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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.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 A/42/16 (Part II), A/42/512, 532, 640 and 674; A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1; A/42/806 and Corr.1, A/42/295, A/42/573 and A/42/724 and Corr.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 27. Public information (continued)

1. Mr. MA Longde (China) said that the members of the Fifth Committee bore a responsibility both towards the Organization as a whole and towards the Member States they represented, and it was therefore with a knowledge of the facts that they expressed their views and put questions. The replies by the Secretariat and the statements by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information in the Special Political Committee had not cleared the air with regard to section 27. His delegation had proof enough that the sums spent on consultants were unjustifiable, and would therefore like the Department of Public Information to report to ACABQ and CPC at their next sessions on the amount involved, its sources and the programme affected by resource transfers; those two bodies should then transmit their conclusions on the subject to the General Assembly at its next session.

2. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) welcomed the efforts to rationalize the activities of the Department of Public Information and increase its effectiveness. A number of the changes proposed were justified, but the explanations given in the Fifth Committee left a number of questions unanswered. Would not the new structure of the Department be more complex, since at least two new services were envisaged, which appear to run counter to a well known General Assembly resolution on the simplification of Secretariat structures? Were the measures contemplated in line with the system of policy priorities, and did they take due account of equitable geographical distribution of the staff? His delegation was counting on the sense of responsibility and experience of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information to ensure that the restructuring took place with the greatest possible transparency. It hoped that those questions and all others relating to the process of restructuring the Department of Public Information would be answered in the explanations to be given to ACABQ and CPC at their next sessions.

3. Mr. DEVREUX (Belgium), referring to document A/AC.198/118, noted the high cost of producing the Yearbook of the United Nations, \$111.24 per copy, not including overheads and staff resources utilized by other departments. That remark also applied to the UN Chronicle. His delegation also noted the statement in paragraph 36 of the document that for each volume of the Yearbook there were 6,000 copies printed for sale at a current list price of \$75 each, from which the United Nations derived gross revenue of about \$250,000, in the table on page 10 of the same document, however, revenues from the Yearbook were indicated as around \$180,000, representing only about 19 per cent of the total cost of producing the publication. His delegation would therefore like to know the pricing policy with

(Mr. Devreux, Belgium)

respect to publications and what efforts were made to determine their total production cost and to set their sales price in the light of it. Prices had admittedly to be adjusted in the light of specific situations, for example that of students or libraries in developing countries, but to sell those publications at low prices in developing countries was ill-advised, for price was a good indicator of the usefulness users saw in a publication. His delegation noted moreover that 900 copies of the Yearbook were distributed free of charge, representing a loss in earnings of about \$100,000, and would like to know what guidelines, if any, governed the distribution of publications free of charge.

4. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) endorsed the views expressed by a number of delegations, particularly that of the Soviet Union, regarding the implications of the process of restructuring the Department of Public Information, and said that in particular, the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts should be respected, and indeed applied more fully, during and after the structural changes contemplated. Given the world-wide scope of the Department's activities, that principle had important positive consequences for the image of the Organization.

5. With respect to expert and consultancy services, his delegation noted the explanations given by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division regarding the provision of certain consultancy services out of the appropriations for general operating expenses and the Secretariat's intention to provide information on those expenses in the performance report. The purpose of general operating expenses was to provide for rental and maintenance of premises, rental of furniture, communications, representation and miscellaneous expenses; it was therefore not, in his delegation's view, advisable to include consultancy services in them. The Secretariat no doubt considered that the case in question had involved special consultancy services made necessary by the restructuring of the Department, but in that case information should have been provided beforehand through ACABQ. With regard to the conceptual approach to consultancy services in the Department of Public Information, since no appropriation for the purpose was included for the current biennium or in the proposed programme budget for the coming biennium, his delegation would welcome confirmation that it was the policy of such a large and complex department not to resort to outside consultants and to draw exclusively on its own resources.

