



Chairman: Mr. Motoo OGISO (Japan).

**AGENDA ITEM 81**

**Personnel questions (concluded):\***

- (a) **Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (concluded);\***
- (b) **Other personnel questions: report of the Secretary-General (concluded)\***

*Draft report of the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.25)*

1. Mr. PASHKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (Rapporteur) introduced the draft report (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.25).
2. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the draft report.

*It was so decided.*

**AGENDA ITEM 73**

**Budget estimates for the financial year 1973 (continued) (for the earlier documentation, see 1541st meeting; A/8708/Add.17 and 22, A/C.5/1490 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1100, A/C.5/L.1102 to 1104, A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.23 and 26)**

*First reading (continued)*

**SECTION 7. CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAJOR MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES (A/8706, A/8708 AND CORR.1)**

**OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND RENTAL OF OFFICE SPACE AT HEADQUARTERS (A/8708/ADD.17, A/C.5/1458 AND CORR.1 AND ADD.1, A/C.5/1462, A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26)**

**PROGRAMME OF MAJOR MAINTENANCE OF AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA AND EXTENSION OF THE PALAIS DES NATIONS (A/8708/ADD.6, A/C.5/1444, A/C.5/1445)**

**UNITED NATIONS ACCOMMODATION IN ADDIS ABABA, BANGKOK AND SANTIAGO, CHILE (A/8708/ADD.11, A/C.5/1461)**

3. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take up in first reading section 7 of the budget estimates for 1973 and to consider in that connexion the related questions of office accommodation and rental of office space. In his initial estimates (A/8706) the Secretary-General had requested an amount of \$14,875,400 for section 7. In its first report (A/8708 and Corr.1) the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended an appropriation of \$12,965,400, or a reduction of \$1,910,000 in the Secretary-General's estimate. In its report on the programme for major maintenance of and improvements to the Palais des Nations, Geneva (A/8708/Add.6), the Advisory Committee had concurred with a further reduction of \$43,000 which had been proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on the subject (A/C.5/1444). As indicated by the Advisory Committee in its report on United Nations accommodation in Addis Ababa, Bangkok and Santiago, Chile (A/8708/Add.11), more up-to-date projections of expenditure would be reflected in the revised estimates, which the Fifth Committee would take up at a later stage. For the first reading, the total amount recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 7 for 1973 was thus \$12,922,400.

4. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), dealing with the various chapters of section 7 individually, noted that chapter I provided for amortization of the Headquarters construction loan; the usual provision of \$2,500,000 had been made in accordance with the normal schedule of payments.

5. Chapter II dealt with the United Nations Office at Geneva. Owing to a further revision in January 1972 in the United Nations accounting rate of exchange between the Swiss franc and the United States dollar, an additional three quarters of a million dollars would be required (A/C.5/1445). Accordingly, the schedule for implementing the General Assembly decisions would have to be revised; that would not affect the 1973 estimates, but would affect the period 1974-1984. Any further changes in the relationship of the Swiss franc to the United States dollar could not be ruled out and the Advisory Committee had felt it would be premature to revise the schedule of budgetary payments now; that could be done in 1973. The amount of \$4.9 million provided for under chapter II would thus remain unchanged. The Advisory Committee had been somewhat uneasy to see that at the end of July 1972 there was still a considerable amount of work for which contracts had not been concluded, as stated in annex I to document A/C.5/1445. The Advisory Committee had been assured that the \$4 million re-

\* Resumed from the 1549th meeting.

ferred to in that annex had been provided as a contingency reserve against any possible future increase in prices.

6. Chapters III, IV and V dealt with construction projects at Santiago, Chile, Bangkok and Addis Ababa. The Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$1.9 million because it was clear that the amount initially requested would not be required in 1973 in view of delays in starting the project and in the construction programme. The Secretary-General had subsequently submitted a report (A/C.5/1461) showing that even the reduced amount recommended by the Advisory Committee would not be required. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee had suggested, in document A/8708/Add.11, that the Secretary-General should review the requirements and reflect his findings in the revised estimates for 1973. That had now been done and the Fifth Committee would see, when it took up the revised estimates, that the Secretary-General had proposed a further reduction of \$1.3 million for the three projects at Santiago, Bangkok and Addis Ababa.

7. Chapter VI made provision for a variety of projects at Headquarters. The Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$10,000 which it had been proposed should be used to construct a transparent noise barrier in the General Assembly hall. The Advisory Committee had wondered whether that would really be conducive to improving the conduct of business or be a convenience to representatives.

8. Chapter VII made provision for alteration, improvement and major maintenance of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Secretary-General had submitted a report on that subject in document A/C.5/1444, and the Advisory Committee's comments on it were to be found in document A/8708/Add.6.

9. In its first report (A/8708 and Corr.1) the Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$1,910,000 in the Secretary-General's initial estimates for section 7, and in document A/8708/Add.6 it had recommended a further reduction of \$43,000 because of subsequent developments. Thus, the total amount recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 7 for 1973 was \$12,922,400. That did not reflect the further reduction of \$1.3 million recommended by the Secretary-General in the revised estimates.

10. Turning to the question of the problem of space in general, he noted that the Secretary-General had reported in documents A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 on the situation with regard to office accommodation in all cities in which the United Nations maintained major offices. The question of rental of office space at Headquarters had been discussed in document A/C.5/1462, in which the Secretary-General had suggested that most of the Division of Human Rights should be transferred to Geneva in 1973, and had requested additional appropriations to cover the cost of the transfer, and the rental of office space at New York for 75 to 100 staff. The Advisory Committee had commented on those two reports in document A/8708/Add.17.

11. The Advisory Committee had taken note of the present unsatisfactory situation at Headquarters and of the Secretary-General's view that the possibilities for transferring staff away from New York before 1975 were extremely limited. In paragraphs 5 and 6 of document A/8708/Add.17 the Advisory Committee had been somewhat critical of the lack of planning and foresight in the allocation of space in the new office building of the United Nations Office at Geneva, in particular the decision to move the European office of UNICEF from Paris to the new building. In paragraphs 8 and 9, the Advisory Committee pointed out some inconsistencies in some of the Secretary-General's conclusions, and the fact that the Secretary-General had dealt only marginally with some aspects of the problem which the General Assembly had requested him to look into. The Advisory Committee had concluded in paragraph 10 that the General Assembly was not in a position at the present time to resolve the problem of office accommodation at Headquarters on a long-term basis. It had, however, recommended two possible means of providing partial relief, namely relocating staff from New York to Geneva and rationalizing the situation in New York.

