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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993
(continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1 and A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 29. Protection of and assistance to refugees

Section 29A. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretary-General was proposing the transfer of two posts from extrabudgetary funding to the regular budget, pursuant to a proposal that posts of chiefs of missions in the least developed countries where UNHCR operated should be recognized as a proper charge to the regular budget. The proposed transfer accounted for the rate of real growth of 1.0 per cent. The Committee would note that regular budget funding accounted for only a small fraction of total resources under the section.
2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that over the years there had been much discussion concerning the proportion of UNHCR's total funding that should come from the regular budget. The General Assembly had taken the view that appropriations under the regular budget were not intended to cover the bulk of UNHCR's costs, but were more in the nature of a subsidy. The statute of UNHCR provided that administrative expenditures should be financed under the regular budget, with operational expenditures being financed from voluntary contributions.
3. The question of transfers of posts from extrabudgetary to regular budget funding had been the subject of debate over many years. In 1989 the High Commissioner had agreed with the Secretary-General that no further proposals to transfer posts would be made prior to 1999. The Advisory Committee had been somewhat surprised to find that the agreement had been set aside and that the transfer of 17 posts to the regular budget over several bienniums was now being proposed. The Advisory Committee had not concurred in the proposed transfer at two of the posts in question in the biennium 1992-1993.
4. Ms. ERIKSSON FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic delegations, said that there was a need for UNHCR funding to be more predictable. The current uncertainty led to an ad hoc approach to assisting refugees and prevented the financing of long-term solutions. The proposal to transfer two posts from extrabudgetary funding to the regular budget was therefore a step in the right direction. Indeed, the Nordic delegations would support transfer of all the 17 posts referred to in paragraph 29A.14 of the proposed programme budget.

(Ms. Eriksson Fogh, Sweden)

5. The statute of UNHCR provided for financing under the United Nations budget. Since 1958, however, there had been no increase in the number of posts funded from the regular budget, primarily owing to financial constraints. Given the increase in UNHCR activities the Secretary-General's proposal was a very modest one.

6. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his Government strongly supported the work of UNHCR, to which it had made substantial voluntary contributions. Nevertheless, he noted with regret the Secretary-General's request for additional regular budget funding of UNHCR posts. Such funding, which constituted less than 5 per cent of the total resources available to the agency, should never become a significant source, and decisions should not be taken which might undermine the financial support of major donors.

7. Over the years various proposals had been advanced for regular budget funding of administrative staff. As noted by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had already violated the understanding that staffing arrangements would remain unchanged for four bienniums subsequent to 1990-1991, and he was concerned that further changes might be proposed in the future. His delegation had indicated previously that it could accept the transfer of some posts on an exceptional basis if there was no increase in overall staff levels and no real increase in the regular budget. Unfortunately, that was not the case, in addition to which it appeared that the posts in question carried few administrative responsibilities. In that connection he asked how many refugees UNHCR had responsibility for in each country that would receive a new regular budget post under the proposals.

8. His delegation had long opposed the transfer of extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget, a position supported by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. At the same time his Government recognized the difficulties facing UNHCR. More efforts were needed to reduce the cost of the programme through more efficient utilization of its resources. In the long run, obviously, the best solution would be to eliminate the conditions that gave rise to refugees flows.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusion and recommendation of CPC on section 29A, as contained in paragraph 354 of its report (A/46/16).

10. It was so decided.

11. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$42,073,600 under section 29A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 29A would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 29B. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

12. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretary-General was proposing the transfer of three posts from extrabudgetary funding to the regular budget under section 29B.

13. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee, in paragraph 29B.7 of its report, had recommended that the General Assembly should take a policy decision with regard to the transfer of international UNRWA posts from extrabudgetary to regular budget funding. The question went back to the twenty-ninth session, and General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX). At that time the Secretary-General had stated that the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations would apply to personnel costs in respect of international staff at UNRWA. The General Assembly, in resolution 3331 B (XXIX), had decided that expenses for salaries of international staff in the service of UNRWA which would otherwise be a charge on voluntary contributions should with effect from 1 January 1975 be financed by the regular budget for the duration of the Agency's mandate. The question had subsequently arisen of whether the resolution meant that international staff could be transferred to the regular budget. The Advisory Committee had concurred in the Secretary-General's view that the resolution should be interpreted to mean that international posts could be established only in accordance with proper budgetary procedure, namely, following review by the Advisory Committee and approval by the General Assembly.