6. Mr. MURRAY (Trinidad and Tobago) referring to the steps which the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had, in paragraph 214 of its report, requested the Secretariat to take, said that the explanations given by the Director of the Programme, Planning and Budget Division, namely that the Secretariat would seek to ensure that the programmes in question did not suffer from any possible financial restrictions, could be applied to any other programme element in the budget, and in no way diminished his delegation's fears regarding the approaches being taken by the Department of Public Information, for example, to dissemination of information at the grass-roots level. It was not a question of treating the Department of Public Information differently from any other department, but of ensuring that its structures had a direct impact on the Department's policy and approach and on the way in which it discharged the mandate assigned to it by the General Assembly. The question of outside consultants was also directly related to the problem of the

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(Mr. Murray, Trinidad and Tobago)

approach taken, in the sense that consultants might be very competent in their field but come from organizations whose activities focused on the pursuit of profit. The questions raised by delegations in that connection were therefore extremely relevant, and satisfactory answers to them were needed, for the approval of financial resources should not be reduced to giving those in charge of the Department a blank cheque.

7. Mr. TAKASU (Japan), noting the establishment of a Bureau of Programme Operations located hierarchically between the head of the Department and the division directors, said that, even if the Secretariat considered that its establishment was not inconsistent with the spirit of recommendation 14 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts, it constituted a precedent which might be copied by other departments, and that caused his delegation a great deal of concern. His delegation welcomed the fact that the post of head of the Bureau was at the D-2 level, but felt that, since the head of the Bureau had to act as deputy to the head of the Department when the latter was absent and supervise the division directors, themselves at the D-2 level, a difficult situation might arise in future with regard to filling the post. It therefore requested the Secretary-General to review that point very carefully when submitting the revised estimates.

8. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon), supported by Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia), Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) and Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania), said that delegations had not always received very precise answers on a number of issues. His delegation had obtained a copy of DPI's new organizational chart and noted that it referred to a client approval phase in the project cycle; it would like the term to be more clearly defined. It had also noted that, in future, the various regional groups of the radio or television services would only adapt programmes produced at the central level. In its view, production was very important at the regional level and the Secretariat should reconsider that issue so that the regional groups would not merely be purveyors of local color.

9. Finally, his delegation had noted that human rights, decolonization, apartheid, Namibia, Palestine and so forth were dealt with in a single section. All those issues were very important and did not deserve to be thus diminished at the structural level by being placed in a single catch-all section, particularly since other, less important issues were given an entire service. At the very least Namibia and apartheid should be in a special section, which would be eliminated once those problems were resolved, and a corresponding section should be established within the Production Division.

AGENDA ITEM 119: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued) (A/C.5/42/L.6)

10. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should take a decision on draft resolution A/C.5/42/L.6. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

11. It was so decided.

12. Mr. WILLIAMS (Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit) thanked delegations for their co-operation and pointed out that that was the first time since the establishment of JIU that a draft resolution concerning JIU had been adopted unanimously by the Fifth Committee.

13. Supplementing the answers given by the Secretariat to questions raised by the representative of Poland at a previous meeting, he stated that JIU had taken fully into account recommendations 61 to 65 of the Group of 18 concerning JIU even before the General Assembly took a decision on the issue in December 1986. Furthermore, notwithstanding the difficulties that that created for the smooth progress of its work, it had voluntarily implemented all the economy and austerity measures advocated, specifically in respect of travel costs, consultant services and temporary assistance.

14. Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) welcomed the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/42/L.6. In particular, he welcomed the content of paragraphs 5 and 7 in which JIU was requested to include in its next report its guidelines for the selection of its inspections and to take fully into account the mandate of other relevant organs in exercising its functions, powers and responsibilities.

AGENDA ITEM 125: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- (a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (c) REVIEW OF THE RATES OF REIMBURSEMENT TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF TROOP-CONTRIBUTING STATES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/374, A/42/642, A/42/692, A/42/791; A/C.5/42/L.5)

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report on the agenda item (A/42/791), which was based on the three relevant reports of the Secretary-General.