12. In connexion with the relocation of staff, the Advisory Committee had agreed with the Secretary-General that there would be some advantage in transferring most of the staff of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva in 1973. The Advisory Committee had also endorsed the Secretary-General's intention to keep under review the possibilities for additional transfers, particularly if the European office of UNICEF were to move out of the United Nations Office at Geneva as other accommodation became available in order to make way for other United Nations units that might have a better claim, on functional grounds, to be located in the buildings of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Advisory Committee also felt that it would be reasonable for the Secretary-General to take a decision now on the space which would become available in the present ILO building when it was vacated in 1975, that is, when the new ILO building would be ready.

13. The situation in New York could be rationalized or consolidated to some extent. The Advisory Committee had recognized in paragraphs 16 to 26 of document A/8708/Add.17 that unless there was a drastic change in the present policy there would be a continuing need to accommodate large numbers of staff outside the Secretariat building in New York. The first three alternatives suggested by the Secretary-General were not very realistic; they assumed that a sizable amount of capital would be available either to construct new premises at the south or north side of the Headquarters site or to make a capital investment in new premises. The fourth alternative was that the United Nations should participate in a new building which the United Nations Development Corporation was to construct on the west side of First Avenue at 44th Street, possibly connected with the present Secretariat building. There was a possibility of either a straight rental of premises in that proposed building, or else rental with option to buy later. The Advisory Committee had concluded that the

Secretary-General might be authorized to enter into the rental option, but he could also look into the advantages of rental with option to purchase later and report to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session. The Advisory Committee felt that there was an obvious advantage to the rental with option to purchase, since the base rental charge would not be subject to escalation, there would be no need for an initial capital payment and, should the Organization in the future wish to exercise its option to buy, the capital contribution required would take account of rental payments already made. But the details should be looked into very carefully.

14. Transferring the bulk of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva and the renting of extra office space in New York would require an additional appropriation of just over \$450,000; that amount would affect five sections of the budget, but not section 7.

15. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) recalled that the basic problem of office space at Headquarters had been much discussed in the past and that the General Assembly had, at its twenty-fourth session, approved construction of a new building at the south side of the Headquarters site; but, since it had proved impossible to complete the financial arrangements, the General Assembly had, at its twenty-sixth session, requested the Secretary-General to make a further detailed report. The Secretary-General had appointed a high-level interdepartmental working group, consisting of the heads of departments and senior representatives of administrative services and of UNDP and UNICEF, to assist him; the working group had also maintained top-level consultation with the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna and the regional economic commissions. The report prepared by that working group was contained in document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, and paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 contained the main conclusions.

16. One conclusion was that, in considering the optimum distribution of existing functions and the desirability of relocating them, maximum use should be made of existing or projected conference facilities in New York, Geneva and Vienna; that did not refer to any new functions that might be decided by the General Assembly in the future. Another conclusion was that the need for additional space at Headquarters could be eliminated only by transferring about 1,500 staff (including staff of UNDP and UNICEF) away from New York. That would mean a major change in the nature and method of direction and operation of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General felt that such a major change and dispersal of staff would seriously affect the Secretariat's performance and would be counter-productive. The Secretary-General had also concluded that transferring a large number of staff to a location where there were no conference, general or administrative services available would make it necessary to provide such services at considerable additional expense at the new location. That problem had been raised recently in connexion with the financial implications of establishing the environment secretariat

at Nairobi, where there was a lack of support facilities. Moreover, dispersing the existing elements of the Secretariat among different locations would lead to increased costs and the loss of effective direction and control by the Secretary-General.

17. The Secretary-General had concluded that the most practical way of solving the problem would be to contain growth at Headquarters, while endeavouring to locate new activities outside of New York. The first step in that direction would be to transfer some staff from Headquarters in the near future and to review the possibilities of additional transfers later in the light of changing circumstances and new developments. The number of transfers would depend on the annual growth of the Secretariat, which had been postulated at approximately 2.5 per cent, or 150 to 175 new staff members every year; transferring that number of staff members each year would keep the situation in New York static.

18. Turning to the current situation at Headquarters, he noted that there were over 1,300 United Nations, UNDP and UNICEF staff working in rented premises in New York in five separate office buildings, the rental and operating costs of which amounted to approximately \$2.4 million per year, plus the additional costs of operating from so many different locations. There was also an overload of almost 300 staff within the Secretariat building which had resulted in overcrowding and the use of substandard space for office accommodation.

19. In order to reduce costs and increase efficiency, it would be most desirable to place all staff who could not be accommodated in the Secretariat building, i.e. 1,600 staff members, in one single outside building as near as possible to Headquarters. Even there, provision would have to be made for minimal growth, although an attempt should be made to keep the members static by transferring any new staff members outside New York, as he had already suggested. Annex II of document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2 gave the projected number of staff by 1980, if a minimum growth rate was assumed. UNDP, funded partly from voluntary contributions, would tend to increase the number of its staff more rapidly. If a 2.5 per cent growth rate was assumed, the number of Secretariat members requiring office space would increase from 1,561 in 1972 to 1,855 by 1980.

20. He stressed that the space problem could be kept within bounds, and the amount of space required in New York could be kept to a reasonable level by means of limited, progressive annual transfers of existing functions out of New York and by establishing new activities in other cities.

