



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 115 AND 116; PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/6 and Corr.1, A/42/7 and Add.2, A/42/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and (Part II), A/42/512, 532 and 640; A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 5A. Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's original estimate for section 5A had amounted to \$3,627,900, and the corresponding initial recommendation of the Advisory Committee had been for an appropriation of \$3,536,700. The section would be affected by measures to be taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213, such as those outlined in the Secretary-General's first progress report on the implementation of that resolution (document A/42/234), and particularly those specified in paragraphs 27 to 32 of his updated progress report (A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1). The attention of the Fifth Committee was also drawn to the reporting arrangements mentioned in paragraph 32 of the updated report. The proposed measures would entail an upward revision of the Secretary-General's original estimate to a figure of \$3,886,100. The appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee had accordingly been revised to \$3,783,000.

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) with respect to section 5A were contained in paragraphs 77 to 79 of document A/42/16 (Part I).

3. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) asked whether the Advisory Committee was satisfied with the reductions in resource growth for consultants and travel, as mentioned in paragraph 5A.3 of document A/42/7, and drew attention to an apparent discrepancy between the figure of \$117,800 for consultants in table 5A.3 of document A/42/6 (Sect. 5A) and the reference to a figure of \$112,600 in paragraph 5A.11 of the text. He also questioned the Director-General's need to make use of consultants.

4. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the recommendation of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations for a 30-per-cent reduction in expenditure on consultants appeared to have been met with respect to section 5A. Although the Group had also called for a reduction of 20 per cent in spending on official travel, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the recommended reduction would not be applied uniformly to all units of the Secretariat, the actual reductions being in some cases lower and in some cases higher. The Advisory Committee had not called into question the procedure adopted by the Secretary-General; however, while recognizing the need for flexibility in view of

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the differing requirements of each unit, it had indeed expressed the opinion that the overall reduction should approximate that recommended by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. It was therefore satisfied that a smaller reduction in spending on travel would be acceptable with respect to the Office of the Director-General, which required considerable co-ordination and a large number of meetings, while noting the need for greater reductions in other areas.

5. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that the discrepancy noted by the representative of Italy was due to the fact that the figure in paragraph 5A.11 referred, in accordance with standard practice, to resource requirements at revised 1987 rates, whereas the figure in table 5A.3 represented a 1988-1989 estimate which included an allowance for inflation, as shown in the fourth column of that table. It was his view that the scope of the Director-General's functions did give rise to a particular need for expert advice; nevertheless, such assistance had been reduced as far as possible in accordance with the recommendation for a 30-per-cent reduction.

6. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that the subject of expert advice might well be considered in due course separately from consideration of the budget.

7. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) inquired, with reference to paragraph 19 of document A/42/16 (Part II), whether the competent body of the General Assembly had yet taken a decision on the reporting procedure of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development. He also called for diversification in the recruitment of consultants by the Office of the Director-General, following the practice of other Secretariat units.

8. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that, as far as he was aware, the Second Committee, which was the competent body in the matter at issue, had not yet taken a decision. He took note of the call for diversification.

9. Mr. GUPTA (India), noting that the figure in paragraph 5A.11 reflected a reduction of 30 per cent, wondered why the Advisory Committee had recommended a further reduction of \$8,300 in the figure for consultants, as indicated in table 1 of document A/42/7. He asked whether sufficient account had been taken of the impact on the Office's programmes.

10. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the overall provision for consultants had been explained in paragraph 69 of document A/42/7. The figures in table 1 for reductions in spending on consultants reflected the Secretariat's own pro rata distribution of the \$450,000 reduction recommended in the final sentence of that paragraph. It should be noted that some sections bore a larger share of the overall reduction because of their capacity to absorb such reductions more easily than others.

11. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the competent body must be advised of the need for a decision on the reporting procedure of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, in order to enable the Fifth Committee to take a decision on the recommendations of CPC.

12. Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) endorsed the call for diversification in the recruitment of consultants. Since the Office of the Director-General dealt with the problems of developing countries, it should be appropriate to engage consultants from the third world with practical experience of the situation. With regard to any economy measures which might be planned with respect to section 5A, it was the belief of his delegation that such economies should be applied, in the first instance, to expenditure on consultants.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the conclusion of CPC with respect to the particular question raised during the current discussion of section 5A was contained in paragraph 19 of document A/42/16 (Part II). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC contained in paragraphs 77 to 79 of document A/42/16 (Part I) and paragraph 19 of document A/42/16 (Part II).

14. It was so decided.

15. Mr. FIGUEIRA (Brazil) asked whether the Committee's decision to approve the conclusion contained in paragraph 19 of document A/42/16 (Part II) would have any impact on the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of \$103,100 in the appropriation under section 5A.

16. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, although the decision would affect that figure, the Fifth Committee would revert to the question before its second reading of the budget on the basis of whatever decision was taken by the competent body. If no decision was taken, it would be for the Fifth Committee to decide how to proceed.

17. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$3,783,000 under section 5A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 was approved in first reading without objection.

Section 5B. Regional Commissions Liaison Office

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee report on section 5B, said that the Secretary-General's initial estimate had been \$653,900 and the Advisory Committee had recommended an amount of \$628,900. The section was not affected by the measures outlined in the Secretary-General's progress report (A/42/234) and updated report (A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1). The ACABQ therefore maintained its recommendation. The slight reduction was a straightforward application of some of the Advisory Committee's general recommendations.

19. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation, but hoped that the appropriation for the Regional Commissions Liaison Office would help to reduce the amount of travel by representatives of the regional commissions to Headquarters.

20. Ms. SHERWOOD (United States of America) said that her delegation recognized the need for the Regional Commissions Liaison Office and supported its proposed work programme. The operation of a central office was a cost-effective means of facilitating co-ordination with the five regional commissions. The Regional Commissions Liaison Office should serve as a model for consolidating the support activities of the various Secretariat units, as recommended by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts.

21. The C. IRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendations of CPC regarding section 5B, contained in paragraph 82 of the CPC report (A/42/16 (Part I)).

22. It was so decided.

23. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$628,000 under section 5B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 was approved in first reading without objection.

Section 6. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

24. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's initial estimate had amounted to \$54,474,300 and the Advisory Committee's recommendation to \$52,331,700. Several changes proposed by the Secretary-General and discussed in the progress report and the updated progress report (A/42/234 and A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1) would affect section 6. The first change involved the proposal to divide section 6 into two sections. Programme resources for the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) would come under section 6A. Section 6B would cover programmes of activity on global development issues. Those programmes would comprise the activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, for which responsibility would be transferred to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. Programme planning, monitoring and evaluation would be transferred to the Department of Administration and Management under section 28. Activities relating to maritime affairs would be divided. Some of those activities would remain in section 6A, as explained in paragraph 34 of the updated progress report (A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1). Most, however, would be transferred to the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

