



Chairman: Mr. Zenon ROSSIDES (Cyprus).

AGENDA ITEM 91

United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law: report of the Secretary-General (A/8379, A/8508, A/C.6/412)

1. Mr. SLOAN (Director, General Legal Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/8508) said that, taking into account the limited financial resources at the disposal of the United Nations, UNESCO and UNITAR—the three bodies concerned with the implementation of the Programme—and the far-reaching objectives of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, a modest degree of success could be claimed for 1971. The majority of activities relating to that question were carried out by national institutions, and the assistance provided in that sphere was essentially bilateral. The role of the United Nations was not to replace those activities, but simply to encourage them.
2. Part II of the report dealt with the execution of the Programme in 1971, and part III contained the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the execution of the Programme in 1972-1973.
3. The Secretary-General recommended (*ibid.*, para. 51) that the activities of the United Nations with regard to co-operation with other organizations and the provision of legal publications of the United Nations should continue to be conducted along the same lines as in the past. In the case of the United Nations/UNITAR fellowship programme in international law, the Secretary-General had proposed, in paragraph 55 of the draft report submitted to the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law (*ibid.*, annex II) that the number of fellowships to be provided by the United Nations should be reduced to 10, while the number of fellowships provided by UNITAR should remain unchanged. The recommendation concerning the reduction in the number of fellowships derived from the steady rise in the costs of the fellowship programme over recent years and the difficulties experienced by the legal departments of the various organizations within the United Nations system in providing, on an annual basis, full training facilities for those fellows selected to receive practical training, sometimes for extended periods. Different opinions had been expressed in the Advisory Committee on that proposal, and the Secretary-General had offered (*ibid.*, para. 54) to change the original proposal and to recommend that the number of fellowships provided by the United Nations in 1972 and 1973 should remain at 15. It was indicated that the legal departments concerned would make every effort to provide training facilities for as many fellows as possible but that regard would nevertheless have to be paid to the practical difficulties encountered by those departments in providing such training while carrying out their normal duties. Differences of opinion had also emerged in the Advisory Committee concerning the proposal that the current budget estimates of \$40,000 for the financial year 1972 should be increased accordingly. It had been agreed (*ibid.*, para. 55) that the General Assembly should be asked to decide what course the Secretary-General should be authorized to follow in 1972 and 1973. The General Assembly would have to choose among the three possibilities which were set forth in paragraph 55 of the report.
4. The Secretary-General had also proposed to the Advisory Committee (*ibid.*, para. 63) that provision should continue to be made in the United Nations budget to cover the cost of travel grants for participants in the regional training and refresher course to be held in Latin America in 1972 and in the regional symposium to be held in Asia in 1973. The travel costs for participants in the symposium had been estimated at \$15,000, compared with \$10,000 for the course, in view of the greater distances involved and also, the recent increase in the number of Asian Member States. Because of the different opinions expressed on that subject in the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had considered it necessary to ask the General Assembly to decide what course should be followed with regard to the provision of travel grants and the budgetary arrangements to be made.
5. The activities of UNESCO in 1972 and 1973 were described in the report (*ibid.*, paras. 57 and 58), as were those of UNITAR (*ibid.*, paras. 60 and 61). The Director, General Legal Division, stressed that UNITAR's efforts were of the utmost value to the Programme. In the report, the Secretary-General proposed (*ibid.*, para. 64) that, for the trial period of the next two years, the General Assembly should be invited, at its current session, to approve the recommendations made for 1972 and 1973, which should permit some saving of costs with regard to the expenses of meetings and documentation. In 1972, the Advisory Committee would be informed and consulted with regard both to the activities conducted in that year by the Secretary-General, UNESCO and UNITAR and to the steps to be taken in 1973.
6. The contents of the remainder of the report, dealing with the meetings of the Advisory Committee and the administrative and financial implications of United Nations

participation in the Programme, derived from the considerations he had outlined. Two more points, however, deserved attention. Firstly, the Advisory Committee had agreed (*ibid.*, para. 72) that it would be desirable to encourage Governments and other interested bodies to increase their voluntary contributions to the Programme, and he requested delegations to inform their Governments of the wish expressed by the Committee in that connexion. Secondly, the Advisory Committee had considered that, in keeping with the proposal that the Programme be operated in future on a two-yearly basis, it might be useful to extend to four years the term of office of its members. The different views which had been expressed on the role and the composition of the Advisory Committee were set forth in paragraph 73 of the report.

7. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the list of speakers on the item under consideration should be closed at 1 p.m., and that the afternoon meeting and that of the following morning should be given over to the general debate.

8. Mr. SEATON (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the item under consideration was a very important subject.

In addition, it would no doubt be necessary to hold consultations on the renewal of the mandate of the Advisory Committee and on its possible enlargement, which might take some time. It was therefore desirable for the Committee not to adopt an excessively rigid approach concerning the number of meetings it should devote to that subject.

9. Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon) said that while he recognized the need to complete the general debate on the present item by the end of the following day, he thought that the list of speakers might be kept open until 4 p.m.

10. The CHAIRMAN suggested, as a compromise, that the list of speakers should be closed at 3 p.m. and that, if necessary, the Committee should continue the general debate at its meeting on the following afternoon and be prepared to hold a night meeting in order to complete it.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.