21. The city most frequently mentioned as a reception area for new activities and the transfer of existing ones from New York was Geneva. Geneva was a major international centre with an established United Nations conference and administrative capability, and the United Nations was completing expanded conference and office facilities there. It was often assumed that

Geneva could accept an unlimited number of Secretariat staff; but that was not true. Since the Geneva buildings had been planned it had proved necessary to provide space for a number of unforeseen activities and there would therefore remain only a little unallocated space in 1973 in the premises of the Palais at Geneva. The Secretary-General proposed, subject to approval by the General Assembly, to transfer the Division of Human Rights to occupy that space. Additional office space would become available in Geneva when the new ILO building was completed in 1975, and the buildings now occupied by GATT would provide space for about 175 persons when the GATT staff moved to part of the old ILO building. If the Secretary-General wished to take advantage of the situation, he must indicate by the end of 1972 his intentions with regard to the office space to become available by 1975. He recommended that the United Nations should act now to obtain the temporary buildings on the grounds of the United Nations Office at Geneva now occupied by GATT; if there was no urgent need for that space, it could always be used by the International Trade Centre, thus releasing less convenient rented premises which the Centre currently occupied. He also recommended that the United Nations should exercise its option to reserve the offices available in the old ILO building for future use. Given the possibility of the transfer of additional staff to Geneva and the history of the growth of United Nations activities in Geneva, such action would seem to be fully justified. Even if the old ILO premises were not needed by the United Nations in 1975, they could be released for use by other organizations or even delegations, several of which had already approached the Director-General of the European Office for assistance in obtaining space. Moreover, a commitment by the United Nations to reserve that space would not entail any immediate financial obligation. Some space might also be available in Geneva on a short-term basis, for two or at the most four years, in the new ILO building. Those were the physical possibilities for locating additional staff in Geneva; but the Secretary-General was also aware of the reservations of the Government of Switzerland concerning further substantial increases in the international community in Geneva. The Swiss authorities had indicated that, because of shortages in housing, schooling and other facilities, they would be reluctant to see any large influx of international staff. It had been suggested that any major expansion in the United Nations activities there should take place in the environs of Geneva rather than in the Canton itself. He believed that the proposals he had outlined with regard to a gradual transfer of staff would not be in conflict with the position taken by the Swiss authorities.

22. Annex VI of document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2 described the situation in Vienna where the Austrian Government and the municipal authorities were constructing new offices and conference space on the Donaupark site to accommodate UNIDO and IAEA, completion being scheduled for 1977. The generosity of the Austrian Government in that connexion had been much appreciated by the United Nations. The Austrian Government had, moreover, indicated that it would

be willing to consider the transfer of additional United Nations units to the Vienna area from 1973 onwards.

23. There would also be some spare office space for about 200 or 300 staff when the new construction in Addis Ababa and Bangkok was completed in 1975. However, since that capacity had been provided specifically in order to accommodate the future needs of the regional economic commissions, it could only be used on a temporary basis to accommodate other units of the Secretariat and would not be a real solution to the United Nations problem.

24. In seeking premises for United Nations activities the attitude of the host Government towards a large influx of international staff should always be borne in mind, in view of the "common premises" policy advocated by the General Assembly. The Assembly's reaction to the suggestions for relocation made in the Secretary-General's report should enable him to give further consideration to the possible relocation of other Headquarters activities in the future.

25. In contemplating the transfer of staff away from Headquarters, there were a number of practical, human and financial considerations to be borne in mind: the cost of moving a permanent staff member and his family to a new duty station; the possibility of having to move some staff back to Headquarters temporarily in order to attend or service meetings there—for instance, during the General Assembly; the possibilities of finding office space and living and educational facilities for staff members in new locations; the relative movement of rates of exchange and cost-of-living indices between the new duty station and New York; and the cost of renting space in other locations where no rent-free space was available.

26. From its study, the Secretariat had concluded that there would continue to be a need for space in New York beyond what could be provided in the existing United Nations buildings and what could be vacated by the transfer of staff to other duty stations. The ideal solution would be to obtain the extra space required in a single building as near as possible to the Secretariat building. There were two possible ways of achieving that end: either to construct a new building on the United Nations site or to buy or rent a building, or space in a building, preferably adjacent to the United Nations site. The possibilities and costs of constructing a new building on the Headquarters site were dealt with in paragraphs 49 to 51 of document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2. There had been no change in the prospects for construction at the south end of the Headquarters site. Construction of a new building at the north end of the site would cost some \$50 million and, assuming that authorization was given immediately, could be completed by late 1976. However, the Secretariat saw no prospect of expenditure of that order being authorized at the present time.

27. The second possibility of providing additional office space at Headquarters was offered by the project of the United Nations Development Corporation, re-

ferred to in paragraphs 54 to 65 of the same document, to construct a building at the corner of East 44th Street and First Avenue. That project had several advantages: propinquity; construction by a non-profit corporation with consequent exemption from real estate taxes; construction with United Nations requirements primarily in mind; and various rental or conditional purchase options under which eventual ownership of a portion of the building and land might be acquired by the United Nations. Those options were three in number. Firstly, the United Nations could make a capital grant of \$21.5 million to the Corporation, receiving in exchange ownership of 250,000 gross square feet of rent-free office space. Secondly, the United Nations could enter into a straight rental arrangement at a guaranteed rate of a maximum of \$8.14 per square foot; that rate would not be subject to the usual price rises of the commercial market. Thirdly, it was possible to conclude a rental arrangement with a conditional option to purchase under which a portion of the rental payments would be credited against purchase and the United Nations could, if it so chose, put up the balance of the \$21.5 million capital investment, with allowance for interest, at any time. That option was subject to the approval of municipal and governmental authorities, which were currently giving the matter close consideration. It should be pointed out that the 250,000 square feet of space which could be obtained in the new building would take care of the immediate outside office space requirements of the United Nations, UNDP and UNICEF, but would leave only a small margin for expansion. The amount of space available to the Secretariat would be increased to the extent that delegations, to which space would also be offered, did not choose to take up that offer.

28. The Secretary-General hoped that the General Assembly would take the necessary action to enable him to rent additional office space in New York on a short-term basis; to arrange the transfer of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva in 1973 and the subsequent transfer of other Headquarters staff to Geneva, as suggested in paragraph 28 (b) of document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2; to confirm the United Nations option on the available part of the premises to be vacated by the ILO and GATT in Geneva—action which must be taken by 31 December 1972; and to conclude an agreement with the United Nations Development Corporation to rent space in the new building to be erected opposite the Headquarters site on the best terms that could be negotiated, including the possibility of taking out a conditional purchase option if that proved to be in the best interests of the United Nations.

29. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) emphasized the complex nature of the item under consideration and the difficulties of giving it the in-depth consideration which it warranted during the short time remaining to the Committee at its current session. Furthermore, as was pointed out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8708/Add.17), the Secretary-General, in document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, had omitted to deal with some of the aspects of office accommodation at Headquarters which he had been

requested to study by General Assembly resolutions 2618 (XXIV) and 2895 (XXVI), particularly the possibility of locating new programmes in cities other than those having established United Nations offices. Because of that omission, the substantial financial implications involved and the shortage of time, his delegation believed that the best solution would be to defer consideration of the item until the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, as proposed in the text of the paragraph (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26) it had submitted for inclusion in the Committee's report; the first sentence of that text should be amended so as to replace the word "territories" by the word "cities". He hoped that that proposal, which would enable the General Assembly to consider the question carefully and the Secretary-General to report on the matters not covered by document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, could be adopted by consensus. In the meantime, his delegation agreed to the suggestion concerning the transfer to Geneva in 1973 of the bulk of the Division of Human Rights and the renting of additional office space in New York for some 75 to 100 staff in order to meet short-term needs.

30. With regard to the location of United Nations offices in cities other than those in which such offices were already established, he recalled that the Second Committee had recently adopted a draft resolution, with only one negative vote, calling for the establishment of the environment secretariat at Nairobi. He had no doubt that, in adopting that draft resolution, the members of the Second Committee had weighed carefully all aspects of the matter, including both economic, practical and human considerations and the need to decentralize and universalize the United Nations by establishing the headquarters of some United Nations organs in the developing countries.

31. Mr. JIMENEZ (Philippines), referring to the question of accommodation for the staff of the European office of UNICEF in the new United Nations building at Geneva, said that, in the view of his delegation, the relocation of the UNICEF office in that building was perfectly in order and fully in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57 (I), paragraph 4 (a) of which stated that staff and facilities required for the administration of the Fund should be provided to the Executive Board by the Secretary-General and that the Fund could also utilize such staff, equipment and records as might be made available by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration during the period of its existence. UNICEF was a subsidiary body of the United Nations and should not be considered as a separate, unrelated or isolated organization. Moreover, the location of the European office of UNICEF in the new United Nations building at Geneva placed it in premises which already housed the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Consequently, it would facilitate the effective co-ordination of UNICEF operations with those organizations, with which UNICEF was required to maintain very close working relations. His delegation was therefore strongly opposed to the suggestion in paragraph 6 of the report of the Advisory

Committee (A/8708/Add.17) that the Secretary-General should review with the Executive Director of UNICEF the decision to accommodate UNICEF in the new office building at the Palais. The ostensible reason for the Advisory Committee's suggestion was that UNICEF was not included in the United Nations regular budget. However, UNICEF was an integral part of the United Nations family of organizations which was called upon to extend effective and fruitful assistance to the developing countries and should not be denied the facilities and accommodation stipulated in General Assembly resolution 57 (I). It would be unfair and discriminatory to penalize an agency which did much useful work merely because it raised its own funds out of voluntary contributions. If UNICEF was allowed to remain in the new United Nations building, it would be able to make substantial savings on office rentals and could apply those additional resources to operational activities aimed at assisting needy children, mothers and youth in the developing countries. Moreover, to eject UNICEF from the new Geneva building when it was already installed could have serious adverse repercussions on the voluntary contributions which were among the principal sources of UNICEF's income. For all those reasons, his delegation was strongly opposed to the Advisory Committee's suggestion that UNICEF's European office should be relocated at another site in Geneva.

32. Mr. NAUDY (France) observed that the issue before the Committee went beyond administrative and budgetary considerations to touch upon problems of principle. It was regrettable that issues of such importance should have been neglected until the eleventh hour.

33. The reasons which had led to the adoption of resolutions 2895 (XXVI) and 2618 (XXIV)—and particularly paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the latter—were still valid. They were somewhat similar to the reasons advanced for the reduction of the United States assessment: it was not fitting that a universal political organization should be exclusively concentrated in the territory, or should rely too heavily on the financial support, of a single State. That was particularly so if the local conditions were open to criticism. There should be some degree of decentralization, with services and units being distributed between New York and other suitable locations, including the developing countries. The Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2) was a genuine attempt to comply with the terms of resolution 2895 (XXVI). The French delegation took a favourable view of the statements in paragraph 5 of the report, particularly those in subparagraphs (b), (c) and (d). However, as the Advisory Committee had pointed out, the Secretary-General had not pursued the inquiries requested of him in resolution 2618 (XXIV) far enough. Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8708/Add.17) were particularly pertinent in that connexion. The situation at Geneva should be considered with special attention because it was there that the second largest United Nations establishment was situated. Given the considerable financial investment—some \$32 million—in that establishment, the French

delegation considered that the facilities available should be used and approved the proposal to transfer the Division of Human Rights to Geneva. It regretted the absence of specific proposals for further transfers, over and above the proposed movement of 100 members of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Also to be regretted was the installation in the Palais des Nations of UNICEF staff, who were occupying office space which should have been reserved for United Nations staff members. It was obvious from paragraph 25 of the Advisory Committee's report that the utilization of that space for United Nations staff would have resulted in economies.

34. The French delegation was somewhat reluctant to support the recommendation in paragraph 23 of the Advisory Committee's report regarding participation in the United Nations Development Corporation project. In the first place, the suggestion was somewhat vague. On what basis, for how long and under what conditions was the Organization to participate in the project without any commitment to buy space? Secondly, how could a rental agreement with the Corporation be negotiated without a commitment to purchase when the rental rate itself inevitably reflected that option? In any case, the rental level indicated in paragraph 58 of the Secretary-General's report was not especially advantageous. The question whether the Organization had the financial resources to commit itself to participation in the project had not been examined. Participation in such uncertain circumstances would be to commit the Organization to a course which it could not easily abandon and whose outcome could not be foreseen with any precision. It could lead to the extension of United Nations installations in New York, in contradiction with the guideline that new programmes and their secretariats should be located outside that city (A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 5 (c)). Accordingly, a decision during the current session would be premature. There should be a very thorough study of the financial aspects of rental and purchasing arrangements. The proposal should be compared with the 1969 financial package to determine whether it was more or less satisfactory. It was the duty of the host country to take the necessary steps to facilitate the functioning of the Secretariat. The host country derived benefits in the areas of finance, culture and prestige from the United Nations presence and could be expected to give something in exchange. The Committee had rejected a proposal on the grounds that it did not know what future action UNDP proposed regarding the United Nations staff college. The same uncertainty prevailed with regard to the issues now before the Committee. Why, therefore, should it do otherwise than it had done in other cases? As the Advisory Committee rightly pointed out in paragraph 10 of its report, the Assembly was not in a position to take such decisions as would resolve on a long-term basis the space difficulties at Headquarters. The Cuban proposal (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26) was in line with the views of the French delegation with regard to the lacunae in the Secretary-General's report and he could therefore support it. The French delegation could also accept, in principle, the proposal that the Division of Human Rights should be transferred to Geneva.

