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**FORTY-SECOND SESSION**

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**FIFTH COMMITTEE**  
47th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 27 November 1987  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th 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 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 115 AND 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/41/806 and Corr.1; 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/42/295, 512, 532, 640, 673 and 724 and Corr.1; A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 29. Conference and library services (continued)

1. Mr. EAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as the representative of China had acknowledged, the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989 was transitional and included only posts which were already in the 1986-1987 staffing table. As such, it did not include the additional posts required to establish a Chinese editorial unit in the Editorial Service. Planned redeployments and temporary hiring to launch the unit had been deferred in 1986-1987 as part of the economy measures. That left two possibilities: either to create new posts or to redeploy existing staff members in a flexible implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of high-level Intergovernmental Experts.

2. He had only a preliminary answer to the United States representative's question concerning the impact of technological innovations on personnel costs in the Department of Conference Services (DCS). The introduction of word processing had resulted in the elimination of 18 posts since 1982. The proposed programme budget for 1988-1989 did not reflect further post reductions because, as mentioned earlier, it included all posts currently in the Organization's staffing table. However, cutbacks would be partially reflected in the revised estimates. No interpretation or translation posts would be affected. The data requested by the United States delegation on the project for selective dissemination of information (SDI) at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library was not yet available.

3. Replying to the representative of the United Kingdom, he said that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had been consulted in 1985 - when it was still part of the United Nations - on the question of unified conference services in Vienna. Its response had been inconclusive and, to his knowledge, neither UNIDO nor the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had been consulted since. Internal difficulties still appeared to be a major obstacle.

4. In reply to the representative of Yemen, he said it was true that original summary records were drafted in English, French and Spanish only. However, the original records were then translated into all the official languages of the United Nations and issued simultaneously. In answer to a question from the Kenyan delegation, he said that the pattern of meetings in Nairobi did not justify the establishment of a permanent staff of interpreters there. It was still less costly to send interpreters from Geneva to Nairobi.

5. Ms. ZHANG Xian (China) said that the delay in establishing a Chinese editorial service could not be convincingly attributed to economy measures. The Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division himself had indicated that the unit would not require any additional expenditure - only redeployment of three posts from the Chinese Translation Service. DCS had been proceeding in that direction, but had met with obstacles at some stage. The part played by the Programme Planning and Budget Division in the matter should be clarified. The Director of that Division had referred to two options, but had given no indication of the Secretariat's intentions concerning either one. There had also been no comment on the observations made by a number of delegations on the inadequacy of temporary assistance for conference-servicing.

6. Mr. VAHER (Canada) said that DCS played a vital role in enabling Member States to communicate with each other and with the Secretariat, and in circulating documents in all of the Organization's official languages. Therefore, DCS must have sufficient resources to perform its functions fully. The real growth rate of 1 per cent in the appropriations requested for DCS was lower than the overall rate of 1.5 per cent for the biennium 1988-1989. In Vienna, where the vacancy rate was as high as 60 per cent, the Department could not possibly carry out its mandate. Consequently, in implementing recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts the aim should be a 15 per cent reduction overall. The staff of the language services and the Economic Commission for Africa should be reduced by less than that figure or even increased with the difference to be made up in other budget sections. The recruitment freeze was necessary, but should be implemented in a cost-effective manner. An exception should be made in the case of the interpretation services, where it had become necessary to hire short-term free-lance interpreters at higher cost. Free-lance interpreters must be used to provide short-term services only, and never for the purpose of meeting year-round requirements.

7. Mr. GUPTA (India), referring to the statement by the Canadian representative, said that reductions in permanent staff were of questionable value if they had resulted in a \$3 million increase in the requirement for temporary assistance. The Secretariat should indicate whether the increase was due to cuts in permanent staff or to other factors, and how the situation was expected to develop in future.

8. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) responding to the representative of China, said that the economy measures had not affected the redeployment of staff, but rather the provision of temporary assistance, without which a Chinese editorial service could not be operational. Redeployment was the only feasible option of the two he had indicated.