14. The Commissioner-General had maintained that the Agency's right to establish international staff was not limited. The Advisory Committee, however, had taken the view that the Commissioner-General could not establish such posts on his own initiative and then request transfers to the regular budget, since such a procedure presented the Fifth Committee with a fait accompli. The General Assembly must clarify the situation and select one of the options indicated in paragraph 29B.7 of the Advisory Committee's report. Pending such clarification, the Advisory Committee had not been able to recommend approval of the transfers requested.

15. In the biennium 1984-1985 the transfer of seven posts had been proposed, but the Advisory Committee had agreed only to the establishment of four posts. The three remaining posts had now grown to 16, created on the initiative of the Commissioner-General, and the Assembly must now decide whether all or none should be funded from the regular budget. ACABQ was neither recommending nor rejecting acceptance of the proposed transfers, and the recommended reduction of \$600,400 was merely provisional.

16. Ms. BERENQUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC, in paragraphs 359 and 360 of its report, had noted the proposed redeployment of five posts from Vienna to field offices, and had recommended approval of the programme narrative of section 29B.

17. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his Government had traditionally been the largest donor to UNRWA. Nevertheless, his delegation regretted the proposed transfer of posts. Such mechanisms as the transfer of posts to the regular budget would not add to the overall level of resources available to voluntary programmes, since increased assessed contributions could lead to a reduction in voluntary contributions. His delegation concurred in the view of the Advisory Committee that no authority existed for the transfer to the regular budget of the 16 posts established on an extrabudgetary basis. His delegation strongly supported the option proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 29B.7 (b).

18. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve attached great importance to the work of UNRWA. In the view of the Twelve, General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX) had been intended only to alleviate the financial crisis besetting UNRWA at that time. Further, the Twelve recalled the Group of 18 recommendation that the practice of transferring extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget should be discouraged. The European Community delegations noted the Advisory Committee's comment that clarification of the resolution was required, and supported the option proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 29B.7 (b).

19. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation, while also supporting UNRWA and being a contributor, did not concur in the proposed transfer of posts to the regular budget. Resolution 3331 B (XXIX) related only to the circumstances prevailing at the time, and could not be used to justify further transfers. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's option in paragraph 29B.7 (b).

20. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 29B, as contained in paragraphs 359 and 360 of its report (A/46/16).

21. It was so decided.

22. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$20,129,200 under section 29B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 29B would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 30. Disaster relief operations

23. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to paragraph 30.1 of the proposed programme budget, said that it had originally been intended to provide details separately on staff and resources for the secretariat for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. However, the documents relating to the Decade now before the Second Committee gave little indication of administrative and budgetary

(Mr. Baudot)

implications and he was therefore not sure what further details could be provided to the Fifth Committee except in regard to the fund already established and the current status of the secretariat

24. Ms. BERENQUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that, as indicated in paragraph 362 of the CPC report (A/46/16), several delegations had pointed out during the discussion in CPC that functions pertaining to the role of the United Nations in addressing disaster and emergency situations appeared to be fragmented in their presentation in the proposed programme budget. In that context, references had been made to section 30, section 6 (subprogramme 4, Special emergency programmes) and section 29A. A general recommendation on the question of fragmentation was made in paragraph 52 of the CPC report.

25. With regard to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, concern has been expressed in CPC over the lack of information in section 30 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/136. The Committee recommended, in paragraph 368 of its report, the inclusion in that section of a programme narrative relating to the Decade in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

26. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) noted from paragraph 30.18 of the budget proposal that an additional P-5 post was requested to strengthen the information dissemination capacity of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO). His delegation wished to review proposals to ensure effective implementation of activities in subprogramme 3 during the informal consultations.

27. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) asked what steps the Secretariat was taking in response to the CPC recommendation concerning the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. He also wished to know what proposals the Secretariat might make regarding the additional P-5 post requested for subprogramme 3 (Disaster information).

28. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) replied that the Secretariat had not yet prepared a text relating to the Decade for inclusion in the programme narrative of section 30 but might provide a draft for consideration during the informal discussions if required. Concerning the additional P-5 post, it was not clear whether the Advisory Committee was recommending redeployment within section 30 or from another section. Once the Committee had decided on those matters, the Secretariat would endeavour to put its decisions into effect.

29. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 30, as contained in paragraphs 366 to 369 of its report (A/46/16).

30. It was so decided.

31. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$7,831,300 under section 30 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 30 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 31. Public information

32. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that, in addition to the estimated regular budget requirements of \$100,993,900 under section 31, extrabudgetary resources expected to be available to the Department of Public Information (DPI) in 1992-1993 were projected at \$6 million and some \$12.3 million were requested for public information activities under other sections. The Under-Secretary-General had expressed concern that the United Nations was allocating too small an amount for public information compared with the resources available in the private sector. The Advisory Committee, however, observed that few budget sections contained estimates above \$100 million and was not of the view that the Department was being starved of resources. While staff costs, as in other sections, accounted for up to 80 per cent of the total, the Advisory Committee felt that there was room for the Secretariat to use the resources provided with acceptable flexibility.

33. In paragraph 31.6 of its report (A/46/7), the Advisory Committee referred to the Secretary-General's further review of public information activities and looked forward to the report on their consolidation that would be submitted to the General Assembly in 1992.

34. The Advisory Committee was not convinced of the need for the proposed reclassification of the post of Director of the Communications and Project Management Division from the D-1 to the D-2 level (see para. 31.10 of its report). That question and the other proposed reclassifications would no doubt be examined in informal consultations.

35. Paragraph 31.14 of the Advisory Committee's report noted an arrangement made with the external publisher of the Yearbook of the United Nations to deal with the production of backlog editions and he hoped that the new arrangement would ensure timely publication. Regarding future arrangements for Development Forum, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of a contribution of \$200,000 towards the financing of issues for 1992 and provisional approval of the same amount for 1993 subject to submission of a performance report for 1992. Lastly, he trusted that DPI would give serious consideration to the Advisory Committee's comments in paragraph 31.17 of its report concerning the United Nations information centres.

36. Ms. BERENQUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC had noted in paragraph 388 of its report (A/46/16) that the format of section 31 did not present a clear relationship between the proposed activities and the resources requested, and had further noted that it was

(Ms. Berenguer)

difficult to determine the distribution of resources between Headquarters and the field offices and the relationship with public information activities conducted under other sections. Accordingly, it felt that the Secretariat should comply with the format for the standard presentation of the budget.

37. The discussion in CPC had also focused on the question of linguistic diversity. In paragraph 389 of its report, the Committee requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information issue as many of its publications and documents as possible in Arabic and other official languages of the United Nations. The purpose was to maintain the requisite linguistic balance.

38. Concerning subprogramme 1 (Promotional services), CPC had emphasized that DPI should give due attention to all priorities of the United Nations as adopted in the medium-term plan and elsewhere (see para. 390 of its report). Lastly, the Committee had emphasized the importance of the Department's objective in promoting the goals and the activities of the United Nations (para. 387).

39. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 31 could be regarded as justified in view of the high total resource level. The dissemination of information about the Organization's work in the political, economic and social fields was, however, crucial in promoting the goals and activities of the United Nations. His delegation appreciated DPI's efforts in that regard and believed that they would be facilitated by the new concerted approach and realistic attitude of Member States, as demonstrated in particular in the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) and in the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly.

40. In the discussion in CPC it had nevertheless been pointed out that no clear strategy emerged from section 31 of the proposed programme budget. It was to be hoped that the formulation and implementation of information programmes would in future be geared to achieving a greater impact on the public at large and to enhancing the image of the United Nations as projected by the mass media.

