



Chairman: Mr. Motoo OGISO (Japan).

AGENDA ITEM 73

Budget estimates for the financial year 1973 (continued)
(for the previous documentation, see 1525th meeting;
A/8729, A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.13)

*Progress made by the Administrative Management Service
in conducting a survey of manpower utilization in the
Secretariat (concluded) (A/8708/Add.5, A/C.5/1446, A/
C.5/XXVII/CRP.13)*

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee might decide to include in its report the text submitted by the Philippine delegation (A/C.5/XXVII/CRP.13).

It was so decided.

2. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly should take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1446) and of the observations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/8708/Add.5).

3. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he had no objection to the proposed text, but he asked for an assurance that the Committee's report would reflect the various comments and proposals made during the debate.

4. The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of the Soviet Union that the comments of the Soviet delegation on the item would be reflected in the Committee's report.

The proposal of the Chairman was adopted.

**Review and reappraisal of United Nations information
policies and activities (A/8708/Add.9, A/C.5/1452)**

5. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the estimate of \$280,500 submitted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 19 of his report (A/C.5/1452) and to the fact that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had accepted that estimate in paragraph 9 of its report (A/8708/Add.9).

6. Mr. RHODES (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Secretary-General had been submitted in implementation of General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI). Although the Fifth Committee was, as it were, the substantive committee for matters of

information policies and activities, the Advisory Committee had naturally concentrated in its report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the Secretary-General's proposals. In paragraphs 1 to 7 of its report, attention was drawn to the administrative implications of the proposals made in the Secretary-General's report, especially the effects of the main proposal, which was to move gradually towards a reorientation of the Office of Public Information away from its traditional media-based approach towards a thematic approach. The report also indicated some areas where further clarification of the division of responsibility had seemed necessary. The comments made in the report had not been offered in a spirit of criticism but to help the new Assistant-Secretary-General in his desire to reorient and reinvigorate the Office of Public Information.

7. Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report of the Advisory Committee covered the programme of acquisition and replacement of radio-visual equipment. The General Assembly had approved the first phase, that financed from the 1972 budget, at the twenty-sixth session. The Secretary-General had reduced his estimate for the 1973 segment of the acquisition and replacement programme to \$325,500. Bearing in mind the fact that the sum of \$45,000 had already been included in the initial estimates, should the Committee recommend and the General Assembly approve the continuation of the programme, an additional amount of \$280,500 would be needed for 1973.

8. Although the General Assembly had decided at the twenty-sixth session that the entire balance of the acquisition and replacement programme for the period 1973-1976 could be considered at the twenty-seventh session, the Secretary-General was only seeking approval of the 1973 portion at present. The Advisory Committee accepted the Secretary-General's cost estimate and would consider requirements for later years when they were submitted at future sessions of the General Assembly.

9. Mr. AKATANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information) said he had noted with gratification that over the years the General Assembly had consistently expressed the view that public information had a crucial role to play in furthering the substantive work of the Organization. He fully shared that view and looked forward in that spirit to working with the Fifth Committee.

10. The Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1452) on United Nations public information policies and activities was essentially a response to General Assem-

bly resolution 2897 (XXVI). The debates in the Fifth Committee preceding the adoption of that resolution were the most extensive it had conducted on public information in many years. The resolution itself was one of the most comprehensive documents the Assembly had ever adopted on the subject. The specific guidelines it provided would be very useful to the Secretary-General and to the Office of Public Information in their efforts to provide the Organization with the type of information activities desired by Member States, although some time might be needed to implement all aspects of the resolution. Nevertheless, the Committee had given the Secretariat an important mandate which would guide it in both the short and long term. The resolution had been most useful in that it had reactivated the Secretary-General's Consultative Panel on Public Information after a five year interruption. Paragraphs 11 to 14 of the Secretary-General's report indicated the manner in which the Panel, which consisted of members selected by the Secretary-General in close consultation with the regional groups, had been enlarged and outlined the general trend of the discussions at its first session, which had been most fruitful. A unit like the Office of Public Information needed a mechanism that ensured a continuing dialogue with Member States, a consultative body that could sound out the feelings of Members on information matters, particularly when the Assembly was not in session. That was why the Panel intended to meet again, probably in March, to explore in greater depth issues already broached and to discuss new questions such as that of the field establishment of the Office of Public Information. The Panel acted in an advisory capacity to the Secretary-General; the decision-making power remained, of course, in the hands of the General Assembly, although the latter's work should be greatly facilitated by the existence of the Panel.

