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**FIFTH COMMITTEE, 575th  
MEETING**

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**New York**

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**Chairman: Mr. Omar LOUTFI (Egypt).**

**AGENDA ITEM 51**

**United Nations salary, allowance and benefits system: report of the Salary Review Committee (A/3209, A/3505 and Corr.1, A/C.5/691 and Add.1 to 3) (*continued*)**

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS (A/3505 and Corr.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled the general agreement reached by the Fifth Committee at the 574th meeting to base its detailed discussion of the Salary Review Committee's recommendations (A/3209) on the summary table in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/3505 and Corr.1). He suggested that the points for discussion should be referred to in accordance with the numbering in column A of that table, in which a summary of the Salary Review Committee's recommendations appeared, and that they should be taken in the order proposed in the chairman's note (A/C.5/L.394/Add.2). After discussing each separate point, the Committee could take a decision on the principle.

2. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as he had pointed out in his statement during the general debate (572nd meeting), most of the points connected with the organization and classification of posts (points 3 to 8 (*b*) inclusive of the summary table in the Advisory Committee's report) were to be discussed at the twelfth session of the General Assembly on the basis of a report to be submitted to that session by the Secretary-General. While there were some recommendations with which the Soviet delegations was prepared to state its agreement immediately, such as point 3—a single level in the Under-Secretary category—it felt that there others, such as points 4 and 5, on which much further thought was still necessary. He therefore considered that the Committee would do well to take no final decision on such points at the present stage, and he reserved the right to make appropriate comments as the discussion of the individual points proceeded.

**Point 1**

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that the common system of salaries, allowances and benefits should be retained in the sense indicated in its reports (A/3209).*

**Point 3**

3. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that, as the classification of Under-Secretaries was one of the staffing questions scheduled for discussion at the twelfth session, it would be preferable for the Committee merely to take note of point 3 and to reserve its final decision until a later stage.

4. Mr. HUNN (Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee) said that the Soviet representative's remark was not inconsistent with the views of the Salary Review Committee, which had been well aware that its recommendation would be subject to review at the twelfth session of the General Assembly. He considered, however, that the Committee might properly approve the recommendation, while adding a rider to the effect that such approval was without prejudice to any relevant proposals which might be made by the Secretary-General at the twelfth session.

5. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objections to that procedure.

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that there should be only one level in the Under-Secretary (or equivalent) category, subject to such proposals as the Secretary-General might submit to the General Assembly at its twelfth session.*

**Point 4**

6. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked that the observations which he and other representatives had already made with regard to point 4 during the general debate should be reflected in the Committee's report to the General Assembly, so that they could be taken into account at the twelfth session.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that the Rapporteur would pay due regard to the USSR representative's request.

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that there should be a maximum of two levels in the Principal Officer and Director category.*

**Point 5**

8. In reply to a question by Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. HUNN (Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee) said that, although the recommendation under point 8 (*a*), if adopted, would result in the transfer of a number of staff members in the lower Professional grades to the General Service category, it was unlikely that more than eighty out of a total of 600 P-1 and P-2 posts would be involved. It would thus still be necessary to retain five levels in the Professional category.

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that there should be a maximum of five levels in the Professional category.*

*Point 7*

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that uniform standards of grading should be developed in the Professional category.*

*Point 8 (a)*

9. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) believed it to be the general feeling of the Fifth Committee that the proposal to include certain Professional posts up to P-3 level in the General Service category should be the subject of further study. That proposal might run counter to the principle of geographical distribution, because it would mean that the posts in question would be filled by local instead of international recruitment, thus diminishing the chances of the smaller countries to supply candidates and so be adequately represented. Until the principle of geographical distribution was more satisfactorily implemented, it would be undesirable to make the suggested transfers.

10. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the views of the Philippine representative. In the light of its earlier discussion on the extent to which the principle of geographical distribution had been implemented during the past year, the Committee would be well advised to take no final decision on point 8 (a) at the present stage.

11. At Headquarters no appointments in the General Service category, even at the highest levels, were made on the basis of geographical distribution, but the same did not apply to other centres, such as Geneva. The Secretary-General should consider the possibility of extending the application of the principle of geographical distribution to several of the levels in that category. Under-developed countries, in particular, were anxious to have the maximum opportunity of providing candidates for employment in the General Service category, in view of the valuable training it provided. He hoped that the Committee would confine itself to taking note of the Salary Review Committee's recommendation under point 8 (a) on the understanding that the Secretary-General would study the matter further and that a final decision would be reached at the twelfth session.

