twenty-sixth session.

50. The Salary Review Committee had preferred a flat rate of language bonus but the modalities could well be left to

* Resumed from the 1683rd meeting.

the International Civil Service Commission when it is established. It must be realized that staff members whose mother tongue was not an official language had to know two foreign languages to gain the same advantage as those whose mother tongue was an official language; that was why the Salary Review Committee and the International Civil Service Advisory Board had found punitive and discriminatory elements in the language bonus system and the former had recommended that a staff member's mother tongue should in no case be counted in deciding his qualifications for language benefit, a concept with which the sponsors agreed. The inequalities might be reduced if training facilities were available to all staff members but that was not the case. It would be seen from table M in paragraph 91 of the Secretary-General's report to the twenty-eighth session on the composition of the Secretariat (A/9120 and Corr.1 and 2) that language requirements had been waived in the promotion of 28.3 per cent of staff having an official language as their mother tongue; that suggested that the regulations were difficult to apply

rigidly, and, indeed, the Secretary-General had specifically referred to the difficulties in paragraph 27 of his report to the twenty-ninth session (A/9724) and had asked for flexibility in the application of General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII). The sponsors thought that the Fifth Committee should support that request and had therefore accepted the suggestion of the representative of the Upper Volta at the 1682nd meeting, to amend the last sentence of the draft decision to read: "Accordingly, the Committee endorses the policy of flexibility followed by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the aforementioned resolution in respect of the promotion of staff members". He hoped that that formulation would also cover the oral amendment proposed by the representative of Canada.

51. He thanked the delegations, and particularly the representative of France, for their co-operation in devising the amendments to paragraph 4 of the draft decision.

The meeting rose at 11.15 p.m.

1687th meeting

Tuesday, 10 December 1974, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Costa P. CARANICAS (Greece).

A/C.5/SR.1687

AGENDA ITEM 81

Personnel questions (*continued*) (A/C.5/L.1172):

(a) Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/9120 and Corr.1 and 2, A/9603 (chap. V, sect. D, paras. 479-486), A/9724, A/C.5/L.1170 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1192, A/C.5/L.1200/Rev.1, A/C.5/L.1203, A/C.5/L.1204; Economic and Social Council resolution 1857 (LVI))

1. Mr. KELLER (United States of America), referring to the amendments (A/C.5/L.1192) to the draft resolution contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1857 (LVI), said that he wished to delete the last part of the third amendment in the hope that a consensus could be reached on those amendments.

2. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the word "equitable" had been translated incorrectly in the fourth preambular paragraph and in paragraph 1 of the Russian text of Council resolution 1857 (LVI).

3. He was pleased that the sponsors of the draft decision under consideration by the Committee (A/C.5/L.1200/Rev.1) had included the second of the amendments (A/C.5/L.1203) to that draft decision submitted by his delegation. He regretted that they had been unable to accept the other two amendments, which would have facilitated the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. His delegation would not press for a vote on its amendments, but it requested that a

separate vote should be taken on each of the subparagraphs of paragraph 2 of the draft decision.

4. Mr. POSSO (Ecuador), introducing on behalf of Colombia and Ecuador, amendments (A/C.5/L.1204) to the draft decision, emphasized that the views of the Latin American countries had not been taken into account by the sponsors of the draft decision. In a spirit of compromise, the sponsors of the amendments would not insist on their first amendment, since the question could be resolved by accepting the proposal of the representative of Trinidad and Tobago at the 1683rd meeting. However, they considered that their second amendment was of great importance: the developing countries were inadequately represented in the senior categories of the Secretariat, which were currently reserved for candidates of the great Powers. That vestige of colonialism was unacceptable, and his delegation would therefore insist on the second amendment. The third amendment was based on the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII). The sponsors considered that it was of great importance to maintain the rule concerning knowledge of a second language, since there was currently a danger of one language becoming excessively predominant. The rule should be applied flexibly only in truly exceptional cases.

5. Mr. VARGAS (Costa Rica) said that, with the agreement of the sponsors of the amendments in document A/C.5/L.1204, his delegation proposed the deletion of the word "individual" in the text of the third amendment, which would then be more flexible and more widely acceptable.