11. One of the main conclusions he had reached since assuming office was that the Office of Public Information should develop, in consultation with the substantive departments concerned, a nucleus of information officers who, by becoming intimately acquainted with the major areas of United Nations involvement, would be able to service several media. That was essentially a matter of adaptation and organization and would require no additional resources; nor did it imply any duplication of the basic expertise that should continue to remain in the substantive departments. What was mainly required was a change of attitude and approach on the part of information staff. Knowledgeable specialists in the Office of Public Information should certainly be expected to deal adequately with the outside media, where specialists in subjects covered by the Organization already existed. The success of the information and promotional efforts for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm was certainly due, at least in part, to the fact that the information specialists had been able to observe at close range, and work hand in hand with, the substantively responsible parts of the Secretariat. A Task Force for Population Questions had been set up within the Office of Public Information in preparation for World Population Year and the Population Conference. The same approach would be adopted toward

problems of southern Africa. It was essential that a group composed of the best information officers should become as well versed as possible in all *apartheid* and decolonization matters in order to be able to devise multimedia approaches which would make full use of the Office's potential.

12. That approach would be greatly assisted by the integrated work programme which had been drawn up and included, subject by subject, all the activities to be conducted by the Office of Public Information during 1973. A programme of that type had not been drawn up since the very early years of the Organization. Henceforth, Member States could ascertain precisely how, and on what subjects, resources made available to the Office of Public Information were being spent. The programme for 1973 had been submitted to the Consultative Panel, the views of which were being taken into account in the final determination of activities for the coming year. The suggestion of the Advisory Committee that the work programme for 1974 and subsequent years should also be submitted to the Committee would raise no difficulties for his Office. In future, the Office of Public Information would prepare a work programme on a yearly basis, taking into account the numerous public information requests received from various organs of the Organization.

13. In the resolution it adopted at the twenty-sixth session, the General Assembly had emphasized the need for central policy control and direction and had mentioned the administrative arrangements made by the Secretary-General for the Centre for Economic and Social Information, of which the Second Committee had taken note in resolution 2800 (XXVI). One of his primary objectives since taking office had been to straighten out the situation existing in 1971. He was pleased to be able to assure the Committee that he had been able to achieve a smooth working relationship between all the divisions of the Office of Public Information, including the Centre for Economic and Social Information. The integrated programme of information activities enabled the Centre to benefit fully from the views and assistance of the other divisions.

14. The question of allocating adequate resources to meet additional needs for UNCTAD information activities during the Second United Nations Development Decade had been discussed in some detail at the first part of the twelfth session of the Trade and Development Board in October at Geneva. The Secretary-General's report on the dissemination of information and mobilization of public opinion relative to problems of trade and development¹ would be taken up by the Second Committee in the fourth week of November. He hoped that the collaboration between the Office of Public Information and the Information Service of UNCTAD would be a satisfactory response to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at the twenty-sixth session. He was also in communication with the Executive Director of UNIDO and had asked him for his views and proposals on the support, in terms of information programming and resources, that the Office of Public Information could give to UNIDO.

¹ Document A/8893, of 16 November 1972.

15. As was clear from paragraphs 22 and 23 of the report of the Secretary-General before the Committee, the matter of the field establishment of the Office of Public Information had been left in abeyance for the time being. That was because the Secretary-General had wished to examine in detail the existing network of United Nations information centres throughout the world before formulating any recommendations. He also wished to satisfy himself that existing arrangements indeed constituted the best way of using the very limited resources available or whether other more effective means could be found. If the message of the United Nations was to carry greater weight, it must be conceived and expressed by people who understood the culture and mentality of the peoples of a particular region. The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information did not wish the Committee to draw any specific conclusions from his remarks, which were merely meant to illustrate the point that the Office of Public Information would consider every aspect of that very major part of its operation before submitting its views.