12. Mr. NATARAJAN (India) agreed with the USSR representative that a final decision should not be taken at the present session. The Salary Review Committee had itself recognized (A/3209, para. 65) that in view of the importance of geographical distribution, any transfer of posts from the Professional category would require close scrutiny. The Indian delegation feared that, with the passage of time, the original status of such transferred posts might be forgotten, and for that reason he felt that much further study of the question was required.

13. Mr. J. AHMED (Pakistan) supported the views of the Philippine, Soviet Union and Indian delegations.

14. Mr. HUNN (Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee) said that the Salary Review Committee had been very conscious of the implications of geographical distribution; it had had no wish to run counter to the policy of the General Assembly in that matter, and had therefore prescribed certain safeguards. It had nevertheless submitted its recommendation, because it had considered that there was a real problem resulting from the misclassification in the Professional category of staff members who, strictly speaking, were local servicing staff and whose salaries were governed by

the best prevailing local rates. Some of them were in the Professional category from necessity; for example, in New York it was not possible to recruit printers as General Service staff, because their local rates of pay would automatically place them on the P-1 or P-2 level. Once that principle had been established, the existence of the common system meant that it would also be applied in Europe, where it was not in fact necessary. The Salary Review Committee had therefore felt the situation to be anomalous, and had considered the best solution to be a reclassification involving the addition of two further levels to the General Service category. The problem would not be solved by a decision to defer approval of the recommendation, because the question of geographical distribution had still not been settled.

15. Since there might be psychological disadvantages in transferring staff members from the Professional to the General Service category, it was suggested that no actual transfers should be made until posts became vacant. The principle of geographical distribution could be more closely observed if, in recruiting staff members for the General or Local Service category, the various organizations made greater efforts to appoint nationals of different countries. That should be perfectly feasible in a cosmopolitan centre such as New York. Since the proposed transfer would only involve some eighty posts out of 1,200, the Committee had felt that the position of Member States with small quotas would not be much affected. On balance, therefore, he did not think that the recommendation would constitute a serious violation of the geographical distribution principle, and he therefore suggested that, to solve an urgent problem, the recommendation should be approved, even if it were necessary to add an appropriate rider.

16. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) understood that one of the main problems was how to give staff members at the top of the General Service category an opportunity of advancement. The Salary Review Committee's solution was to establish a new General Service level above G-5 composed of approximately 100 posts—eighty-five in New York and fifteen in Geneva—which were now classified as Professional. That was not a good idea. The morale of the staff at the top of the General Service category could be improved by granting them additional privileges and allowances, in other words, by "horizontal" rather than "vertical" action.

17. He entirely agreed with previous speakers that the whole problem required further study both from the point of view of geographical distribution and in the light of the considerations he had mentioned.

18. Mr. BENDER (United States of America) said that some solution to the problem outlined by the Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee should be found. He did not think that that Committee's proposal would tend to benefit the host country by adding to the number of posts available for its nationals. For one thing, it might well be possible to transfer certain posts from the Professional to the General Service category without removing them from the scope of application of the principle of geographical distribution. As the whole question of geographical distribution was to be studied at the following session, the Committee could decide to transfer the posts, but to leave the question of geographical distribution in abeyance pending that study.

19. Mr. GANEM (France) felt that it might have an adverse psychological effect to change the title from General Service category to Local Service category. The staff members concerned might feel that they had been discriminated against. It would be interesting to hear why the Salary Review Committee had recommended that change.

20. Mr. HUNN (Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee) explained that the Committee had felt that the staff fell into two categories, international and local. International staff were recruited internationally on the basis of geographical distribution and were liable for service anywhere in the world. The other category of staff were essentially local servicing staff, who had very limited obligations in regard to transfer; they were recruited locally, they mainly served locally and their pay was based on the best prevailing local rates. The Review Committee had considered the psychological implications of the proposed change. It had felt that no stigma attached to the term "Local Service" whereas the term "General Service" was open to objection on the grounds that it was non-descript and had little meaning. In brief, the Salary Review Committee had felt that the new title was both fairer and more accurate.