9. Replying to the representative of India, he said that under the new budget format temporary assistance was being treated as a "perennial" activity. Temporary assistance had been increased in order to sustain the pattern of meetings experienced during the past five years - and not because of cutbacks in permanent staff. As yet, there had been no indication of how recommendation 15 would affect individual budget sections. In any case, it was the Fifth Committee's prerogative to decide on any given recommendation by ACABQ.

10. Mr. GUPTA (India) said that it was difficult to understand the Secretariat's answer to his question. Delegations had been told that the increase in the estimates for temporary assistance was not due to reductions in the permanent staff. He wondered whether the increased amount requested meant that DCS would be servicing a greater number of meetings, or whether the increase could be justified on some other basis.
11. Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) said that, as document A/42/6 (Sect. 29) amply explained, an increase in temporary assistance resources would eliminate the need for "add-ons". Some delegations had questioned the ACABQ recommendation, because in the past, additional appropriations had been requested for meetings outside regular General Assembly sessions.
12. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) drew attention to paragraph 29.46 of document A/42/6 (Sect. 29) and said that it confirmed the statement by the Moroccan representative. The increase in the provision for temporary assistance would avoid requests for additional resources to service meetings not included in the original calendar of conferences, particularly in New York. The temporary assistance estimate had been based on the average of additional amounts requested in the past five years.
13. Mr. BOUR (France) said that his delegation had already asked what would happen if temporary assistance resources were not sufficient to cover unscheduled meetings. His delegation wondered whether the contingency fund would be drawn upon in such circumstances or whether the traditional method for meeting additional expenses would be used.
14. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretary-General's budget proposals were based on the assumption that no significant additional demands would be placed on DCS and that Member States would attempt to avoid the proliferation of meetings. In reply to the representative of France, he said that the budget, as proposed, did not provide for recourse to a contingency fund. The resources allocated should be sufficient to cover the same level of meetings as in previous years. If additional resources should be required, the Secretary-General would have no choice but to submit revised estimates.
15. Mr. BOUR (France) said that the Secretariat's reply confirmed that the reduction proposed by ACABQ was not justified. The amount requested by the Secretary-General should be approved.
16. Ms. ZHANG Xian (China) expressed concern at the possible consequences for programme implementation of the recruitment freeze combined with a \$3.1 million reduction in temporary assistance. General Assembly resolution 41/213 called for flexibility but it was doubtful whether the Secretary-General would have much flexibility if the resources available to him were further reduced. Some of the regional centres relied almost exclusively on temporary assistance for language services and a reduction of \$3.1 million would hardly help.

(Ms. Zhang Xian, China)

17. She had noted with concern that the proposal concerning the establishment of a Chinese unit in the official records service, contained in paragraph 29.28 of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 1986-1987, as approved by the General Assembly, had not yet been implemented. Her delegation had raised the question as long ago as 1985 and hoped that positive action would be taken before a further two years has elapsed.

18. Mr. BOUR (France) pointed out that, in paragraph 29.24 of its report, the Advisory Committee, in recommending a \$3.1 million reduction for temporary assistance, had taken into account the fact that the Secretary-General had the necessary flexibility to transfer resources within section 29. In the view of his delegation it was not enough for the Secretary-General to have flexibility; he must also have adequate resources to transfer. He would like to know what steps the Secretary-General would take if the allocation for temporary assistance was reduced by \$3.1 million. What would be the situation regarding the permanent staff?

19. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller), replying to the representative of France, said that the current economy measures, including the recruitment freeze, would end on 31 December 1987 because the legislative authority granted to the Secretary-General to impose such measures would end at the same time as the 1986-1987 programme budget. The Secretariat had been careful to avoid transferring the 1986-1987 economy measures into the environment of the new programme budget for 1988-1989.