16. Paragraphs 16 to 20 of the Secretary-General's report dealt with the request of the Office of Public Information for the acquisition and replacement of equipment; the items to be purchased in 1973 were listed in the annex. The General Assembly had approved the first year's instalment at its twenty-sixth session and had decided to consider the balance of the programme at its twenty-seventh session. The second year's instalment, for which a request was now being submitted, had been reduced to \$325,500, of which \$45,000 had already been included in the initial budget estimates for 1973. The Consultative Panel on Public Information had given its support to the acquisition and replacement programme for 1973, as had the Advisory Committee. He hoped, therefore, that the General Assembly would be able to approve the request of the Office of Public Information.

17. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that at the twenty-sixth session his delegation had challenged the Fifth Committee's competence to discuss information problems except, of course, the financial implications of the Secretary-General's report on the Office of Public Information. It had even abstained in the voting on resolution 2897 (XXVI) to show its interest in the matter. It still thought that a question as important as that of information should be discussed either in a political committee or in the plenary Assembly, or in an *ad hoc* committee set up for the purpose. In the meantime, it would seize every opportunity, including discussion in the Fifth Committee, to underline the importance of information for the achievement of the aims of the United Nations and the need to strengthen the means available to the Office of Public Information. It was in that spirit that his delegation had taken part in the meetings of the Consultative Panel on Public Information, reactivated by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 2897 (XXVI). A real dialogue had been established between the members of the Panel and those in charge of the Office of Public Information; he thanked the latter for their concern that the Office should be reinvigorated and

for their spirit of co-operation. The interest shown in the information activities of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, who had attended both the opening and closing meetings of the Panel, was highly appreciated by his delegation.

18. The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information deserved not only the encouragement but also the full confidence and support of the Committee. It was thanks to his efforts that the Panel had been able to visit the Office's technical installations and discover, to the great surprise of most members, that the installations were far too few and of a quality too poor to meet the information needs of an organization as large as the United Nations. Most of the transmitters in use were some 25 years old and were museum pieces.

19. The appropriations requested were fully justified. Indeed, he wondered whether the five-year acquisition and replacement programme was perhaps too modest and would have to be revised in coming years. His delegation supported the granting of the appropriations requested and felt that credits allocated to the Office of Public Information were justifiable to the extent that they were being used for a conscientiously planned policy. He noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General intended to call another meeting of the Panel, since that would allow its members to express their views on such planning.

20. He was glad that the Secretary-General felt that the Office of Public Information should adopt a more dynamic and energetic role in promoting the universally recognized causes to which the Organization was committed and that the work programme would be based on the principal information themes that were of concern to the United Nations and should result in a series of well-thought-out and co-ordinated multimedia information strategies on certain priority themes.

21. The procedures laid down following the establishment of the Office of Public Information in 1946 had aged along with the equipment. He wished the Secretary-General every success in his effort to carry through the changes envisaged in paragraph 6 of his report. The task was a difficult and bold one, in which personal interests might not coincide with those of the Organization.

22. He noted with interest that the Centre for Economic and Social Information, whose autonomous status had enabled it to avoid red tape in recent years and do a useful job, was an integral part of the Office of Public Information. The arrangement in effect was an encouraging one and might make it possible to set up a similar centre for political information to deal with the problems of decolonization, *apartheid* and other important matters. The groups mentioned by the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information covered that point to some extent.