21. Mr. GANEM (France) regretted that the Rapporteur's explanations had not dispelled all his doubts.

22. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed with the French representative on the unfortunate psychological connotation of the term "Local Service". That point bore out his contention that the whole question should be studied further.

23. Mr. DAVIN (New Zealand) was prepared to support the Salary Review Committee's recommendation. The Fifth Committee had sufficient evidence before it to come to an immediate decision.

24. Mr. VAN ASCH VAN WIJCK (Netherlands) agreed. He had been impressed by the Rapporteur's arguments in favour of the Salary Review Committee's proposal. The Committee had obviously taken geographical distribution into full account; indeed its report contained several arguments refuting the fears expressed on that score. In his opinion, the adverse effects of the proposal on the principle of geographical distribution would be virtually negligible. There was no reason why the Fifth Committee should not adopt the proposal immediately. It could, if necessary, review its effects in the context of the general discussion on geographical distribution at the following session.

25. Mr. HAZNAM (Indonesia) supported the proposal that the Committee should merely note the Salary Review Committee's recommendation, deferring any decision until the following session, when all aspects of the problem could be studied.

*That proposal was adopted by 28 votes to 18, with 4 abstentions.*

26. Mr. ROBERTSON (Director of Personnel) suggested that the title of the category should also be left open. Care should be taken to ensure that conditions of service in the General Service category were not altered as a result of the change in its title. It would be unfortunate, for instance, to take any decision that would imply that staff in that category were not subject to overseas assignment. The Salary Review Committee itself had recognized that such staff were subject to overseas service for periods of up to two years. He was sure that the Fifth Committee would

recognize the need for ensuring that adequate staff were available to service overseas missions.

27. Mr. POLLOCK (Canada) explained that he had voted against postponing action on the Salary Review Committee's recommendation, because he was in favour of that recommendation on its own merits and in view of the statement in paragraph 65 of that Committee's report that it would not in practice disturb the object of wide geographical distribution of staff. The latter aspect of the problem could be considered in a broader context at the following session.

#### *Point 8 (b)*

28. Mr. BENDER (United States of America) agreed with the Salary Review Committee's recommendation, but hoped that local offices would as far as possible take advantage of the experience of other offices and that there would be as much uniformity as possible in the standards used in establishing the levels.

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that local circumstances at each office should determine the number of levels in the General Service category.*

#### *Point 9*

29. Mr. BENDER (United States of America) welcomed the parts of the Secretary-General's statement at the 573rd meeting dealing with non-financial factors. He wished to make it clear, however, that his delegation had not intended to imply in its statement at the 571st meeting that nothing had been done in that respect. Much had indeed been accomplished, but more needed to be done, as the Secretary-General himself had recognized. His delegation, therefore, adhered to its belief that the Fifth Committee should approve the Salary Review Committee's recommendation that a small personnel committee should be set up in each organization with the specific assignment of giving continuing consideration to the special non-financial problems of international service. The reference in his delegation's general statement to the desirability of uniformity had been made in connexion with the Review Committee's suggestion that the International Civil Service Advisory Board (ICSAB) should be strengthened and not in connexion with non-financial factors.

30. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that many of the problems dealt with under the heading of non-financial factors were closely connected with the Secretary-General's personnel policy. He hoped that those problems would be dealt with in the Secretary-General's report to the twelfth session on personnel policy.

31. He had no objection in principle to the Review Committee's detailed observations on non-financial factors, but he would prefer the Fifth Committee not to endorse any particular observation. It should be left to the Secretary-General and the executive heads to follow the general trend laid down by the Review Committee in personnel matters.

32. Mr. DAVIN (New Zealand) complimented the Salary Review Committee on the section of its report dealing with non-financial factors, which contained a number of very useful and helpful ideas. He was impressed by the important points made in paragraph 42 and particularly with the point that non-constructive work and academic studies not likely to lead to action should be weeded out. In that connexion, he felt that the onus of responsibility lay not so much with the

Secretariat as with the delegations who requested it to undertake the work. Delegations should not ask the Secretariat to undertake non-productive tasks.