Similarly, he had been interested to hear the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management regarding steps to be taken with a view to the transfer of other staff members to Geneva.

35. Mr. CLELAND (Ghana) recalled that the Organization's acute accommodation problem would have been solved in 1968 by the construction of an extension adjacent to Headquarters had the United States Congress been in a position to appropriate the \$20 million which had been its share of the related financial package. The lack of office space and the resulting problems had led to the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 2618 (XXIV), which had requested the Secretary-General to study the possibility of relocating certain units of the Secretariat away from Headquarters and authorized him to initiate a fuller study of the optimum distribution of Secretariat functions between Headquarters, Geneva and any other appropriate location. It was evident from the Secretary-General's report that the current situation with regard to the accommodation of the staff in New York was far from satisfactory. The Headquarters complex was accommodating some 300 staff members above its immediate capacity. Such a situation imposed health and other hazards. To meet the long-term needs, the Secretary-General had examined the possibility of relieving that pressure by transferring some staff to other locations where there were major United Nations offices. That study had disclosed that the major offices in Bangkok, Addis Ababa, Santiago, Chile, and Vienna had been built to cater for immediate requirements so that their capacity to absorb additional staff was only marginal. The next location which offered any real possibility for absorbing significant additional staff was the almost completed extension to the Palais des Nations, Geneva. That possibility had apparently been hamstrung by the recent transfer of UNICEF's European office from Paris to Geneva and by the need to provide additional space for existing units, the establishment of a new section and the vacation of new premises. The Secretary-General had recommended the transfer of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva by the end of 1973 and the transfer in subsequent years of at least 100 posts in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Such transfers created human problems—the disruption of schooling arrangements, the termination of lease agreements and personal adjustments to new situations. In the light of those considerations, the Ghanaian delegation would have preferred a phased approach to the problem to ease the difficulties of the staff affected. If it was considered absolutely essential to relocate the Division of Human Rights, sympathetic consideration should be given to the adoption of a more flexible time-table.

36. To consolidate the overcrowded and scattered staff in New York, it was proposed that consideration should be given to participation in the United Nations Development Corporation project. There was an option in the Corporation's proposal which would allow the United Nations to utilize rental payments towards the acquisition of an equity value in the project. The Ghanaian delegation considered that offer attractive and, provided there was a consensus, would be pre-

pared to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into an early agreement with the Corporation on the lines set out in paragraph 22 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8708/Add.17). The scattering of staff, overcrowding, additional cost in messenger services, loss of man-hours through commuting between building complexes for consultation must be replaced by consolidation, which would lead to greater efficiency. For those reasons, his delegation would find no difficulty in accepting the proposed transfer of the Division of Human Rights from New York to Geneva and the relocation of staff members in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. His delegation also favoured the offer of participation in the United Nations Development Corporation project, in respect of which the Secretary-General sought authority to initiate negotiations to investigate the option offer and report to the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Not to authorize the Secretary-General to proceed might jeopardize the negotiation of an option. If the Fifth Committee was too cautious it might realize too late that no space was left in the complex open to negotiation.

37. Mr. TYSON (United States of America) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1458 and Corr. 1 and 2) set forth the Organization's space problems lucidly. It was not the Secretary-General's fault that it contained no complete solutions; none existed. The current overcrowding of the Secretariat building demanded remedial action. The inefficiencies of the current space arrangement were enormous and unacceptable. Even so, they were better than some alternatives which had been proposed. He was referring specifically to helter-skelter dispersal, which could make it impossible for the United Nations to carry on its activities effectively.

38. In paragraph 5 of his report, the Secretary-General had indicated the main considerations to be taken into account in relocating staff. It was recognized therein that the main organs of the United Nations would continue to meet in New York on a regular basis, and it followed that the central establishment of the Secretariat must be located in that city. Reviewing the remaining considerations cited in paragraph 5, he said that the United States delegation was prepared to accept them as general guidelines. Yet, there were no specific suggestions for following the third guideline, namely, that new programmes should be located away from New York. Precisely where might such programmes be located? What would be the cost in efficiency and, especially, in dollars? As yet there was no place available for the location away from New York of anything but a small number of people, such as the staff of the Division of Human Rights. If that particular guideline was to be followed, therefore, well-reasoned answers were needed to questions such as how, where, when and at what cost in effectiveness and money it could be applied. The mere statement of a principle did not solve the problem. The Organization was faced with a need, whose remedy could not be deferred beyond the current session, to approve arrangements for office space in New York for units already in existence there. The problem was not

theoretical but real. The United States delegation shared the regret of others that the southward expansion project must be considered a dead issue. That reality must be accepted and other solutions found.

39. Annex III of the Secretary-General's report indicated that the Organization had entered into 20 separate leases for office space in six buildings and three for warehouse space at an annual cost of some \$2.4 million. There were also individual added costs—that for telephone lines alone being over \$61,000. Three alternatives were listed in paragraph 7 of the report. The first, continued rental of scattered commercial space, was the least desirable over the long run. The second, construction adjacent to Headquarters, might well be best, except for the immediate cost factor. The General Assembly could not be expected at the current juncture to approve construction of a costly new building in view of the Organization's financial situation. Accordingly, the third alternative—the United Nations Development Corporation project—was the most practicable, and his delegation endorsed it. That project would permit all office space currently rented, including that occupied by UNDP and UNICEF, to be consolidated in one building, closer to Headquarters than any existing rented space. Occupancy of the new space would cost no more, and in all likelihood less, than the current leases; cost increases would relate only to actual services and would not be subject to fluctuating space rental rates, which had been rising over the years. The interior of the new building could be designed to United Nations specifications and its construction would be of superior quality. It would contain a hotel convenient for representatives, parking space and accommodation for permanent delegations. A secure weather-proof link with Headquarters could also be constructed.