20. The Secretariat had been severely hampered by the vacancies resulting from the recruitment freeze but not all departments and offices had been affected to the same extent. Although the vacancy rate in DCS was lower than the average because of the essential nature of the services it provided, the language services were nevertheless experiencing difficulties. One of the problems faced in preparing the programme budget proposals had been how to reduce expenditures without curtailing programmes. The staffing table had been maintained at 100 per cent and resources had been requested at a significantly lower rate than historically, both for Professional and General Service staff. In April 1987, instructions had been issued to programme managers asking them to review their requirements in order to reduce staff while avoiding a negative impact on programmes. Not all departments had submitted their proposals as yet. The Post Review Group had been established to review the proposals and expected to complete its work by the end of January 1988. Flexibility would be observed in applying recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. In order to deal effectively with the reduction in staff, however, the Secretariat must know what the General Assembly intended to do about the number of meetings to be held during the biennium. In that connection, the budget proposals assumed that Member States themselves would observe the discipline which they had mandated for the Organization.

21. Mr. BOUR (France) said that it was clear from what the Controller had said that the Secretariat could not give a precise answer at the current stage and must therefore be given a degree of flexibility. The reduction of \$3.1 million recommended by ACABQ in the estimate for temporary assistance should not be

(Mr. Bour, France)

approved until the Fifth Committee come to consider the revised estimates. His delegation therefore considered that the estimate for section 29 could be adopted in first reading on the understanding that it would be taken up in the context of another item before the second reading.

22. Mr. HOH (United States of America) said that his delegation shared the concern that conference services should be provided at a level which was adequate to meet the needs of Member States. It understood that the estimates for section 29 were based on the assumption that 100 per cent of anticipated requirements were to be met. In fact, given the procedure normally followed for forecasting conference-servicing requirements, only when the consolidated statement was prepared would the Fifth Committee be able to determine whether it would be possible to meet all the anticipated requirements from within the approved appropriations. The Advisory Committee was recommending reductions from what it considered to be an inflated base. As in the case of other sections of the budget, many of the reforms and other proposals which the Secretariat planned to implement were not fully reflected in section 29.

23. In the view of his delegation, the level of the proposed budget was more than adequate to provide the services necessary. As had been agreed at the beginning of the first reading, the Advisory Committee's general recommendations could be considered only after the first reading had been completed since they all derived from the same assumptions and applied in greater or lesser degree to all sections. In particular, his delegation did not feel that the question of reducing the provision for contractual services could be separated from the other general recommendations of ACABQ. It therefore agreed with the representative of France that the question could not be acted on separately and should be addressed in the context of the Fifth Committee's review of the general recommendations of ACABQ.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objections, he would consider that the Committee wished to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning section 29 (A/42/16 (Part I), paras. 225-226).

25. It was so decided.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the understanding that the general recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 would be dealt with before the second reading, the Committee could take action on section 29.

27. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation of \$296,564,400 under section 29 for the biennium 1988-1989 was approved in first reading without objection.

Section 27. Public information (continued)

28. The CHAIRMAN announced that an informal paper summarizing the Secretariat's replies to questions on section 27 was being distributed to delegations.

29. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller), replying to questions raised by delegations on section 27, said that he had noted the understanding expressed by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union and Trinidad and Tobago, to the effect that approval of section 27 would be subject to the submission of revised estimates through CPC and ACABQ in 1988, taking into account the views expressed in the current debate. In that connection he recalled the conclusions reflected in paragraph 30 of the CPC report (A/41/16 (Part II)), to the effect that CPC would review the question of the programme structure of DPI at its twenty-eighth session in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget and the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan. In that regard, CPC had requested that, in drawing up his revised programme budget proposals, the Secretary-General should take account of the views expressed by members of that Committee.

30. Concerning the reference by the representative of Belgium to the publications policies of the Organization, he assumed that those issues would be dealt with, as agreed by the Committee, during the informal consultations that would take place following the first reading of the proposed programme budget.

31. In reply to the representative of Poland, he said he trusted that the informal paper which had been circulated would provide clarification on the question of consultants and other contractual services.