41. His delegation encouraged efforts to reduce the costs of the United Nations information centres. Due attention should be given to the special circumstances under which each operated and use could be made of local United Nations offices, where appropriate, to carry out proposed activities. That would involve strengthening coordination between field offices, including those of the United Nations Development Programme, and Headquarters.

42. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that although the Department of Public Information seemed to be making some effort to reflect the rapid changes taking place in the world overall, its proposed work programme and budget continued to focus on many activities that were of marginal value or

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

did not present a balanced view of important global issues. He noted the observation in paragraph 31.7 of the Advisory Committee's report that while many of the products under section 31 were proposed by the Secretary-General in order to respond to requests by the General Assembly, there was room for flexibility and creativity in the actual implementation of those requests.

43. Among the many outmoded and ineffective information activities was the Yearbook of the United Nations. No real progress had been made in eliminating the backlog in publishing the Yearbook though more than \$1 million had been spent on it over the past few years. General Assembly resolution 40/252 I had called for the production of abbreviated versions of the Yearbook until the backlog was eliminated and he wondered why the Secretariat had not chosen to implement that resolution. It seemed to take a flexible approach in deciding which resolutions to implement, generally ignoring those aimed at improving economy and efficiency while defending the continued funding of marginal activities mandated many years previously. He hoped that the new arrangements in regard to the Yearbook would yield results and asked whether any of the posts previously created to eliminate the backlog would continue to be funded during the biennium 1992-1993.

44. Press releases on the meetings of most United Nations bodies should be eliminated completely, as should the hundreds of releases issued on subjects of very marginal interest to the world media. Terminating those releases could free resources for activities of higher priority.

45. The Advisory Committee had noted that the financial situation of Development Forum continued to deteriorate. He asked how long it had been subsidized from the regular budget. Development Forum was only one of many United Nations publications on that subject and the time had perhaps come to consolidate them with a view to eliminating those which appeared to lack readers.

46. The narrative on activities relating to Palestine gave little evidence that the United Nations intended to make much effort to provide balanced and unbiased reporting on that important question. It was to be hoped that future activities would adequately reflect the views of all the parties involved in the issue. He noted that Palestine information activities had been designated as having high priority and asked what the specific legislative mandate was for that designation. He would appreciate confirmation from the Secretariat that the designation was in full conformity with the relevant regulations governing programme planning. He reiterated his delegation's long-standing reservation regarding the funding of those programmes, estimated at \$854,000.

47. His delegation would also like further details regarding DPI staff to be sent to the forthcoming Conference on Environment and Development. He asked whether any staff members beyond the 27 to be financed out of the regular budget would be travelling to Brazil, and why it was necessary to send such a large advance party a week before the Conference started. As the Advisory

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

Committee had pointed out on many occasions, the Department sent too many staff members to cover conferences held away from Headquarters. An in-depth assessment of its policies in that regard should be undertaken immediately.

48. The need for 22 staff members to provide administrative support to the Department, in addition to the 22 staff members in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, was questionable. He asked why the two units were separate, and whether, in the interests of economy, they could not be merged or transfer some of those services to the central administrative units at Headquarters.

49. Lastly, his delegation supported the observation of the Advisory Committee, in paragraph 31.17 of its report, that the time had come to issue new guidelines for the establishment of additional information centres and for the management of the existing centres. The United States had recently conducted an independent review of information centres and found many not to be functioning adequately. In one country, the centre received some 500 kilograms of publications from Headquarters each week, which its staff was under constant pressure to dispose of since there was no room to store them. Clearly, severe imbalances remained in the distribution of resources between Headquarters and the centres, and among the centres themselves. The Secretariat should not ask for more resources for the centres without first eliminating existing problems. His delegation hoped that the report to be submitted to the Committee on Information in 1992 would respond to the concerns raised by the Advisory Committee.

50. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, stressed the importance of the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting an informed understanding of the activities of the United Nations. The Department accounted for 4.2 per cent of the proposed budget for 1992-1993. Given the increasing world interest in the Organization, it was essential that it should perform its task effectively and efficiently. In that connection, the Twelve noted that the resources requested under section 31 did not represent the total resources allocated to public information activities, since various other sections contained such resource proposals. The Twelve supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation referred to in paragraph 31.6, that the public information activities of the United Nations system should be consolidated, and looked forward to the report on that issue due in 1992. In addition to such consolidation, a more fundamental approach might be required to improve the Department's effectiveness and efficiency. The Committee on Information should carry out a detailed examination of the Department's programmes at its 1992 session, taking into account previous reports including the evaluation report.