40. The Organization could buy the space it required in the project for an initial payment of \$21.5 million and pay no rent in the future. On the other hand, it could rent the required space for some \$2 million per year for as long as 50 years, with no rental charge thereafter. One intermediate possibility was that of renting the space with an option to purchase. He emphasized that it was an option. It had been confirmed that construction of the project would go ahead, whether the United Nations participated or not, and would start in 1973. If the United Nations was to obtain the space it needed, therefore, a decision was required at the current session. In addition to the interest in the project expressed by the Secretary-General in his report, he noted the statement in paragraph 21 of the Advisory Committee's report, that should the Assembly decide in favour of an agreement with the United Nations Development Corporation the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNICEF would strongly recommend to their governing bodies that they should make the necessary parallel commitments. In paragraph 23 of its report, the Advisory Committee had suggested that the Secretary-General might be authorized to negotiate a rental agreement with the Corporation, without commitment to acquisition, and to report to the Assembly on the possibility of securing eventual ownership by an option to buy or other means.

The United States delegation agreed with that suggestion and proposed that the Fifth Committee should approve it and authorize the Secretary-General to negotiate a rental agreement with the Corporation on the conditions mentioned in the Advisory Committee's report.

41. As the Fifth Committee had no time to debate all the material in the various reports before it, he would simply express his delegation's support of the Advisory Committee's report. He would not support the proposal of the representative of Cuba.

42. Mr. HATCHETT GUTIÉRREZ (Mexico) expressed support of the Cuban proposal to defer consideration of the current item, which would allow a decision to be taken on the basis of all the information requested in resolution 2618 (XXIV). The Mexican delegation also supported the proposal to transfer the Division of Human Rights and certain staff members of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to Geneva. It could agree to the rental of additional accommodation for between 75 and 100 staff in 1973, as proposed in paragraph 25 of the Advisory Committee's report. It noted the financial implications of those proposals, which were stated in paragraph 26 of the same document.

43. Mr. FAURA (Peru) observed that, quite apart from the extreme complexity of the issues before the Committee, there was insufficient information on which to base a decision. A question of such magnitude required the most careful study, and he therefore supported the Cuban proposal. The Peruvian delegation agreed, in particular, with the comments by the representative of France in connexion with that proposal. The more careful the consideration of the issues, the better would be their final solution.

44. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the proposal made by the representative of Cuba that the item under discussion should be postponed until the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. His position was based on his recognition of the need for maximum economy, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions, in the work on the construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance of the United Nations Office at Geneva and the new building in Bangkok. The Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2) and the Advisory Committee's comments on it (A/8708/Add.17) showed clearly that the proposal with regard to the premises at Geneva and Bangkok had not been worked out in enough detail.

45. His delegation acknowledged the truth of the Secretary-General's statement that the Secretariat building at Headquarters was overcrowded and that that interfered with the efficient performance of the Secretariat. He pointed out, however, that the present situation was the result of an excessive increase in the number of staff, to which his delegation had frequently drawn attention in the past, and of excessive centralization in New York.



46. He could not accept the Secretary-General's arguments in his report regarding the effect on the efficiency of the Secretariat's work of transferring staff away from New York. He felt that transferring a considerable number of staff would not have a negative effect but would rather increase efficiency in the work of the Secretariat.

47. Document A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2 indicated that the Palais des Nations was used by a number of services, including the European office of UNICEF, UNITAR, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, and the Centre for Economic and Social Information. That was incorrect use of premises built with the use of funds from the regular budget, under which nearly \$35 million had been appropriated for the new building. The Palais des Nations should be used first and foremost to accommodate the divisions of the Secretariat servicing the main organs of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's proposal to transfer to Geneva the Division of Human Rights, in which 75 staff members were employed, was quite inadequate. Furthermore, the Secretary-General proposed to increase expenditure on rented premises in New York. The United States, after succeeding in reducing its contribution under the regular budget to 25 per cent, supported the Secretary-General's proposal. The USSR delegation, for its part, was quite unable to agree to it.

48. Neither could it therefore support the Advisory Committee's recommendations set forth in paragraph 23 of document A/8708/Add.17. Since there was no time to deal in greater detail with the substance of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on office accommodation at Headquarters, his delegation considered that the Cuban proposal (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26) was well justified and deserved full support.

49. Mr. POLIC (Chile) said that, in view of the administrative and financial complexities of the question and the lack of time to carry out a full evaluation of such an important problem, his delegation fully supported the Cuban proposal.

50. Mr. DE BELDER (Belgium) said that several members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Buildings meeting at Geneva had sought the co-operation of the Director-General of the Geneva Office in the search for office accommodation which would be more economical and physically more convenient than some of the buildings used at present. He understood that the Director-General would write to delegations at Geneva to ascertain their interest in obtaining accommodation in either the new building or existing premises, such as the old ILO building, several years hence. In paragraph 38 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2) it was stated that, if the United Nations wished to take advantage of the space in the old ILO building, which would become available in 1975, it must make a firm reservation for it with the local authorities. It was further stated that, if the view of the General Assembly was that that space was needed for United Nations purposes, the

Secretary-General would approach the Swiss authorities to secure a firm option. In his statement, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had given considerable attention to that problem. However, the Belgian delegation would like some clarification as to whether the United Nations, GATT, UNICEF or other organizations were interested in the old ILO building, since it appeared that, for various reasons, many delegations at Geneva were interested in that building. From what the Under-Secretary-General had said, it would appear that consultations were going on at Geneva between the Director-General and various delegations. Did that mean that the United Nations had changed its position and that the possibility that delegations would take over the ILO building was being kept open? His delegation had previously understood that the United Nations had regarded the administrative problems as being too complicated to make it possible to accede to the request made in the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Buildings. That had been the main reason why several members of that Committee had envisaged the construction of a building on United Nations premises either by the Swiss Government or by private enterprise. Whether that idea was worth pursuing depended on the readiness of the United Nations to leave buildings such as the ILO building to delegations. There were many reasons why Geneva-based delegations wished to have their premises in the United Nations buildings, but that was for the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Buildings to decide. Before taking a decision, his delegation would appreciate more clarification from the Under-Secretary-General. It shared the view expressed in paragraph 15 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8708/Add.17) that, in the event that the United Nations should not need the space in the ILO building, little difficulty would be expected in finding other occupants. Indeed, it would appear that more than 40 delegations were interested. On the assumption that the United Nations left that possibility open, his delegation felt that it was urgent to know whether the Secretary-General could be approached by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Buildings, which might ask him to speak on behalf of those delegations when securing the firm option from the Swiss authorities.