32. The representatives of Cameroon, Kenya, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania had sought clarification regarding the use of the words "client approval" used in an internal Secretariat document dealing with the reorganization of the Department of Public Information (DPI). The term was intended to mean the "user" or substantive department or office concerned with the particular project. Delegations would in the mean time have received the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of DPI, dated 2 November 1987, which described in broad terms the structure which would be phased in for the Department. In that connection he wished to make it very clear, on behalf of the Secretary-General, that the revised estimates for DPI, to be submitted to the General Assembly in 1988 through CPC and ACABQ, would be drawn up to reflect the overall level of resources appropriated by the Fifth Committee at the current session and the inventory of mandated programmes recommended for approval by CPC.

33. With reference to points made by the representatives of Cameroon, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania relating to questions of administrative structure and nomenclature, he would like to clarify that, in the preparation of the revised estimates, the Secretary-General would effect the necessary fine-tuning of the administrative structure of the Department so as to take due account of the views of Member States as reflected in the debates of various intergovernmental bodies and, in particular, those expressed during the Fifth Committee's consideration of the issue.

34. Mr. LADVOUZI (Algeria) said that the Committee should adopt section 27 as proposed, together with the amendments recommended by the Advisory Committee, and revert to the restructuring problem at a later stage. In his delegation's view, some intergovernmental organ must take a decision on the restructuring and if the Special Political Committee did not do so, the Fifth Committee might have to fill the gap. He would also like to know what stage the restructuring had reached. Was the Secretariat still reflecting on the matter together with Member States or was the plan actually being implemented? In approving the estimates for section 27 the Fifth Committee should expressly indicate that, for the time being, there should be no change in the amount budgeted, the programmes planned or the structure of DPI.

35. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) asked why no senior officials of DPI had come to the Committee to answer the questions that had been asked. Section 27 was of great interest and importance to all delegations, and in the circumstances a conference room paper was still necessary.

36. Mr. MOUSSAKI (Congo) thanked the Secretariat for the informal paper summarizing the replies already given to the Committee, but said that, on looking through the document, he found that his delegation's questions remained unanswered. He recalled that he had conveyed a formal request from his Government for certain information. If the list of names and nationalities of officials that he had asked for was too long, he would confine his request to the names and nationalities of the heads of divisions, services, sections, and units. Regarding post requirements for the Radio Services Division, he noted that provision was made for three French-speaking posts, two of them for Africa. He would like to know whether those posts had been filled and, if not, why not. In Africa, particularly in the Congo, radio was the medium with the widest reach. In 1986, broadcasting in two African languages had been discontinued and for Central Africa there was broadcasting only in French. He would like to know how DPI intended to reinforce that service, based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution. He asked how many posts were envisaged in the new structure for the French, English, Swahili and Portuguese languages.

37. The aim of the proposed centralization of the information services was obscure. Standardization was outdated as a concept. All the major world radio services had specialized sections covering specific regions, and the United Nations should take the same approach. Regarding the proposed television service, he would like to know what content was intended for the proposed television magazines and whether there would be enough time to deliver a serious message. Lastly, he asked how many anti-apartheid programmes a year were proposed under the old structure and how many it was intended to produce under the new arrangements.

38. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) said that there should be a clear understanding that approval of section 27 did not imply acceptance of the new structure of DPI.

39. Mr. NGAIZA (United Republic of Tanzania) regretted that an informal summary of the Secretariat's replies had been provided instead of the conference room paper requested. He also felt that a proviso must be attached to section 27 before the Committee could approve it. The descriptions of the Department's programmes of



(Mr. Ngaiza, United Republic  
of Tanzania)

activity in section 27 did not tally with the chart in the Secretary-General's bulletin on the new structure of DPI (ST/SGB/Organization/DPI).