16. With regard to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the Advisory Committee was recommending, in paragraph 13 of its report, approval of the Secretary-General's estimate for UNDOF for 1987/88. Subject to any decisions that might be taken by the Security Council regarding the renewal of UNDOF's mandate after 30 November 1987, requirements for UNDOF for the 12-month period from 1 December 1987 to 30 November 1988 should not exceed an amount of \$35,320,000 gross, or \$34,716,000 net.

17. With respect to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Advisory Committee was recommending that the General Assembly should appropriate an amount of \$145,500,000 gross, or \$143,064,000 net, for commitments entered into for the period from 19 January 1987 to 31 January 1988. For the 12-month period starting on 1 February 1988, the Secretary-General proposed that effective from 1 February 1988 the special financial period of UNIFIL should be of 12-month

(Mr. Mselle)

duration, from 1 February to 31 January of the following year. As it stated in paragraph 22 of its report, the Advisory Committee understood that the 12-month financial period proposed would not change the manner in which Member States were currently assessed for the expenses of the Force for each mandate period as approved by the Security Council. It was therefore recommending that the General Assembly should approve commitment authority up to the level of \$11,765,000 gross (\$11,618,000 net) per month for the 12-month period beginning 1 February 1988.

18. With regard to the review of the rates of reimbursement to the Governments of the troop-contributing States, the Advisory Committee endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 7 of document A/42/374 that the current standard rates of reimbursement should be retained until a further review was conducted.

19. Mr. VAHER (Canada), on behalf of the sponsors, (Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden), introduced draft resolution A/C.5/42/L.5 concerning agenda item 125 (a): Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. The vast majority of Member States supported the United Nations peace-keeping role. The economically developed countries and the permanent members of the Security Council had special responsibilities for financing peace-keeping operations. In that connection, the recent announcement by one Member State that it intended to settle all its arrears was particularly encouraging.

Section 28. Administration and management (continued)

20. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the light of the decisions taken with regard to the recommendations of CPC and the revised estimates for the International Computing Centre, and based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, he suggested that the Fifth Committee should approve an appropriation of \$344,424,700 under Section 28 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 in first reading, on the understanding that the question of studies to be conducted by ICSC would be dealt with before the second reading of the programme budget in the context of consultations on the report by ICSC. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the suggestion.

21. It was so decided.

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa (continued)

22. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should approve the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning Section 13 in first reading, on the following understanding:

"The Committee, noting the report contained in document A/42/674 and the intention of the Secretary-General to give priority to Africa in the budget for the 1988-1989 biennium, requested that a new report be presented to the General Assembly at its forty-third session through CPC. The report should

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(The Chairman)

clearly identify in the related sections of the programme budget activities (subprogrammes, programme elements, outputs) and related resources as contribution by the United Nations towards the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The report should also contain proposals by the Secretary-General for the effective solution of ECA's persistent high vacancy rate. Pending consideration of the above report by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, in consultation with AJABQ, should ensure that, as recommended in paragraph 137 of the CPC report, adequate resources were made available to ECA for the full implementation of its work programme and priorities".

23. Mr. FIGUEIRA (Brazil) requested that the text of the proposal should be circulated to delegations.

24. The CHAIRMAN replied that that would be done. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on Section 13 as contained in paragraphs 134-140 of its report (A/42/16 (Part I)).

25. It was so decided.

26. Mr. KLUFT (Netherlands) endorsed the request by the representative of Brazil and asked that the text should be circulated before the Committee took a decision on the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

Section 29. Conference and library services

27. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the problems of storage and its costs in organizations of the United Nations system (A/42/295, 673 and 724 and Corr.1 and A/41/806 and Corr.1).

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the JIU report on problems of storage of documents related rather to section 28D. In any event, the Advisory Committee's report on the matter would be issued in the forthcoming week. On the other hand, the Secretary-General's report entitled "Unified conference services for the United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre" (A/C.5/42/22) was directly relevant to section 29.