51. Mr. WOSCHNAGG (Austria) said that his delegation favoured the decentralization of United Nations activities because the scope of the Organization was world-wide. He wished to take the opportunity to thank the Advisory Committee for stating in paragraph 3 of its report (A/8708/Add.17) that the Austrian authorities had generously provided UNIDO with adequate space. He also wished to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management for his statement concerning premises in Austria. The Austrian Government had indicated that it was sympathetic to an increase in the international community at Vienna and that, if an increase was planned, it would be desirable to have adequate premises. He wished to place on record his belief that, in the future, there would be less willingness on the part of the Austrian people to contribute to the establishment of United Nations centres in Austria.

52. His delegation concurred with the proposed transfer of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva and with the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning United Nations participation in the United Nations Development Corporation project, which it felt was a very economical and realistic one.

53. Mr. A-YED (Democratic Yemen), supported by Mr. ALI (Iraq), said that, in view of the importance of the question of Headquarters accommodation, it should be deferred until the next session to allow time for further consideration by the relevant bodies.

54. Mr. CHERPOOT (India) expressed his delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, which provided specific recommendations together with alternatives. For more than a decade, the Secretary-General and his predecessor had been drawing the attention of Member States to the increasingly difficult problem of Headquarters accommodation, and efforts had been made to utilize all available space in the Secretariat building. Over 1,200 staff members were now accommodated in rented premises in five different buildings at an annual cost of \$2.4 million. The Secretary-General had drawn attention to the uneconomical operation of the Secretariat resulting from the unsolved space problem. His delegation fully agreed that renting accommodation was uneconomical and was particularly undesirable in view of the critical financial situation. However, it also shared the Advisory Committee's view that, for technical, financial and political reasons, a solution to the shortage of space in New York—whether on a long-term or a relatively short-term basis—was not easily found.

55. With regard to the long-term solution, his delegation attached great importance to the possibility of locating new programmes and their secretariats outside New York. It fully agreed with the Secretary-General that the future growth of the New York Secretariat should be limited to a minimum compatible with the proper functioning of those units which must be located there. The location of new programmes need not be limited to cities having established United Nations offices—particularly if assistance was offered by host Governments. The Advisory Committee had rightly pointed out that the Secretary-General's report did not indicate whether in fact such offers could be expected. His delegation also noted the Advisory Committee's observation that there seemed to be an inconsistency in the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report.

56. There were a number of advantages, including a political advantage, in spreading the location of United Nations offices throughout the world. Each region of the world should feel the presence of the United Nations and that would undoubtedly promote United Nations activities. Offers of assistance by Governments, particularly in the developing countries, should therefore be considered favourably. His delegation welcomed the decision to locate the environment secretariat in Kenya. In his delegation's view, the criteria set forth in annex IV of the Secretary-General's

report for the evaluation of offers of space were an ideal not easily put into practice. It was doubtful whether all those criteria could be fulfilled satisfactorily in any city in the world, including those in which United Nations offices were located. Therefore, they should be taken into account but should not be the determining factor.

57. His delegation was inclined to support the Advisory Committee's conclusion that the best way in which to rationalize the situation in New York would be to rent space in the United Nations Development Corporation building, with an option to buy it at a later stage. That course was dictated by the financial situation and by lack of time, which made it very difficult to choose the best possible alternative from among those listed by the Secretary-General.

58. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said, in reply to the question raised by the representative of Belgium, that UNICEF would prefer to remain in the new wing of the Palais des Nations and that, unless obliged or persuaded to move, it would not be interested in acquiring accommodation in the old ILO building. As to GATT's intentions, he drew attention to paragraph 37 of the Secretary-General's report, which indicated that some 240 offices in the old ILO building had been reserved by GATT for 1975. Thus, the position of GATT was comparable to the position in which the United Nations would be if the General Assembly approved a decision to reserve by option the rest of the old ILO building before the end of 1972.

59. Turning to the consultations between the Director-General of the Geneva Office and the Geneva-based delegations, he said he understood that the suggestion had been made that the United Nations should be authorized to reserve for its use in 1975 the balance of the office space available in the old ILO building. While it was not possible to forecast the precise requirements of United Nations staff, various delegations had given their assurance that, should the United Nations have surplus space in its portion of the old ILO building in 1975, they would take up that surplus. In other words, the United Nations would have first call on the remaining 260 offices in that building, with the possibility of "off-loading" the surplus space to interested delegations.

60. Turning to the question raised by the representative of France as to whether UNICEF and UNDP wished to rent or buy accommodation in New York, he said that the United Nations had made arrangements with them to act on behalf of all three organizations in its negotiations with the United Nations Development Corporation. If the United Nations were to be authorized to rent the space, it would rent all the available space, namely 24 floors, and would in turn sublease to UNICEF and UNDP the portions which they needed. Likewise, if the United Nations was later given the option to purchase accommodation, it would acquire ownership of that portion and would continue to sublease the space used by UNICEF and UNDP; in other words, they would remain United Nations

tenants on a continuing basis under the rental agreement. Therefore, UNICEF and UNDP would in no way become involved in joint ownership of that part of the building which the United Nations might purchase.