40. Mr. CHACON (Costa Rica) said that many questions had been left unanswered. His delegation shared the views expressed at the previous meeting by the representatives of Japan, Cameroon, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania regarding the restructuring of DPI. Instead of the Department's being streamlined, more levels seemed to have been added, such as the new Bureau of Programme Operations, for which, as the delegation of Japan had noted, there was no precedent in the Secretariat. Apparently, the regional approach to radio and television programming was being discarded, although it had been endorsed in many General Assembly resolutions and statements by Member States. Concentration of the kind presented in the restructuring plan could result in information being forced into a single mould, without taking into account the needs of the different regions of the world to which the United Nations message was directed. The function of the regional programming units should be redefined and strengthened rather than weakened.

41. His delegation was also concerned about the use of outside consultants. Although the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information had said that only 60 to 70 per cent of the funds allocated for that purpose had been used, it would appear to have been at the expense of programmes. The delegations of Brazil and Pakistan had noted in the Special Political Committee that there had been no radio programmes in Brazilian Portuguese and Urdu for the last two years. United Nations programmes in Somali, Greek and Hebrew had also been discontinued. While minor sums were being saved on outside radio contractors, large amounts had been paid to consultants from a single country. The point that needed to be explained was why the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had been disregarded and outside consultants engaged for the restructuring exercise, with no use being made of in-house skills. If matters went as planned, DPI would shortly be engaging consultants to decide how much a radio or television service should cost on the basis of conditions in an advanced industrialized country. For a poor, small and indebted country such as Costa Rica, it would be less expensive to bring its own television team to New York than to buy such services from the Organization.

42. Mr. IHEME (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported the suggestion that approval of the programme budget proposals for section 27 should be separated from the endorsement of the planned reorganization of DPI. He asked when the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information would be able to come to the Committee to explain the restructuring. Clearly, the Controller and the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division were unable to do so, since they were not directly involved.

43. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller) regretted that he could not give an immediate answer to the additional questions that had been asked. Regarding the presence of the Under-Secretary-General, he reminded the Committee that programme budget questions were traditionally dealt with by the Department of Administration and Management

(Mr. Gomez)

rather than the substantive programme managers. If the Committee raised questions that went beyond budget and programme considerations, and related to substantive matters, the Office of the Controller, if answering purely on its own, might indeed be better at misinforming than at providing the substantive information requested. Therefore, if the Committee wished to see the representatives of the Secretary-General joined by the Under-Secretary General for Public Information, he was sure that she would be glad to come.

44. In reply to the representative of the Congo, he said that he would make available the list of staff of the United Nations Secretariat referred to in the informal document circulated to the Committee. He could not answer his additional queries for the time being, but would look into the question of names, nationalities and posts at once. He regretted that he was also unable to answer the questions of the representative of Costa Rica, though he was sure that the Under-Secretary-General would be able to do so immediately.

45. The Secretariat had not issued a conference room paper, because that would have meant arranging for translation into all the official languages. He had hoped that the Committee would be willing to work from an informal document in one language. He was ready, however, to put out a conference room paper if the Committee wished it.

46. The procedural question raised by the representative of Algeria and others applied to many sections of the proposed programme budget. Programatically, and in terms of resource base, marking table and so on, those sections reflected the situation as it existed before the adoption of General Assembly resolution 41/213. In the mean time, implementation of the resolution's provisions was proceeding apace. The Fifth Committee was being asked to deal simply with the resource envelope. Only when the revised estimates were submitted would the situation become clearer. At that point, CPC and the Advisory Committee would be able to look at the results of the restructuring and determine whether the assumptions made in estimating the level of resources necessary and planning the programme aspects of the budget still held good.

47. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said that he welcomed the Controller's admission that he was better at misinforming than informing the Committee. His delegation was relieved, none the less, that it could have the conference room paper it had requested.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that conference room papers were normally issued in response to a sense of the Committee after discussion involving the officers of the Committee, or sometimes by the Secretary-General on his own initiative. The production of such papers had financial and other implications. The fact that one delegation requested a conference room paper did not mean that the Secretariat should begin to produce one right away. The Kenyan delegation's request for such a paper had not yet received any formal endorsement in the Committee.