*The Committee endorsed the observations of the Salary Review Committee on non-financial factors.*

**Point 15**

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that the existing provisions with regard to the education grant should be maintained.*

**Point 16**

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee concerning the installation grant.*

**Point 20**

*The Committee approved the recommendations of the Salary Review Committee that there should be no change in the present practice with regard to annual leave, but that the Secretary-General should be empowered to grant additional leave to staff serving in unhealthy climates.*

**Point 21**

33. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) was in general agreement with the position taken by the Review Committee, subject to the points which he had raised in the general debate. In particular, his delegation hoped that the Salary Review Committee's recommendation would not be applied in such a way as to compel staff members who had an aversion to flying to forego their home leave. A staff member from the Far East, for example, might not have enough leave to travel by surface transport and still spend a fairly long period in his home country. His delegation attached great importance to home leave as a means of maintaining the international character of the Secretariat and it hoped that the Review Committee's recommendation would not place it in jeopardy.

34. Mr. ROBERTSON (Director of Personnel) pointed out that the Secretary-General and the executive heads had asked to be given some discretion in the matter (A/C.5/691, para. 45). It would be unduly rigorous to adopt the Salary Review Committee's recommendation without an escape clause providing for administrative discretion where inequity or hardship might result from the strict application of the recommendation. Procedures for the exercise of the proposed discretionary powers would be developed through the normal inter-agency consultative machinery.

35. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) thanked the Director of Personnel for his assurance. He was satisfied that the right of staff members to home leave would not be jeopardized.

36. Mr. CLOUGH (United Kingdom) said that while he would not vote against the recommendation, he felt that the grant of home leave every two years was over-generous. It was a heavy drain on resources and caused prolonged absences. While he agreed that home leave served a useful purpose in that it enabled staff members to maintain contacts with their national culture, he suggested that it would be more appropriate to grant it every three years.

37. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the Salary Review Committee's recommendation, while noting the point made by the Director of Personnel concerning the discretion to be given to the Secretary-General in carrying it into effect. He strongly opposed the suggestion that home leave

should be granted every three years only. Staff members must not lose their ties with their home countries, and the question was not one which could be considered from the financial standpoint only.

38. Mr. CERULLI IRELLI (Italy) agreed with the views expressed by the United Kingdom representative.

39. Mr. GANEM (France) said that his delegation, now as in the past, supported the principle of granting home leave every two years, and he was glad to see that both the Salary Review Committee and the Secretary-General agreed on that score. He hoped, however, that the latter would interpret the limitation on travel time in a liberal sense.

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that no change should be made in the present system of home leave, except that travel time should in principle normally be limited to air travel time.*

**Point 22**

*The Committee approved the recommendation of the Salary Review Committee that the United Nations should apply the common standard in regard to sick leave proposed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.*

**Point 23**

40. Mr. RAAB (Israel) was surprised at the Salary Review Committee's restrictive proposal that the second six weeks of maternity leave should be on half pay. Not only did the International Labour Organisation Convention (No. 103) concerning Maternity Protection provide for a minimum of twelve weeks leave but the ILO maternity protection recommendation of 1952 revising that Convention urged that such leave should be extended to a total period of fourteen weeks. While he did not intend to press for that period, he felt that the Secretary-General's proposal that the whole twelve weeks should be on full pay should be approved.

41. Mr. HUNN (Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee), explained that the Salary Review Committee had taken the ILO Convention into account, but that the latter imposed no obligation on employers as regards pay during the period of maternity leave; its purpose seemed, rather, to provide women workers with security of employment through the grant of leave. The Salary Review Committee had also studied the practice of various Governments and had come to the conclusion that the existing system in the United Nations was on the generous side. It had therefore felt that it would be reasonable, in view of the high cost, for the period of twelve weeks to be retained, but for the second six weeks to be on half pay. He drew attention to the fact that the proposed qualifying period of one year's service was an improvement on the previous period of two years laid down in 1949 by the Committee of Experts on Salary, Allowance and Leave Systems, although he recognized that the ILO provided for a ten months' qualifying period.

42. Mr. DIEGUEZ (Guatemala) would have preferred a qualifying period of ten months rather than one year as being more equitable. It would be improper for the United Nations to act as a private insurance company assessing profits against benefits. While he was prepared to agree to a period of one year, he was emphatically opposed to the proposal that the second six weeks should be on half pay, which he regarded as an arbitrary measure of discrimination



against women. He would support the Secretary-General's proposal on that point.