23. The Secretary-General's report contained the elements of a new orientation designed to enhance the dynamism and efficiency of the Office. His delegation would have liked it to contain details of, rather than

allusions to, the ideas and suggestions made by delegations during the meeting of the Consultative Panel for they were generally the result of mature experience and a sincere desire to serve the United Nations and its aims. Mention had been made, *inter alia*, of the principle of regional balance that must be reflected in distributing the responsibilities of the Office of Public Information. He regretted that the developing countries were not represented at the highest levels of the Office. That situation should be rectified urgently, since the United Nations was very much concerned with problems of the third world. There was also the matter of linguistic balance. The Office should be internationalized. The third world, whatever languages it used, should be accorded the same treatment as the developed countries. The possibility of setting up units by language should be considered. The experience of a French language production unit, although limited, was edifying and showed that valid work could be done with a small staff provided its supervisors had competence and a sense of responsibility. The unit should be strengthened by a rational deployment of information staff. With regard to making Arabic and official language of the Organization, he pointed out that 18 Arab countries were already Members of the United Nations. They represented something like a 100 million people, who listened to the radio in Arabic, watched films in Arabic and read their papers in Arabic, although many of their leaders and a large part of the urban population also had access to information in other languages. The use of Arabic to disseminate information among those people was necessary to enable them to understand the work done by the United Nations and to take part in it.

24. United Nations information activities had two aspects: a purely informative one that enabled the public to learn about the work done by the United Nations or to follow action taken by it, and an activist aspect which placed facts and decisions before international public opinion and moved it to adopt a position supporting causes defended by the United Nations. The second aspect, which seemed to his delegation the most important, required the use of the major media—the press agencies, television, radio and the major papers in the main world capitals.

25. The questions of the role of the regional information centres, the effective participation of correspondents accredited to the United Nations and the contribution made by non-governmental organizations had only been touched on in the report and had been commented on during the meeting of the Consultative Panel. They should be discussed in greater depth. It might be useful if the Assistant Secretary-General consulted the units involved to see if any more effective action was possible than that being taken at present.

26. It would perhaps be premature to suggest that a conference should be arranged on United Nations information policies. It might be useful, however, if representatives of accredited correspondents and of the regional information centres and other bodies or specialized agencies of the United Nations system concerned with the problem of information took part in the next meeting of the Consultative Panel.

27. Despite its difficulties, the United Nations had, after more than 25 years, worked out an integrated view of the future of mankind. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and other resolutions on major world problems provided the basis for a dynamic and efficient information policy. Nevertheless, the peoples of the world did not know what the United Nations, which was frequently disparaged, was doing. Efforts should be intensified to mobilize world public opinion and create awareness among leaders in international politics which would inspire them to seek solutions of outstanding international problems and to strengthen peace and international co-operation.

28. Mr. LELLKI (Sweden) expressed his delegation's satisfaction with the steps taken by the Secretary-General to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI). His delegation particularly welcomed, and wished to give full support to, the energetic efforts of the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information to introduce a more modern information policy for the United Nations by gradually replacing the traditional media-based approach of the Office of Public Information by a more effective thematic approach. In that connexion, it wished to stress the importance of long-term planning of information needs from United Nations sources. The four principal themes established for the 1973 work programme (A/C.5/1452, para. 4) deserved the greatest possible attention and should receive wide support from national information resources. The information given in paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of the Secretary-General's report was a source of satisfaction to his delegation, which welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General intended to convene the Consultative Panel on Public Information again early in 1973.

29. Referring to the comments made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of his report, he said that the Office of Public Information should not, of course, engage in propaganda. That did not mean, however, that the Office should not produce material on controversial items under discussion in the United Nations. There were many occasions when information on such items could be presented in such a balanced form, without the Office taking any stand on them, as to stimulate the interest of world opinion. It was also important that in disseminating its information, the Office should take account of the standard of knowledge, language, culture and attitude towards the United Nations of the various audiences to which the information was directed. The Office must, of course, maintain a centralized and co-ordinated information policy, but there were often occasions when decisions might better be taken by local information centres which were in a position to impart the local "touch"

and thus ensure the widest possible dissemination of United Nations information. In that connexion, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's statement, in paragraph 25 of his report, that in future the Office of Public Information must work more closely with the governmental information services of Member States and with non-governmental organizations.