29. The Secretary-General's original proposal (\$309,201,900) and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (\$296,564,400) had not been revised because of the measures described by the Secretary-General in document A/42/234 and its update. The breakdown among the three duty stations under consideration of the cost of conference services and library services was given in paragraph 29.2 of the Advisory Committee's report. The estimate for conference services alone amounted to \$287,711,500, including \$41,093,100 for temporary assistance for meetings. The

(Mr. Maëlle)

number and nature of the language posts proposed for each duty station were shown in paragraph 29.9. In paragraph 29.11, the Advisory Committee commented on the impact of the recruitment freeze.

30. In paragraphs 29.13, 29.14, 29.17 and 29.18, the Advisory Committee explained why it had not been able to analyse in depth the estimates submitted under section 29, namely, because of the inadequate progress in the co-ordination of conference-servicing activities at New York, Geneva and Vienna, particularly in matters related to the harmonization of nomenclature, methods of compiling data on work-load, introduction of new technology and submission of budget proposals. In that regard, he drew the Fifth Committee's attention to paragraph 29.14. Since the introduction of new technology called for a review of existing work-load standards, the Advisory Committee was recommending in paragraph 29.18 that revised work-load standards applicable to all duty stations should be submitted to it.

31. In paragraphs 29.25 to 29.27, the Advisory Committee referred to the information which had been provided to it by the Secretariat on editorial functions at Headquarters, particularly on the number of services responsible for such functions. The position expressed in paragraph 29.26 touched on a matter which had already been raised during the Fifth Committee's consideration of section 8 and section 1.

32. Paragraphs 29.28 to 29.33 dealt with the measures proposed by the Secretary-General in order to eliminate the backlog in the publication of the United Nations Treaty Series. In the light of the information which it had received, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the Secretary-General should not submit the scheduled fourth progress report on the subject to the General Assembly at the current session.

33. The Secretary-General's report on the possible establishment of unified conference services at Vienna (A/C.5/42/22) contained the background of the question, an account of recent developments, the observations of the Secretary-General and the annexed recommendations of an advisory committee which had been established by the United Nations, UNIDO and IAEA to consider the matter. The results of the consultations as described in the Secretary-General's report were disappointing. The Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly take note of the Secretary-General's report.

34. Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) recalled that a number of delegations had on several occasions emphasized their attachment to linguistic pluralism, a factor which demonstrated the universal character of the Organization. The recommendations worked out by the Advisory Committee with a view to solving the problem posed by the lack of comparability in data relating to meetings did not go far enough. Account should be taken of, among other things, the status of the various languages. Given the importance of conference services, the units which were responsible for providing such services must be allocated the resources which they required in order properly to discharge their functions. The recruitment freeze should be lifted for language services, and the related comment in paragraph 29.22

(Mr. Sefiani, Morocco)

of the Advisory Committee's report was encouraging. Qualified staff must be recruited not only at Vienna but at all conference centres. In paragraph 29.24, the Advisory Committee called for a reduction of \$3.1 million in the estimate for temporary assistance for meetings. That figure appeared to be high; it might perhaps be better to adhere entirely to the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General. The Secretariat was endeavouring to provide adequate services despite the restrictions, but it would perhaps be difficult for it to continue to do so with the level of resources proposed. In any event, no reduction should be made at the expense of particular languages.

35. Ms. ZHANG Xian (China) pointed out that the estimates submitted under section 29 represented more than 18 per cent of the total appropriations envisaged for the biennium 1988-1989 and that, out of 11,169 posts included in the regular budget, 2,515 posts related to conference services. That gave an indication of how important those services were for the proper functioning of the Organization. As a result of the financial difficulties and staff reductions, the Department of Conference Services was carrying out its duties under very difficult conditions. Her delegation believed that the Department should have a guaranteed level of resources at its disposal and benefit from a suspension of the recruitment freeze. As indicated in paragraph 29.24 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/42/7), the recommended reduction of \$3.1 million basically related to temporary assistance for meetings. Such a reduction would inevitably have negative consequences for the smooth functioning of the Department. On a more general level, her delegation, like the delegation of Morocco, feared that the current difficulties would compromise the equal treatment of languages in the Organization. In that context, she recalled that, pursuant to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 3189 (XXVIII) and 36/117 B, a decision had been taken, *inter alia*, to establish a Chinese unit in the Official Records Editing Section. The Secretary-General had previously proposed the transfer of three Chinese translation posts for that purpose. Although it believed that translators and editors were not really interchangeable, her delegation had, in a spirit of co-operation inspired by the crisis, accepted a postponement in the establishment of the Chinese editing unit and temporarily contented itself with the proposed transfer. However, it now noted with regret that no measure had yet been taken towards the establishment of such a unit, as indicated in paragraph 29.27 of the Advisory Committee's report. It would like to know why and hoped that the Chinese editing unit would be set up as soon as possible.