25. Under the proposed division of section 6, the Secretary-General estimated the requirements to be \$40,651,800 for section 6A and the Advisory Committee was recommending \$3,083,000. For section 6B, the Secretary-General proposed \$9,772,100 and the Advisory Committee recommended \$9,354,200. The total amount for section 6 remained unchanged, but would be divided between two sections under the new format.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that the CPC recommendations on section 6 were contained in paragraphs 87 to 94 of its report (A/47/16 (Part I)) and were reiterated in Part II. He invited delegations to comment first on section 6A, then on section 6B, or to make general comments on the section as a whole.
27. Mr. BOUR (France) asked why there was a separate item for computer equipment under rental and maintenance, and furniture and equipment, for each programme in section 6B. The current format did not provide any clear overall picture of the plans of DIESA for computer equipment. He would appreciate clarification on the productivity gains anticipated from the new equipment and the compatibility of that equipment with equipment that was either already in place in New York or which other departments planned to purchase. It would be very useful to hear the views of the Advisory Committee on paragraph 6.7. All information, documents and reports of the Secretary-General on the matter should be communicated to members of the Fifth Committee.
28. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that it was difficult to understand why, under rental and maintenance, there were separate increases for word processing and computers in the amounts of \$11,000 and \$23,000, respectively. In fact, word processing and computerization were not distinct activities.
29. Ms. EMERSON (Portugal), referring to table 6.1 (A/42/6 (sect. 6)), asked which programmes would be financed from the extrabudgetary resources of \$2,203.2 million.
30. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium), referring to table 6.3 on rates of real growth, said that several rate increases of approximately 1 per cent were well above the negative rate of 0.3 per cent initially proposed by the Secretary-General. In other places - executive direction and management, global social development issues and world statistics, for example - the increase was as high as 2 per cent. It was not clear whether those percentages reflected demands from the various departments and would be revised downward, or whether they were based on decisions taken at the central level. The Committee should be informed of how such budget allocations fit in with the Secretary-General's overall policy and priorities.
31. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division), replying to the representative of Portugal, said that most of the extrabudgetary resources in table 6.1 would be earmarked for programmes on world statistics. Replying to the representative of Belgium, he said that the positive or negative rates of growth in each programme - which, in any case, did not vary much from the 1 per cent average - should not be confused with the notion of priority. Priorities had been set within each programme of activity, on a scale of high- to low-priority. However, no attempt had been made in the report to establish an order of priority for the various programmes of activity. Various reviews of the functioning of the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies that were under way might have some marginal effect on priorities. The results of the reviews would be reflected in the revised estimates in 1988 and perhaps in the outline of the next programme budget.

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32. The Secretariat shared the concern of the representative of France over the compatibility of computer equipment in the Organization. That was one reason why the Technological Innovations Board, which reviewed all purchase orders and computer rentals, had been formed within the Secretariat. Admittedly, the presentations of computer equipment in the budget was not as clear as it might be.

33. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 82 to 84 on EDP/office automation equipment in the Advisory Committee's first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/42/7). Additional information would be provided to the Advisory Committee at its spring session in 1988.

34. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon), referring to recommendation 25 of the Group of High-level Experts, said that section 6 was one section on which the Committee should take only a provisional decision - even in the second reading - for the section was certain to be affected by a reorganization in the economic and social field. He would appreciate the Advisory Committee's comments on what seemed to be a new trend towards using extrabudgetary resources for purposes that were not priorities of Member States.

35. The Secretariat should advise the Committee on the appropriateness of transferring certain maritime activities to section 2A.C. The advisability of separating the programme planning and co-ordination functions of DIESA was also questionable. It would have been useful to have the Third Committee's views on transferring global social development issues to the United Nations Office at Vienna. Similarly, the opinions of the Second Committee would have been useful in deciding the fate of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development. In general, if other changes were contemplated before the second reading, the Secretariat should inform the Fifth Committee, as it would have to seek the advice of the other Main Committees while they were still in session.

36. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) recalled that in paragraph 88 of its report, CPC had recommended enhanced co-ordination of activities with other programmes, and added that section 6 was one section which appeared to cover a large number of areas which were also the business of other departments, for instance UNCTAD or the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. Some of the language used to describe why consultancy activities were needed lacked precision. Although that was true of other sections too, it did raise questions.

37. Finally, he said that he suspected that regular budget funds were being applied to technical co-operation activities even though delegations had been assured that they were used only "in support of" such activities, since he wondered whether it was possible to make the distinction in every case. Perhaps the Advisory Committee's study of regular and extrabudgetary funds might succeed in drawing the lines more clearly than was the case at present.

38. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that the Advisory Committee had commented on that issue in

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chapter I, paragraphs 2 and 6 of its first report (A/42/7). The Committee would soon be undertaking a review, on the basis of information provided by the Secretariat, of matters raised during the debate on section 6 and other issues. It was essential that the Assembly and Member States be satisfied that extrabudgetary funds were being controlled as efficiently as regular budget funds.

39. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division), in reply to a question from the representative of Italy, said that table 6.4 showed two entries relating to equipment because one dealt with rentals, the other with purchases. Replying to a question from the representative of Cameroon, he said that the Secretary-General would not be introducing any other changes to section 6 before the end of the session. Proposals relating to programmes affected by the reforms would be contained in the revised estimates to be submitted the following year.

40. Replying to a question from the representative of Canada, he said that the second output of subprogramme 3 had also appeared in the previous budget, the only change that had been made was that it now included analysis of information. Accordingly, there was no proposed transfer of resources from one programme to another, just an attempt to do more with the same amount of resources.

41. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria), referring to paragraph 94 of the report of CPC (A/42/16 (Part I)), asked whether the Secretariat had any more information regarding programmes 3 and 5 or whether it was necessary to wait for the revised fascicles of the programme budget. Secondly, echoing the question raised by other delegations concerning how the priority given to African economic recovery and development was reflected in that important section, he asked whether document A/42/674 was intended as a background paper. If it was, he doubted that it was an adequate response to the request made by CPC in paragraph 138 of its report. Moreover, he was astonished to see that it had been submitted not only in connection with item 115 but also in connection with item 21. The purpose behind the request in paragraph 138 was to obtain programme and budget proposals so that they could be reflected at both the programme and the budget level in the programme budget. Unless clear indications were given in the proposal programme budget of the real priority being given to African economic recovery and development, his delegation would have to think carefully whether it could join a consensus on the budget.

42. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that it seemed entirely logical to submit the document under both items since item 21 concerned the critical economic situation in Africa. The request of CPC had been interpreted as a request for information on the measures which the Secretary-General planned to take within the context of the programme budget; accordingly the report of the Secretary-General (A/42/674) did not propose any activities which were not in the programme budget.

43. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that the request of CPC had been made because delegations had felt, following the debate in that Committee, that the programme

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budget did not clearly reflect the priority given to Africa. Naturally, the question of how that priority was to be ensured was for the Chairman of the Fifth Committee to decide.

44. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation had been pleased to hear that the Secretariat agreed with him that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should be included among the policy-making organs in future programme budgets. He was not sure which department was responsible for overseeing the activities of non-governmental organizations, since section 1A had a reference, in paragraph 1.74 (b), to co-ordination between non-governmental organizations and the Secretariat and there was also a reference to liaison with non-governmental organizations under section 6. He requested clarification of the point.

45. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that there were activities relating to non-governmental organizations under sections 6, 1 and 27. That was one area which was currently being reviewed. At the present time, there were working arrangements between DIESA and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, but they were not reflected in the programme budget. Those working arrangements would not be finalized until the Secretary-General submitted his proposals to the General Assembly in the context of the revised estimates.

46. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said that it was the understanding of his delegation that no final decisions had been reached as yet, and that any decision which the Committee took on section 6 or on the other sections would be subject to the decisions and analysis to be made in connection with agenda item 43. He pointed out that the issue was being discussed in other bodies and that the Group of 77 had presented a draft resolution in the Second Committee asking the Secretary-General not to take any steps at the Secretariat level until it was clear what was being done at the intergovernmental level. On that understanding, his delegation could accept section 6. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations was a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council and he expressed concern at the fact that a political organ should be given functions relating to economic and social matters. While it was not objecting to section 6, his delegation reserved its right to set forth its position in detail in connection with the discussion of item 43.

47. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/42/674) prepared in response to the request contained in paragraph 138 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (A/42/16 (Part I)) should have contained information on the measures which the Secretariat intended to take to ensure that due consideration was given to the priority assigned by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. However, in paragraph 2 of that report, the Secretary-General stated that he would not review support for the implementation of the Programme of Action as reflected in the 1988-1989 programme budget submission, since the information was already available. If that was so, why had an 18-page report been prepared? He requested that the Fifth Committee should be provided with a brief document outlining the measures which the Secretary-General intended to take.

48. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that document A/42/674 had been prepared by extracting from the various programmes the types of activity contemplated in the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989 in connection with the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The document was not perfect but there had not been sufficient time to extract information relating to the resources needed for each different item. The document was intended to be of some practical use as a guide to the activities contemplated by the different units of the Secretariat.

49. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that it was difficult for delegates to see what was actually going to be done. As additional time had now elapsed, perhaps it would now be possible for the Secretariat to prepare the short summary which he had requested.

50. The CHAIRMAN, in reply to the representative of Algeria, said that he was inclined to refer the recommendation contained in paragraph 138 of the CPC report for consideration during the consultations to be held on agenda item 116 (Programme planning). The request of CPC related to the issue of priorities and their application to the entire programme budget. He proposed that the Committee should take no action on the proposal of the representative of Kenya at the current stage as it would seem preferable to await the result of the consultations in the working group on agenda item 116 before asking the Secretariat for further information.

51. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that he would be prepared to await the results of the consultations. The brief document he had suggested would, however, have made it possible to define more clearly what was to be discussed during the consultations.

52. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) supported the request of the representative of Kenya, since such information would be helpful during the consultations.

53. The Chairman's proposal regarding paragraph 138 of the CPC report was acceptable. While it should presumably be considered under item 116 in the first instance, it might also be discussed under agenda item 115 on the programme budget for 1988-1989. In the view of his delegation, the Fifth Committee could adopt section 6 without prejudice to the conclusion it might reach on the recommendation contained in paragraph 138 of the CPC report.

54. The CHAIRMAN said that, if the Committee were to consider the CPC recommendation under agenda item 115 in first reading, the question would arise as to whether it should be considered under section 6 or section 13.

55. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that the issue of priorities affected several sections of the budget. It was not really possible to consider the CPC recommendation under any individual section but only in relation to the level of the budget as a whole. In his view, the time to consider the recommendation would be during the second reading, in conjunction with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

56. Mr. VAHER (Canada), referring to subprogramme 3, said that the amount of work involved in analysing reports of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would be considerably greater in 1988-1989 than it had been in the biennium 1986-1987.

57. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budgeting Division) said that he would like to look further into the matter raised by the representative of Canada and would reply at a later stage.

58. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should approve the recommendations of CPC contained in paragraphs 87 to 94 of its report (A/42/16 (Part I)) on the understanding that it would revert to the question of the subprogramme on the analysis of the rights and status of women before the second reading and that the Committee would also revert to the recommendation contained in paragraph 138 of the CPC report at a later stage in the light of any further clarification that might be provided by the Secretary-General.

59. It was so decided.

60. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) asked whether the impact of the reforms to be carried out in pursuance of resolution 41/213 on section 6 would be the subject of a later decision, as had been agreed in the case of other sections.

61. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) asked the Chairman whether the later stage at which the Committee would revert to paragraph 138 of the CPC report would be before the second reading and whether the clarification to be sought from the Secretary-General would be tantamount to the brief document requested by the representative of Kenya.

62. The CHAIRMAN said that the understanding of the representative of Uganda on paragraph 138 of the CPC report was correct; the request of the representative of Kenya, which had been supported by other delegations, would be taken into account.

63. He invited the Committee to take a decision on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning section 6 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 on the understanding that the Committee would revert to the question of the division of section 6 into two sections, 6A and 6B, before the second reading, that the Committee would revert to the question of the implementation of resolution 41/213 as it applied to that section before the second reading, and that the Committee would discuss the priorities identified by the Secretary-General at a later stage before the second reading.

64. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for appropriations in the amount of \$39,083,000 under section 6A and \$9,354,200 under section 6B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 was approved in first reading without objection.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.