30. In his report, the Secretary-General had referred to the limited resources placed at the disposal of the Office of Public Information and had noted that, in spite of greatly increased demands for information activities, the Office's share of the total regular budget of the Organization, which had amounted to 10.6 per cent in 1948, had decreased to 4.6 per cent by 1971. One effect of that decrease was to be seen in the Information Centre for Scandinavia, which had been obliged to reduce staff and appropriations for printed matter. In order, therefore, to maintain the level of the supply of information about the United Nations, Sweden had had to call upon its national institutions for assistance in the translation and printing of material. For Sweden, the problem was not acute, but other countries might have difficulty in obtaining sufficient assistance from national resources. While it was important that every effort should be made at the national level to assist the United Nations, it was also necessary to strengthen that effort by giving the central information service the means it needed at a time when the Organization was more universal than ever before and had been entrusted with new tasks in many new fields. It was important, therefore, that the Office's share of the budget should not be further decreased. It was also important that consideration should be given to the extent to which the Office's activities could be rationalized and more closely co-ordinated with the programmes of the various United Nations organs. It was gratifying to note, therefore, that the thematic approach would permit greater flexibility in the use of the staff and help to eliminate duplication of work among the various divisions.

31. In paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report, reference was made to the functions of the Centre for Economic and Social Information, whose special task was to mobilize public opinion for the Second United Nations Development Decade. In that connexion, it was a pleasure for his delegation to announce that the Swedish Government had decided to continue to contribute \$50,000 to the Centre for 1973. Its sustained contributions reflected Sweden's whole-hearted support for the goals and objectives of the Strategy for the Second Development Decade and of Population Year and its desire to mobilize public opinion in all countries, developed and developing, to share in that support. His delegation wished, in that connexion, to emphasize the importance of the Strategy as a contribution to information about the Second Development Decade in industrialized countries. It wished, too, to express the hope that work of the Centre would be so appreciated that in the very near future sufficient means for it would be provided under the regular budget of the United Nations.

32. In conclusion, he said that his delegation supported in principle the programme of acquisition and replacement of equipment and installations for radio, television film and photographic services proposed in the annex to document A/C.5/1452 and that it endorsed the comments made on the programme by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report (A/8708/Add.9).

33. Miss PIETILÄ (Finland) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for his interesting and informative introduction to the item under discussion.

34. Her delegation had been impressed by the Secretary-General's fresh approach to information questions, as described in document A/C.5/1452. The fact that the work programme would be based on the principal information themes of concern to the United Nations would provide the Office with an opportunity for more specific work in the field of information. Similarly, the gradual reorientation of the Office from its traditional media-based approach towards a more effective thematic approach would make for more concentrated and efficient work. The proposal that more attention should be given to regional and field work and to United Nations information centres was also a step in the right direction. Her delegation was particularly gratified to learn that the principle of adapting information to the specific circumstances and needs of different regions would be implemented. The question of language difficulties in countries where none of the official languages of the United Nations was spoken should also be borne in mind when allotting funds to United Nations information centres.

35. In the opinion of her delegation, sufficient attention was not being paid to the need to adapt information to specific targets, such as schools, adult education organizations, youth organizations and trade unions, as well as to different geographic and language groups. Hitherto there had been a tendency for material prepared by the Office of Public Information to be too general and therefore somewhat lacking in interest. If information was to be effective and if the best use was to be made of available resources, that must change.

36. Referring to paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, she said that the interrelationship of the themes established for the 1973 work programme should not be overlooked. Under the item on the Second Development Decade, for instance, it would hardly be possible to discuss the question of population without referring to the excessive consumption of world resources in the industrialized countries or the question of the human environment without referring to the unequal distribution of wealth among nations. Under the item on human rights, too, account would have to be taken of the fact that the unequal distribution of income within nations and between nations created a problem of human equality, one of the most serious human rights problems in the world.

37. She recalled that at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, her delegation had re-

ferred to the principle that the management of the world's resources could not be planned in isolation; it must be planned within the existing environmental framework. That principle had been reflected in recommendation 97 on the Action Plan for the Human Environment² adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, according to which information on the environment in all its various aspects should be integrated into the activities of the information organs of the United Nations system. That was a question to which the Office of Public Information should pay attention, for it was only by means of an interdisciplinary approach that the Organization would be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the world for the audiences to which its information was directed.