36. Mr. EL-MEKKI (Sudan) said that his delegation, although endorsing the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee, believed that the Secretariat should provide more detailed information on equal treatment of the Organization's official languages and take all the measures necessary to guarantee respect for such equality.

37. Mr. BOUR (France) said that, given the responsibility of the Department of Conference Services to enable Member States to communicate with each other, the estimates requested under section 29 would never be excessive. The Secretary-General's estimates represented a reduction of 0.5 per cent from the

(M. Bour, France)

revised appropriation for 1986-1987. That reduction was in line with the objective laid down in resolution 41/213 but was slightly higher than the reductions planned in other departments. Furthermore, although the budget took account - for the first time - of non-recurrent items, the estimates for section 29 were lower than those of previous bienniums; that showed how far-reaching the reductions were. The reductions had been calculated on the basis of an average vacancy rate of 12 per cent but, in view of the importance of the services it provided, it was obvious that recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 should not be automatically applied to the Department. His delegation was sure that the Secretary-General would take the necessary measures to apply the recommendation in such a manner that the existence and quality of conference services would not be called into question.

38. According to the information provided by the Advisory Committee, the rate of vacancies in interpretation services was currently 13 per cent on average, the actual figures varying according to duty station. It did not seem possible that such a freeze should be maintained and his delegation believed that, in certain cases, the recruitment freeze should be lifted for interpretation services. Moreover, those services were not the only ones concerned. All language posts should be considered (translators, reference clerks, editors, proofreaders, etc.) in order to ensure that recommendation 15 was applied with flexibility. Delegations were rightly concerned by the vacancy rate applied to the Department's permanent posts, since it was important that the Organization should have sufficient permanent staff at its disposal to provide conference services other than during sessions of the General Assembly.

39. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the proposed programme budget had been drawn up for the first time on a full-cost basis, in the light of average actual expenditure over the past five years. While that methodology appeared to be reasonable and judicious, account should also be taken of the necessary balance between permanent posts and temporary-assistance requirements. In paragraph 29.20 of its report, the Advisory Committee questioned the assumption with regard to temporary assistance because it believed that the implementation of resolution 41/213 should result in a rationalization of conference services and thus a reduction in the number and duration of meetings. Noting, however, that there were no developments in that direction, his delegation believed that the primary concern with respect to section 29 must be to ensure the provision of sufficient resources to enable the Secretariat to meet the demand arising from the mandates accorded by deliberating bodies, which instead entailed an increase in conference services. In those circumstances, it was difficult for his delegation to endorse paragraph 29.20 of the Advisory Committee's report and to approve the recommended reduction of \$3.1 million for temporary assistance. Inasmuch as the practice of budgeting on a full-cost basis was being applied, there should not have to be such a reduction, unless the Secretariat could guarantee that measures would be taken in connection with the recruitment freeze and the vacancy rate for permanent posts. It was essential that the Department of Conference Services should have at its disposal all the resources necessary to accommodate the calendar of conferences which was to be approved for 1988-1989. It was for that reason that his delegation would withdraw its reservations with respect to the Advisory Committee's recommendations

(Mr. Bour, France)

only if the Secretariat provided an assurance that the proposed reductions would be offset by improvements relating to permanent posts.