51. The Twelve agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 31.17 concerning the need for new guidelines on information centres and services. They also emphasized that the involvement of the Department in

(Mr. Spaans, Netherlands)

world conferences should be regarded as part of its regular tasks. As far as proposed expenditures for such conferences were concerned, the Twelve looked forward to discussing the relevant statements of programme budget implications.

52. Mr. LEV (Israel) noted his delegation's strong reservations concerning the activities of the Department of Public Information in connection with the question of Palestine. The so-called information activities relating to that issue were counterproductive and did not contribute to a peaceful solution of the region's problems.

53. Mr. SY (Senegal) noted that there was, unfortunately, some inconsistency between the steps taken in such bodies as the Committee on Information, where stress was laid on the importance of DPI activities and the need to strengthen them, and in the Fifth Committee where, in obedience to perhaps another set of interests, difficulties were raised regarding a number of questions. For example, reference had been made to the excessive number of press releases. His delegation thought press releases very useful; they might perhaps be made more concise and more emphasis placed on the work of particular bodies, but eliminating them altogether would be very dangerous for the Organization. The world needed to know what the United Nations was doing, particularly at a time when its reputation and credibility stood higher than it had in many years.

54. The question of Palestine and the priority to be accorded to information activities connected with it, were of special interest to Senegal. Since the question had first come into being, the United Nations had made an effort to make the international community sensitive to it. At a time when it was of particular interest, thanks in part to the work of the Department, activities in that connection should not be cut back. The United Nations should continue to play its role in the light of the situation as it developed.

55. The information centres had an important role to play. The question was not whether they were needed but how they could be made more dynamic. A final decision on the matter must await the submission of the report due in 1992. The Fifth Committee should of course take account of the points raised by the Advisory Committee, but it should not put the Department of Public Information in a position where it would be unable to fulfil a role that was more important than ever in the present-day world.

56. Mr. EL DEEB (Egypt) said that in the wave of democratization currently sweeping the world public information that mirrored those developments was increasingly important. One such development was the situation of Palestine, currently the centre of the international community's attention. The United Nations should continue its special interest in the question and the information programmes on Palestine should be maintained at the level agreed upon by the international community, until all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council had been implemented and a settlement of the Palestinian question achieved. In that connection, he drew attention to the Select Bibliography on the question of Palestine issued by

(Mr. El Deeb, Egypt)

the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in 1976 and expressed the hope that an updated version would be issued shortly. The special funding of the Department's programme on Palestine should continue until a complete and just solution of the overall Middle East issue had been achieved.

57. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) noted that it was indicated in paragraph 31.8 of the Advisory Committee's report that the Secretary-General proposed a total of 668 established posts for 1992-1993 and that the total number of established posts and posts in the Professional category and above was unchanged from the approved 1990-1991 budget. However, the initial estimates for 1990-1991 had provided for 662 established posts. His delegation would welcome a clarification of the reasons for the increase. He also recalled that the revised estimates presented at the forty-fifth session for the section on public information should have provided for a reduction in current expenses. His delegation would like that issue also to be clarified as it might wish to pursue it in the informal consultations.

58. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) expressed general support for the Department's activities. The promotional services described in paragraph 31.9 of the budget document were in keeping with the major interests of Member States although the question of the economic recovery and rehabilitation of Africa should perhaps be added. His delegation particularly supported the priority accorded to activities connected with the struggle against apartheid and the question of Palestine and endorsed the views expressed by the representatives of Egypt and Senegal in that regard. He noted with concern the sharp decline in funds for contractual translation, brought about by the plan to use only one language at regional seminars in order to save resources. He asked what the current practice was for regional seminars, where participants might speak different languages and said he would like an assurance that the proposed reduction would not jeopardize quality. His delegation strongly supported the activities of the regional information centres. The Committee for Programme and Coordination and the General Assembly had consistently requested that their activities should be strengthened and more adequate resources allocated to them. The Secretary-General's proposals would provide for modest growth of only 1.5 per cent and his delegation hoped that that small increase would not have an adverse impact on the centres' activities.

59. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation attached great importance to Development Forum and continued to support the efforts mandated by General Assembly resolution 41/68 A to put the financing of that publication on a sound and stable footing. He therefore had misgivings about the Advisory Committee's recommendations in paragraph 31.16 of its report. His delegation also had concerns about the funding of the publication of African Recovery. His delegation would like further information from the Secretariat on the matter in the light of paragraph 179 of the CPC report.

60. His delegation would like an assurance that adequate arrangements were in place for convening the forthcoming seminar for non-governmental organizations

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

referred to in subprogramme 2, in view of the important topic it was expected to discuss.

61. His delegation was convinced of the importance of the information centres. It would like the Secretary-General to review the adequacy of their coverage, particularly those providing services to more than one country. It was to be hoped that the review would lead to a strengthening of the information activities of the centres and not merely be a cost-cutting exercise.

62. The Department should not relax its efforts with regard to apartheid. He urged it to continue to ensure adequate coverage for anti-apartheid activities until such time as the majority of the population in South Africa was able to participate in the democratic process on an equal footing.

63. Mr. AHMED (Iraq) endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Egypt, Senegal and Algeria. His delegation supported all United Nations activities relating to information in general and those relating to the Palestinian cause in particular. Although they could not be a substitute for the return of the full rights of the Palestinian people, they helped to raise awareness regarding those rights. Peace would be best served by restoration of those rights by those who had usurped them.

64. Mr. NDAYIZIGA (Burundi) stressed the importance of radio programmes in countries where there was much illiteracy. DPI should place more emphasis on radio, so that developing countries, especially in Africa would be better informed about the enhanced role of the United Nations. His delegation was therefore concerned at the proposal in paragraph 31.26 to distribute news bulletins and magazines on United Nations meetings and other activities, in French and other languages, directly to broadcasting organizations, via telephone circuit, at their expense. He asked whether countries which were not able to afford such costs would be denied the programmes. Regarding television news and magazines referred to in paragraph 31.27, he regretted that what was available in French did not seem very impressive. The programme "United Nations in Action" mentioned in subparagraph (c), was a weekly television magazine lasting only three minutes and he wondered whether that was really enough to keep the French-speaking peoples of Africa informed about the United Nations. He noted that "World Chronicle" in English lasted for 30 minutes. In the same connection, he asked why there was such a long delay in issuing press releases in French. The Department was well aware that information that was not timely lost much of its value.

65. His delegation agreed, on the whole, with the comments of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 31.17 of its report. Joint measures should also be taken in order to make the information centres viable. Given the large amount of resources allocated to them, it was important to make them more effective. His delegation believed that it was important for a centre's programme to be elaborated jointly by the Department or its representative and the beneficiary

(Mr. Ndayisiga, Burundi)

country. In that way it would be possible to identify what was useful and suitable and to avoid situations such as that referred to by the United States representative. A programme that was jointly designed and implemented would be in the interest both of the Department and of the host country.

66. Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland) said that there would clearly be a need during the coming biennium for the dissemination of more information about the United Nations and the work of its agencies. As the estimate under section 31 was not a small one, greater attention should be paid to redeploying the Department's resources to meet new situations, rather than simply adding to its responsibilities.

67. With specific reference to United Nations information centres, paragraph 31.4 of the proposed programme budget made no mention of those for which the legal basis existed but which had not yet been established, such as the planned centre in Warsaw. The Polish Government was prepared to pay more than half the cost of the centre and hoped that negotiations for its establishment would be successful.

68. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the resources requested were more than adequate compared with those requested under other sections of the proposed programme budget and the distribution of those resources among the various programmes was appropriate. His delegation was satisfied with the quantity of the Department's output but would like to see greater emphasis placed on economic development. There was a need for further improvements in the quality of United Nations information activities, in particular relating to apartheid and African development issues, which deserved more attention. As for its radio and television programmes, the United Nations was handicapped by the need to rely on others for delivery of its services. Consideration should be given to how the Organization could become independent of other organizations in the broadcasting field.