38. She was glad to note from the Secretary-General's report that attention would be paid to the question of feedback and evaluation. In that connexion, information from the field concerning the value of public information material would be useful in evaluating work done. Special attention should be paid to the views of United Nations Associations in those countries where the Associations were the principal distributors of public information material. More attention should also be paid to non-governmental organizations which were often in a position to stimulate public information in favour of the United Nations. It was noteworthy that the Office of Public Information had never organized a seminar or conference for non-governmental organizations in Europe, a continent in which voluntary organizations played a significant role in the shaping of public opinion.

39. In conclusion, she said that the decline in the share of the total budget allocated to information activities was unwarranted, because a purposeful and universal programme of public information was a programme of implementation, an essential counterpart of the substantive activities of the Organization. Her delegation fully supported the modest financial requests for 1973 submitted by the Secretariat. At the same time, it hoped that the share of the budget allocated to information would increase in the years to come so as to enable the Office of Public Information to fulfil its important task.

40. Mr. DE PRAT GAY (Argentina) recalled that at the previous session his delegation had spoken in favour of the reactivation of the Consultative Panel on Public Information. It was gratifying to learn, therefore, that the Secretary-General had convened the Panel in 1972. If the Organization was to achieve its objectives in the matter of information, the Panel must be composed of real experts in information and questions concerning the United Nations, particularly since it appeared from the Secretary-General's report that the Panel would have a series of advisory tasks to perform in 1973. That was a source of great satisfaction to his delegation, which was confident that a significant effort would be made to achieve the widest possible dissemination of information concerning the United Nations.

² See document A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1, chap. II.

41. He wished to comment on the Secretary-General's report under four headings, namely, uniformity of the information structure, co-ordination within that structure, the trend towards regionalization and the productivity of the Office.

42. Any doubts that his delegation might have entertained with respect to the first two points had been dispelled by the information given in paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Secretary-General's report. The thematic approach would undoubtedly lead to greater homogeneity in the work of the Office of Public Information and possibly ensure more productive results. On the whole, therefore, his delegation endorsed the comments made in the paragraphs to which he had referred. It did not agree, however, with the idea expressed in the third sentence of paragraph 6, namely that what was envisaged was the gradual emergence of thematic specialists who would work together according to their subjects rather than according to their individual media affiliations. The theme should undoubtedly be the common denominator, but clearly the specialists must never lose sight of the communications media, because if they did they would be performing an academic function rather than disseminating information. Similarly, in the thematic approach, the special relations maintained with each of the media must remain in force, for only in that way would it be possible to make full use of the publicity machinery available to the Organization. As his last comment on the first two points, he wished to say that his delegation, like the Advisory Committee, regretted that the relationship between the Office of Public Information and the Development Support Information Service of the United Nations Development Programme remained unclear and trusted that the Office would give the matter its attention.

43. Turning to his third point, he said that his delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's decision to defer action on the establishment of a regional production bureau for one year (A/C.5/1452, para. 21). Like the Secretary-General, his delegation believed that that was an area in which the Consultative Panel could provide sound advice.

44. In so far as his fourth point was concerned, his delegation particularly welcomed the information given in paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report. Argentina agreed that the question of assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of the Office of Public Information required serious and urgent consideration in the months ahead. A demonstration of what had been achieved would not only provide a stimulus for future tasks but would also help to correct defects and improve techniques. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that in the area in question the 51 United Nations information centres clearly had an important role to play, as it should be possible to detect at the local level the effects of any change in approach such as that now proposed by the Secretary-General. That comment indicated once again the importance of appointing highly qualified Professional staff in the field of information to United Nations information centres, as the Secretary-General had been

requested to do in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI). It was to be hoped, indeed, that the Secretary-General would, as he had said he would in paragraph 23 of his report, give highest priority to strengthening the field operations of the Office of Public Information.

45. His delegation would vote in favour of the Secretary-General's estimate for 1973, but agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General should make an effort to reduce estimates for 1974, 1975 and 1976.

46. In conclusion, he said that his delegation commended the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information on the excellent work he had accomplished since assuming office. It hoped that the next report on the item would dispel some of the doubts to which he had referred.