43. Mr. CHECHETKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) disagreed with the Salary Review Committee's recommendations in points 23 (i) and 23 (ii). While full weight had been given to the financial implications, insufficient consideration had been given to the human factors. It was the practice in many countries, including the Soviet Union, to dispense with a qualifying period, and he felt that that was the proper attitude to take in the case of United Nations staff. He also opposed the proposal that the second six weeks should be on half pay and the Secretary-General's proposal that annual leave should not accrue during maternity leave.

44. Mr. CERULLI IRELLI (Italy) agreed with the Soviet Union representative on point 23 (i) and 23 (ii).

45. Mr. QUIJANO (Argentine) said that his one reservation on the Salary Review Committee's recommendations related to the point under discussion. He supported the Secretary-General's position and felt that too narrow an interpretation had been placed on the ILO Convention.

46. Mr. RAAB (Israel) pointed out in reply to the Rapporteur of the Salary Review Committee that the ILO recommendation concerning maternity protection stipulated that the cash benefits to be granted to expectant mothers should, wherever practicable, be fixed at a higher rate than the minimum standard provided in the ILO Convention (No. 103) concerning Maternity Protection, equalling, where practicable, 100 per cent of their previous earnings taken into account for the purpose of computing benefits. In his view, international organizations should set an example to Governments, and not *vice versa*, especially where ILO Conventions were concerned.

47. Mr. J. AHMED (Pakistan) suggested in regard to point 23 (i) that the qualifying period should normally be one year's service, but that some latitude should be given to individual organizations. On point 23 (ii), he preferred the Secretary-General's proposal.

48. Mr. POLLOCK (Canada) thought it would be useful to have statistics, which would indicate the scope of the problem. He supported the Secretary-General's proposals on point 23 (i) and point 23 (ii), which were in accordance with the ILO's practice except that the qualifying period would be one year rather than ten months.

49. Mr. RAJAPATHIRANA (Ceylon) felt very strongly that the United Nations should set an example as a model employer. He was in favour of all measures that tended to improve working conditions so long as output was not impaired. On point 23 (i), he was prepared to support the proposal by the Secretary-General, but wondered whether it might not be possible to reduce the qualifying period of one year and grant a proportionate period of maternity leave to

staff members with less than one year's service. On point 23 (ii), he again supported the Secretary-General's proposal. On point 23 (iii), he felt that it was a question of striking a balance between optimum conditions and the necessity of ensuring a proper level of productivity; from that standpoint, he could agree with the Secretary-General's proposal.

50. Mr. TURNER (Controller) said that the Secretary-General and the executive heads had reluctantly disagreed with the Salary Review Committee on the question of pay during maternity leave, but had been encouraged by the Advisory Committee's endorsement of their attitude. While the precise intention of the ILO Convention on that point was perhaps obscure, since it was primarily concerned with national social security or insurance schemes, the Convention nevertheless imposed the obligation of granting maternity leave, and it would be inconsistent, at least with the spirit of the Convention, to insist on staff members' being absent without making any provision for continuing their normal pay. The United Nations could be accused of failing to live up to international standards if it did not continue the present system. The Salary Review Committee's proposal relating to the qualifying period for leave (point 23 (i)) was a more liberal provision than the one at present in force in the United Nations, although it was less liberal than the system followed in some other organizations. Nevertheless, it introduced uniformity. While there might be a case for shortening the period still further, it might be unwise to be over-generous. The advance made on that point was somewhat offset by the recommendation made in point 25 (iii), which was based on the principle that a line must be drawn somewhere in the matter of accumulating leave.

51. Mr. DIEGUEZ (Guatemala) was unable to agree with the Secretary-General's proposal in point 23 (iii), which to his mind limited the freedom of women to take their leave at the time most convenient to themselves. Actually, the combination of annual leave and maternity leave was to the advantage of employers.

52. In reply to a question by Mr. VAN ASCH VAN WIJCK (Netherlands), regarding point 23 (iii) Mr. TURNER (Controller) explained that non-accrual of leave did not mean that the annual leave entitlement could not be added to maternity leave, but merely that annual leave of two-and-a-half days a month would not accrue during the period of paid maternity leave.

53. The CHAIRMAN, summarizing the discussion, said that there had been three proposals on point 23 (i): the Salary Review Committee's recommendation of a qualifying period of one year, the suggestion by the USSR representative that there should be no qualifying period and the suggestion by the representative of Guatemala that the period should be reduced to ten months.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.