69. The Department's output also lacked linguistic and cultural balance. French was still neglected as compared with English and the Department must make a serious effort to widen the range of its outputs.

70. The number of United Nations information centres should be increased, rather than reduced, and they must be provided with adequate resources to carry out their work effectively. There should be a standard policy towards the centres so as to avoid such anomalies as the funding of its centres in developed countries from the regular budget while funding for centres in developing countries was sought from the Governments concerned.

71. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he was not convinced by the explanation given in paragraph 31.52 of the proposals for the growth in regular budget resources required for the Communications and Project Management Division's external printing and binding. That growth and the requirement for coverage of special conferences made up the bulk of the large increase shown in

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

table 31.4. He wondered why the Organization's investment in internal printing capacity had not produced greater economies under that particular item of expenditure. There was a reference in paragraph 31.43 to a provision of \$56,200 to cover the cost of publishing the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. He questioned whether that report should be published only in English, French and Spanish and wondered if it might be possible to print it internally, to make savings, and in other languages, to achieve the greater cultural diversification advocated by the representative of Cameroon.

72. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to points raised by delegations, said that the Yearbook of the United Nations was regarded as one of the Organization's most important publications. The additional posts authorized in an effort to reduce the backlog in its publication were no longer in the proposed programme budget. It was hoped that the arrangements with the publishers mentioned in the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/7, para. 31.14) would produce a satisfactory solution to the problem. The idea of publishing abbreviated versions of the Yearbook seemed incompatible with its character but he would revert to the subject after consulting DPI.

73. With regard to the questions about Development Forum, he believed that funding had been provided for that publication since 1980. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on the financing of Development Forum in 1992 and 1993 (A/46/7, para. 31.16), seemed particularly wise.

74. On the question of the priority accorded to activities relating to Palestine, the priorities in section 31 were more in keeping with the rules than those in other sections. That was because the rules required priorities to be set at programme element level, which had been done in the case of section 31, whereas priorities elsewhere in the budget proposals had been set at the level of activities. If there was a problem of priorities in section 31, it affected the low priority rather than the high priority items.

75. With regard to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, there was no provision for more than 27 staff to travel to the Conference, as indicated in paragraph 31.126. On the important general points raised by the representative of the Netherlands, resources were sometimes provided specifically for certain conferences, while it was assumed, in other cases, that the estimates would allow costs arising from conferences to be absorbed. It would probably be necessary to revert to the problem when the Committee addressed the question of the financial implications of the World Conference on Human Rights scheduled for 1993.

76. In reply to the representative of Algeria, a single working language was used at regional seminars only when it was ascertained that it would not be an obstacle to all taking an active part.

(Mr. Baudot)

77. In reply to the request from the representative of Uganda for assurances about Africa Recovery, now covered under section 11A, he believed that implementation of the recommendation in paragraph 179 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/46/16) would present no problem, but he would revert to the matter during the informal consultations.

78. He could assure the Committee that the Secretariat and DPI, whose representatives had been present, had taken note of all the other issues raised. The intervention by the representative of Japan on the subject of external printing and binding costs raised the interesting question of justifying reductions in estimates as well as increases. That might be a subject for the ad hoc technical seminar proposed by CPC to review questions of budget methodology.

79. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation could not be satisfied with the Advisory Committee's recommendation of only provisional approval for the financing of Development Forum in 1993. Nor was it content with arrangements for the publication of Africa Recovery under section 11A.

80. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's recommendation of provisional approval for the financing of Development Forum in 1993 was quite straightforward. The word "provisional" indicated that it wished to know the results of the initiatives to secure a sound and stable financial basis for Development Forum that were mentioned in paragraph 31.16 of its report before considering a definite figure for 1993.

81. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 31, as contained in paragraphs 387 to 391 of its report (A/46/16).

82. It was so decided.

83. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$99,607,300 under section 31 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 31 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.