47. Mr. OHTAKA (Japan) said that the Office of Public Information had the heavy responsibility of promoting understanding of the objectives and activities of the Organization among the peoples of the world. Without the informed understanding of the peoples of the world, the United Nations would be unable to attain the objectives and goals embodied in the Charter. Needless to say, the Office of Public Information could not accomplish that task on its own, so the importance of the efforts of Member States in that regard should not be underestimated. The Office should not seek to replace existing information media in Member States but should play a more dynamic role in collaborating with national governmental and private information services.

48. The General Assembly had made it clear in resolution 2897 (XXVI) that the Office of Public Information should assume a more dynamic role in furthering the causes to which the Organization was solemnly committed. His delegation appreciated the conscientious manner in which the Assistant Secretary-General had considered ways and means whereby that resolution could best be implemented. In particular, it welcomed the adoption of the thematic approach towards the formulation and implementation of information activities. It was to be hoped that through the continued process of refinement, the new approach would bear fruit in coming years.

49. The establishment of the work programme on the basis of key information themes would enable Member States to know and evaluate the activities of the Office of Public Information. In that connexion, his delegation had noted with satisfaction the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General that a work programme would be prepared on a yearly basis and submitted to the Fifth Committee. His delegation endorsed the four principal themes established for the 1973 work programme. In view of the heavier responsibilities for economic and social development placed on the United Nations in recent years, it welcomed the fact that the Second United Nations Development Decade had been included as a priority theme.

50. Turning to administrative and organizational matters, he said that his delegation had noted that the matter of the Office's field establishments had been left in abeyance for the time being. His delegation realized that the Secretary-General wished to undertake a thorough review of the existing network of field units throughout the world before formulating any recommendations in that respect. In the course of that review, the Secretary-General would no doubt consider possible ways and means of making the best use of available resources in introducing the most desirable arrangements.

51. At the twenty-sixth session, his delegation had supported the first phase of the programme for the acquisition of radio-visual equipment and, since the Advisory Committee had accepted the cost estimate submitted by the Secretary-General, would also support the programme for 1973.

52. In conclusion, he said that the Consultative Panel, which had been convened in September 1972 after an interruption of five years, would serve as a useful channel of communication to the benefit not only of the Office of Public Information but of Member States as well. His delegation hoped that as a result of the continuous dialogue to be conducted through the Consultative Panel and the discussions in the Fifth Committee, the Organization's information activities would command the general support of Member States.

53. Mr. EKKER (Netherlands), referring to General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI), said that last-minute rephrasing of essential parts of the resolution had posed the danger that a promising opportunity of revitalizing United Nations information activities might be lost. Several representatives, including that of the Netherlands, had therefore abstained from voting on the final text of the resolution. Nevertheless his delegation was favourably impressed by the Secretary-General's report, and by the fact that the United Nations seemed to be departing from the structures and concepts which for so long had prevented it from meeting adequately the information needs of the world community. He also welcomed the reactivation of the Consultative Panel on Public Information; it appeared that the Panel, too, had been favourably impressed by the new approach.

54. To enable the Secretary-General to employ modern methods of information, the Netherlands had contributed and pledged \$2.9 million since 1968 to the United Nations Trust Fund for Development Planning and Projections. An up-to-date approach was now going to be used to promote the causes to which the Organization was committed, and he was particularly pleased that among the four main themes of the work programme the implementation of the International Development Strategy ranked equal to the maintenance of peace, human rights, and decolonization. The organizational changes and thematic approach would facilitate the indispensable pooling of the many talents available within the Office of Public Information and within the United Nations family. It appeared that the Office was now well equipped for a fresh start.

55. Although there had been considerable scepticism about United Nations achievements, some profound changes had been brought about by world-wide co-operation under its aegis, and there was no doubt that combined efforts could bring about many more. Yet with the best will in the world, the information media could never give a complete picture of United Nations activities. For in-depth projection of the aims, programmes and problems of the United Nations many additional channels would have to be used. Whether that might affect the pattern of internal expenditures was a matter that might be discussed with the Consultative Panel. Now that the Centre for Economic and Social Information was fully integrated into the Office of Public Information, and would be complemented by special task forces for specific main themes of information, a refined instrument for using many different information channels had become available. In using that instrument, there must be a high degree of objectivity, and the avoidance of any duplication that would waste the Office's limited resources.