(The Chairman)

49. In the light of the information which the Controller had already provided, he asked the Kenyan representative what ground the requested conference room paper should cover.
50. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) confessed that he would have to go back to the records to be sure exactly what information he wished the conference room paper to include.
51. He had been put in an untenable position: earlier in the day there had been no question that his request for a conference room paper had to be supported by a "sense of the Committee". In his experience, it was enough for one delegation to request such a paper. If there were financial implications, or if the Secretariat was not clear exactly what should go into the paper, those points should have been raised when the request was originally made.
52. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) expressed sympathy with the Kenyan delegation. Two papers had been requested even before the first reading of the budget had begun: one on the current status of the Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development and the other on the proposed restructuring of DPI. The Kenyan representative's question was, therefore, nothing new.
53. It had been admitted during the recent session of CPC that there was a project to recognize DPI, but no dossier on the subject had been put before any intergovernmental body for consideration and approval. Delegations had informally received information about the experts consulted as the project was drawn up, but they could not proceed on hearsay and needed assurance that the normal standards of expertise and equitable geographical distribution had been respected. They also needed to know whether the Secretary-General's bulletin indicating changes in the structure of DPI was an internal document, or required the approval of Member States.
54. The preparation of the conference room paper need not hold up approval of section 27 on the basis of the descriptions given in the Secretary-General's estimates; the paper could be taken up and discussed by the Committee in the context of its debate on item 41.
55. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) said that his delegation had not formally endorsed the original request for a conference room paper in order to save time, but did support the Kenyan request. At least one of the questions his delegation had asked had not been clearly answered by the Controller.
56. Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba) said he failed to understand the Committee's difficulties. Between the first and second readings of the proposed programme budget, the Committee must discuss the Advisory Committee's general recommendations and the implementation of resolution 41/213 during its debate on agenda item 41. In any case, reform was already taking place in many other parts of the Secretariat.
57. It was important for the Fifth Committee to receive clear answers to its questions, and the Secretariat was responsible for providing those answers. When

(Mr. Fontaine-Ortiz, Cuba)

the requested conference room paper had been supplied, delegations would know whether they were satisfied.

58. He suggested that the Committee should begin by endorsing section 27 in its current form in first reading; take up the conference room paper under its consideration of items 41 and 43; and resolve any outstanding issues thereafter. The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information should be in attendance when the Committee discussed the proposals relating to her department.

59. The CHAIRMAN remarked that he had twice tried to bring the Committee to a conclusion on section 27 in first reading, on the same understanding that had applied to the first reading of all other sections; that the Committee's decision should be based on the structures and estimates contained in the Secretary-General's original proposals; and that changes in the organization of the Secretariat would be discussed when the Secretary-General submitted his revised estimates. On each occasion, however, delegations had insisted that they needed to know more about the proposed changes in the Department of Public Information. He intended to return to the records of the Committee in order to see what kind of conference room paper had originally been requested, and took it that the Committee wished such a paper to be presented. He would also arrange an informal meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information in the near future, to allow Committee members to discuss the proposed changes in her department in the context of General Assembly resolution 41/213. On the understanding that the requested conference room paper would be submitted in time for the Committee's debate on agenda item 41, he invited the Committee to approve section 27, subject to the general understandings applicable to all sections of the proposed programme budget, in first reading.

60. Mr. MUDHO (Kenya) said he would be very happy to proceed on that basis.

61. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee endorsed the recommendations relating to section 27 contained in paragraphs 210 to 216 and paragraph 30 of parts I and II, respectively, of the report of CPC (A/42/16).

62. It was so decided.

63. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the appropriations requested by the Secretary-General under section 27B.1(b)(vi)a, "Special public information activities: Question of Palestine".