61. As to the other point raised by the representative of France—namely, his understanding that the United Nations, in having the option to purchase, would be undertaking a future commitment—he wished to point out that the United Nations, under any option to purchase, would be completely free to exercise that option whenever it desired, without being under any obligation to do so. It would therefore be free to rent the premises for as long as it wished. In other words, the binding nature of the option would operate only against the other party—the United Nations Development Corporation.
62. Mr. BARG (Libyan Arab Republic) said that his delegation was very much in favour of deferring the question until the twenty-eighth session, which would make it possible to study in greater depth the different options presented by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee and to ascertain the views of interested Governments. His delegation therefore supported the Cuban proposal (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26).
63. Mr. HAG (Sudan) said that the question of premises was of the utmost importance, not only in view of the large sums of money involved but also because it touched on areas of principle. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the Cuban proposal.
64. Mr. TARDOS (Hungary) said that his delegation shared the view that the Secretary-General's report on office accommodation had been well prepared but omitted some aspects of the question. The report showed that the Secretary-General had given insufficient attention to the question of relocating units of the Secretariat to other United Nations centres or other places where interest had been shown in offering suitable accommodation. It was reasonable, therefore, to support the Cuban proposal.
65. The Secretariat could expect to move to other locations staff of the Division of Human Rights and other units up to a total of 469 personnel currently occupying offices rented outside the building. Subsequent consolidation would solve the remaining problems. Since the acquisition of space in a new building would supply the same number of places as those occupied in existing premises, such a step would not solve the problem in New York. That was perhaps a further argument for considering other approaches that would make it unnecessary to rent premises in New York.
66. A reasonable solution to the problem of UNICEF at Geneva would be to follow the example set in New York, where UNICEF had been moved into rented premises. He wondered whether it might not have been more appropriate for the Secretary-General to defer the arrangements whereby the European office of UNICEF had been moved from Paris to Geneva until suggestions had been considered for the relocation of United Nations units, instead of presenting Member States with a *fait accompli*. His delegation was in favour of moving the Division of Human Rights to Geneva as a first step towards relieving the over-population problem in New York.
67. Although the Committee was considering section 7 in first reading, it had before it the Secretary-General's revised estimates based on savings resulting from construction delays. He wondered whether the Committee could vote immediately on the revised amount.
68. The CHAIRMAN said he was informed that, in accordance with current practice, it would not be possible to follow the course suggested by the representative of Hungary.
69. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) said that the problem of accommodation in New York had been with the United Nations for the past 10 years. He regretted that the plan submitted in 1969 in an attempt to solve the problem had not been following through. For the first time since 1969, the Secretary-General had now prepared a thorough study which would provide guidelines. The advantage of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee was that they suggested practical ways to solve the problem of shortage of space. His delegation favoured the suggestions of the Advisory Committee which called for action rather than inaction and also placed the question of decentralization in its proper context. Nevertheless, the question remained how far decentralization should be taken. Money should not be wasted on activities that would affect the work programme adversely.
70. Mr. McENTYRE (Canada) said that the standard of accommodation in certain rented premises was likely to be lower than that expected of an organization like the United Nations. The accommodation situation was indeed desperate; he agreed with the representative of Brazil that the matter should be dealt with in the way suggested by the Advisory Committee. His delegation could not support the Cuban proposal to defer action.
71. Mr. BENNET (New Zealand) said that his delegation had received instructions to support the proposals contained in paragraphs 13 and 23 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8708/Add.17). His delegation could not, therefore, support the course of inaction proposed in document A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.26.
72. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that he wished to offer some clarification of the consequences of postponing a decision until the twenty-eighth session. It would be incorrect to assume that a postponement would allow the United Nations to exercise all the choices currently available to it. If the United Nations did not give a clear indication to the United Nations Development Corporation of its requirement for 24 floors of the new building, the Corporation would be

obliged to test the interest of other prospective tenants. The Committee should bear in mind, therefore, that the option might not be available the following year.

73. Mr. STEENBERGER (Denmark) said that the Secretary-General's report did not contain exhaustive replies to all the questions raised by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee had drawn the correct conclusion that a final and binding decision might be premature and that an approach that did not foreclose options must be found. The current situation of the United Nations was irrational, inefficient and costly; it was in the interests of Member States to rectify it. His delegation would have preferred the course of action that had been available until the twenty-sixth session. It felt that the suggestion to rent with a future option to buy was a commendable *ad hoc* approach since it would alleviate the situation without binding the Organization to certain decisions in the future. Failure to take prompt action would be a mistake.

74. Mr. RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that since some delegations had suggested that additional documentation was needed, his delegation intended to prepare a paper supporting its position.

75. Although he did not question the clarification offered by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, a recent bulletin issued by the United Nations Development Corporation had stated that the allocation of space in the new building would depend on demand at the time the building was completed. Any firm rental agreement would thus be entered into only at that juncture.

76. Mr. DE PRAT GAY (Argentina) said that his delegation was in favour of the suggestion made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 23 of its report. The opportunity offered was a good one in the light of what had been said so far. Since the approach suggested offered a short-term solution to the problem, it was logical to rent the premises, particularly in view of the fact that the option to buy later would still be

available. Unless other radical steps were taken to resolve the accommodation situation before 1975, the premises in question would certainly be of use to the Organization.

77. The governing bodies of UNDP and UNICEF would undoubtedly have to take a decision on the necessary commitment to the rental agreement. The weight attached to the opinion of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNICEF in such matters was well known.

78. By adopting the course suggested by the Advisory Committee, the General Assembly would not be providing the long-term solution the Secretary-General hoped for. In order to take the vital decision on a long-term solution, the Committee would require all the material requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 2618 (XXIV) and 2895 (XXVI). Once that information was in its possession, the General Assembly, perhaps at the twenty-eighth session, would have to take a final decision on a long-term solution and would, as the representative of India had indicated, have to establish the principle of decentralization.

79. Mr. BENNET (New Zealand), supported by Mr. REFSHAL (Norway), moved the closure of the debate to enable the Committee to proceed to a vote.

80. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) opposed the motion.

*The result of the vote was 34 in favour and 25 against, with 4 abstentions. There being no quorum, the motion was not adopted.*

81. After a procedural discussion in which Mr. RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba), Mr. BENNET (New Zealand), Mr. TARDOS (Hungary) and Mr. DIPP GÓMEZ (Dominican Republic) took part, the CHAIRMAN said that the Committee could not take any decisions since there was no quorum.

*The meeting rose at 8.10 p.m.*