56. The next step must be to prepare a plan of operations to ensure maximum impact. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that the work programme should be made available to the Consultative Panel. It was important to devise a method of measuring the impact of the work of the Office of Public Information, to permit constant review of methods. In paragraph 5 of its report the Advisory Committee had suggested that the information centres might perform that function. But those centres were part of the Office of Public Information, and should have their own effectiveness assessed; consequently, they were not well suited to the task. The Netherlands delegation believed that better use could be made of the governmental information organizations of Member States, both for evaluation and for dissemination of information. If a steady flow of information was made rapidly available in an attractive form, the national channels could take up and elaborate on the themes established by the Office of Public Information. That might be one of the less costly and more productive possibilities although not all the Office's activities would lend themselves to those channels.

57. Concerning the budgetary aspects of the Secretary-General's report, he said that the Netherlands had taken note that the Consultative Panel and the Advisory Committee had approved the minimum programme for the modernization of the Office's radio-visual equipment. He hoped that the reduction of \$49,000 (A/C.5/1452, para. 19) would not endanger the access of the Office of Public Information to world broadcasting outlets.

58. The Netherlands voluntary contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for Development Planning and Projections was intended to enable the Organization to overcome the financial difficulties that always emerged in the path of every new activity. Ultimately, regular United Nations information activities would have to be financed from the regular budget and he hoped that that fact would be reflected in future budgetary planning.

59. Mr. DE BELDER (Belgium) referred to paragraph 8 of the Advisory Committee's report

(A/8708/Add.9) and to paragraphs 8-3 and 7-10 of its first report (A/8708 and Corr.1). Was the figure of \$15,000 referred to in paragraph 8-3 of the first report part of the sum of \$45,000 referred to in paragraph 7-10 of the same report? Or should the figure in paragraph 8-3 also be \$45,000? He also asked if the total for the programme for 1973 was \$329,500, as indicated in paragraph 8-3, or \$325,500, as indicated in paragraph 19 of document A/C.5/1452 and paragraph 8 of document A/8708/Add.9.

60. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) asked whether the intention was that the General Assembly should take a decision on the thematic approach referred to in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report. He would like to know what decisions the Fifth Committee would be taking on the present item, and in what form. He noted that some parts of General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI) had not yet been fully examined, particularly the relationship between the Office of Public Information, UNDP, UNCTAD and UNIDO. He asked the Secretary-General's representative for an assurance that the listing of themes in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/1452 did not imply any order of priority among them.

61. The CHAIRMAN said he intended to propose that the Fifth Committee, at the end of its discussion, should take note of the report of the Secretary-General and the comments of the Advisory Committee, and should also approve the additional expenditure recommended by the Advisory Committee. The figures would be reflected in the second reading of the budget estimates.

62. Mr. WOSCHNAGG (Austria) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for his efforts to give a new direction to the work of the Office of Public Information. Information work was in a sense the life-blood of the Organization, because the general support of taxpayers in all countries could only be won if they were given the information that would enable them to understand why they had to contribute more.

63. As indicated in paragraph 6 of document A/8708/Add.9, the Secretary-General's report did not refer to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 2897 (XXVI), concerning the additional information needs of UNCTAD and UNIDO during the Second Development Decade. He would ask the Assistant Secretary-General to intensify his efforts in that respect. The question had been raised at the twelfth session of the Trade and Development Board and the same concern was felt by the Industrial Development Board.

64. He wished to draw attention to the very meagre budgetary provision made for the information services in Austria. He understood that for 1972 only \$250 had been allocated for operational expenditure. That sum was particularly small in view of the fact that the information services in Austria dealt with all the German-speaking areas. In view of the importance of the two German States, he hoped that something could be done to increase the resources of the United Nations information services in Vienna.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.