64. At the request of the delegation of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

65. An appropriation of \$649,200,000 under section 27B.1(b)(vi)a (Special public information activities: Question of Palestine) was approved in first reading by 84 votes to 2, with 13 abstentions.

66. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation had been unable to support the appropriations for special public information activities on the question of Palestine, believing that the activities were of questionable consistency with the Charter and rested on a spurious legal basis. To the extent that the United Nations took up the cause of one party to a dispute - a party, moreover, that refused to comply with Security Council decisions - its position as a forum in which to debate the question of Palestine was compromised, and its reputation as a source of reliable, accurate information was undermined. There was an urgent need to improve the image of the United Nations; but his delegation questioned whether some of the activities in which the Organization engaged, in particular under section 27, improved that image more than they harmed it.

67. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) drew attention to the statement, in paragraph 27.56 of the Secretary-General's budget proposals, that some of the appropriation just approved would go to meet the cost of travel by journalists. She thought it remarkable, when the cost of travel by full-time staff of the Organization was being cut by 20 per cent, that funds should be found to subsidize outside journalists. She wondered whether the practice was commonplace.

68. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen) said that, had his delegation been present when the vote was taken it would have supported the appropriation under section 27B.1(b)(vi)a.

69. The CHAIRMAN said that the point raised by the Portuguese representative would be dealt with after the Committee had finished taking action on the section. He invited the Committee to take a decision on the total appropriation under section 27 recommended by the Advisory Committee, \$73,426,800, on the understanding that the general recommendations of the Advisory Committee as they related to section 27 and the implications of action under General Assembly resolution 41/213 as they applied to the Department of Public Information would be discussed before the section was taken up in second reading; also that the conference room paper requested by the Kenyan delegation would be presented before the second reading of the proposed programme budget.

70. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation of \$73,426,800 under section 27 for the biennium 1988-1989 was approved in first reading without objection.

71. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that, with the exception noted earlier, his delegation had not opposed approval of the budget estimates for section 27. One element of importance to his delegation was that the Committee had just accepted the recommendation of CPC - recommendations adopted by consensus - regarding the conduct of a programme review of the section at the twenty-eighth session of CPC, on the basis of the Secretary-General's revised estimates. His delegation believed that the reform process was important as a means of increasing the efficiency and professionalism of DPI. The Department needed to be reorganized around functions, not just themes. If it could be, it would augur well for the future of the United Nations.

72. The Advisory Committee pointed out (A/42/7, para. 27.b, that the United Nations also engaged in information activities under other sections of the budget which together would cost over \$11 million for the biennium. It would be to the advantage of the Fifth Committee if all those activities were presented and dealt with at one time. His delegation hoped they might all be brought together under a single, more professional Department of Public Information.

73. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation attached considerable importance to DPI, believing that all the concerns of Member States discussed in the General Assembly derived from the fundamental right to information. DPI dealt with some of the highest priorities of the United Nations: the new world information order, the question of Palestine, the question of Namibia, and action to combat apartheid. His delegation maintained that no changes in those programmes should be made without the prior approval of an intergovernmental body.

AGENDA ITEM 122: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.5/42/L.7)

74. Mr. VAN DEN HOUT (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Australia, the Bahamas, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Samoa, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden and his own country, introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/42/L.7. He echoed the Secretary-General's view that respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials was a question of respect for the organizations of the United Nations system. The intention of the draft resolution was to promote the active participation of the General Assembly in discussing the question, which had led to greater awareness and understanding of the difficulties encountered by the organizations and their officials in some countries and regions, while making sure that the Assembly's annual consideration of the question did not become routine or diminish the willingness of Member States to co-operate in resolving outstanding cases.

75. The draft was clearly more comprehensive than past resolutions on the subject. It contained a dynamic new provision in operative paragraph 10, calling on the Secretary-General to use all the means available to him to bring about an expeditious solution of the cases still pending which were mentioned in his report. The final text had been arrived at after wide and intensive consultations. He was sure that the draft could command consensus, and recommended its adoption on that basis.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.