40. Mrs. FRIESSNIGG (Austria) said that, despite the decision taken at the fortieth session to strengthen the team of interpreters at Vienna, 12 posts out of 20 were vacant, which meant a vacancy rate of more than 50 per cent for permanent posts (table 29.10 of the report of the Advisory Committee). The use of free-lance interpreters was more expensive, and she therefore requested that immediate steps should be taken to fill the vacant posts in Vienna.

41. Mr. HOH (United States of America) said that his delegation shared the concern of other delegations over the Organization's need for adequate conference services. In terms of programmes, it was clear that the holding of intergovernmental meetings was the Organization's primary programmatic activity and its raison d'être. Recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 must be applied with due flexibility. Specifically, exceptions to the recruitment freeze were justified, as paragraph 29.11 of the report of the Advisory Committee showed, when it was a matter of providing the necessary interpretation services and avoiding the use of more expensive free-lance interpreters for that purpose. The Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$3.1 million for temporary personnel on the understanding that the Secretary-General had the necessary flexibility to transfer resources within section 29.

42. The technical innovations proposed by the Department must be reflected in increased activity, improved services and savings. If expected savings did not materialize, the Member States must take a closer look at those innovations and question their effectiveness. As for the pilot project for the selective dissemination of information (SDI) mentioned in paragraph 29.40 of section 29 of the proposed programme budget [para. (ii) (c)], his delegation had no objection but would like details of the kind of information provided and the users for which it was intended, in order to get a better picture of the nature of that service and assure itself that the considerable expansion proposed really met a need. It would also like systematic monitoring of that and the other information services referred to in section 29, so that the Member States could verify their usefulness.

43. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that his delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee but was hesitant about the extent of the reduction recommended. As the Chinese delegation had pointed out, section 29 was a sizeable part of the budget as a whole (18 per cent). He noted that under section 28, which was the next largest section in terms of the appropriations requested, no reduction of resources was planned. In a time of crisis, one must of course be sure that the Organization's resources were used with optimum effectiveness, but it could not be over-emphasized that without adequate conference services the Organization simply could not function. He therefore hoped that proposals would be made during the second reading which would enable the Fifth Committee to approve the appropriations initially requested.

(Mr. Mudho, Kenya)

44. As for the more specific question of conference services for Nairobi, the Secretariat had indicated that the interpreters and specialized conference personnel had been provided by Geneva. His delegation wondered whether it would not be more economical and more efficient to have a team on the spot which would provide conference services rather than to send personnel from Geneva.

45. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) stressed that the magnitude of the resources provided for section 29 indicated how important conference services were. His delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the understanding that the Secretary-General had enough flexibility to transfer appropriations between items under section 29. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that the report on the establishment of unified conference services in Vienna (A/C.5/42/22) provided no new information. In view of the lack of progress on that point, his delegation would like to know whether in the past two years the governing bodies of IAEA and UNIDO had been formally consulted about the idea of unified conference services, and whether their views on the subject differed from those of the General Assembly, or whether the problems arose from differences of opinion among the executive heads.

46. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) noted that the Department of Conference Services was operating under difficult conditions because of the vacancy rate. Recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 therefore had to be applied with flexibility. The implementation of the measures referred to in paragraph 29.21 of the report of the Advisory Committee seemed premature, to say the least. As for the observation made in paragraph 29.24, what was the point of saying that the Secretary-General had the necessary flexibility to transfer resources if the resources themselves were lacking? Everyone knew that all of the resources of the Department of Conference Services were now being used judiciously. In those circumstances, what was the point of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee? His delegation therefore felt that the appropriations requested by the Secretary-General for that section, and particularly for temporary assistance, would best meet the Department's needs.

47. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen), stressing the need for parity between the six official languages of the Organization, asked why, in paragraph 29.24 of section 29 of the proposed programme budget (programme element 1.2 of the sub-programme "Translation"), the outputs provided for included summary records in English, French and Spanish but not in the other languages. With respect to language interpretation services in Geneva (para. 29.68), the Arabic version of the document referred to all the official languages except Arabic. His delegation would like clarification of those two points.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.