



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico)

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

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United Nations accommodation at Nairobi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 99: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)
(A/35/30 and Corr.1; A/C.5/35/37, 39 and 61)

1. Mr. FAUTEUX (Canada) said that, while his delegation recognized that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had devoted a great deal of time over the past months to the pension question, it regretted that more progress had not been made in the review of the post-adjustment system; nevertheless, it was encouraging to note that a special working group had been set up to study that question. In the meantime, the Commission recommended that 30 points of post adjustment should be consolidated into base salary following the principle of "no loss-no gain", in order to correct certain anomalies and rectify the deficit in the Tax Equalization Fund. His delegation approved of that measure with some reluctance, because it did not see how the mere incorporation of points could help to improve a system which did not work properly. In any case, if that decision was approved, it should be applied without prejudice to future proposals by the Commission with regard to changes in the operation of the post adjustment system.
2. His delegation would also have preferred the Commission to develop methodology for measuring the total compensation of United Nations employees before making further adjustments in other benefits. On the understanding that that work would proceed, his delegation accepted the recommendations of the Commission that the education grant should be reviewed and that the present death grant benefits scheme should not be changed; it also supported the recommendations concerning the classification of duty stations according to conditions of life and work.
3. With regard to the classification of posts, he pointed out that the Secretariat had worked for five years to produce the present system, which represented a considerable outlay of resources. The adoption of a new system would, therefore, render those efforts useless; furthermore, it was estimated that it would take three officers three and a half years to implement that system. Nevertheless, the Master Standard would provide a greater measure of co-ordination throughout the United Nations system. Machinery establishing a close link between that Standard and career opportunities for staff should, however, be set up. In that connexion, he shared the views of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations, which were set out in paragraph 240 of the ICSC report. Nevertheless, as the Advisory Committee indicated in paragraph 44 of its ninth report (A/35/7/Add.8), if there was a lack of vacancies preventing promotion, promotions should be carried out not through reclassification but through other procedures to be worked out with the assistance of the Commission.
4. Lastly, his delegation supported the measures proposed by the Commission which organizations of the common system could introduce to ensure that adverse discrimination did not play a role in the careers of staff members (A/35/30, para. 291).
5. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) said that the Commission played an essential role in the co-ordination and standardization of staff working conditions throughout the United

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Nations system. ICSC was to be congratulated on having submitted a comprehensive report, in which thorough consideration was given in chapter III to the question of pensionable remuneration and pension entitlements as elements of total remuneration both for Professional and higher categories and for General Service staff, and a recommendation was made in that connexion, as requested in section II, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 33/119. He expressed the hope that the Commission would continue to study that complicated question in co-operation with the Joint Staff Pension Board.

6. With respect to the repatriation grant, which was considered in paragraph 14 of the report of the Commission, his delegation supported the decision in section II, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 34/165 that effective 1 January 1980 no staff member should be entitled to any part of the repatriation grant unless evidence of relocation away from the country of the last duty station was provided. That decision had been adopted in order to guarantee the effective implementation of the principle set forth in General Assembly resolution 33/119.

7. With respect to the methodology for measuring the total compensation of international civil servants, it was necessary to establish, with the greatest possible theoretical accuracy, a basis for comparison which would take account of elements such as pension, insurance and other benefits. Particular care should be exercised in evolving principles for comparison which might bring about increases in remuneration.

8. The Commission should continue to study the question of performance appraisal: while international organizations must provide good working conditions for their employees, those employees in turn had the obligation to provide quality services.

9. His delegation considered that the recommendations of the Commission requiring a General Assembly decision were reasonable on the whole. In view of the current rate of inflation and monetary instability, it was particularly necessary to complete the study of modified indices to be used for pension adjustment and of the question of the incorporation of adjustment points in the base salary, as well as the review of the education grant. With regard to that last item, the Secretary-General had estimated in document A/C.5/35/39 that the financial implications of increasing the maximum amount of the education grant would be \$US 900,000, but it should be pointed out that the last increase had been in 1977 and it was well known that educational costs had increased considerably since that time.

10. His delegation accepted the explanations which had been provided concerning the classification of duty stations according to conditions of life and work, with a view to changing the frequency of home leave for staff assigned to difficult duty stations. Nevertheless, the classification itself could create difficulties because, in addition to the objective criteria which would be adopted, account would also have to be taken of the sensitivities of the countries concerned.

11. His delegation endorsed the request made by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations that the Committee should draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fate of staff members who had been subjected to arbitrary

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measures in the performance of their official duties. FICSA pointed out that a number of staff members had been subjected to arrest or arbitrary detention, in disregard for the most elementary principles of human rights and in violation of formal undertakings on the part of the Member States concerned.

12. With regard to other matters, steps should be taken to increase the number of women in higher-level posts in the United Nations system.

13. With regard to the actual presentation of the ICSC report, it was true that the diversity and complexity of the questions dealt with by the Commission made compression difficult but, if the report were more concise, the task of the delegations which had to consider it would be greatly facilitated.

14. It was to be hoped that the differences existing between the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit, particularly with regard to the classification of professional groups, would be ironed out, so that delegations would not have to make a difficult choice between two alternatives.

15. Mr. LANDAU (Austria) said that the report of the International Civil Service Commission, which was both analytical and erudite, was also quite bewildering. There was, for example, the salary system for the Professional and higher categories, the principles of which had been developed many decades previously by Mr. Noblemaire. According to those principles, United Nations salaries were based on the salaries of the highest paying national civil service, which was currently the United States Civil Service. The base salaries were then adjusted to take into account the development of the cost of living at the various duty stations, as well as variations in the rate of exchange between the United States dollar and the currency of the country of the duty station. There was, however, a wide gap between those relatively simple principles and their application. Thus, from the table in annex II of the ICSC report, which showed the salaries for the Professional and higher categories after consolidation of 30 post adjustment points, it could be seen that the net and gross salaries proposed were, particularly at the higher levels, considerably in excess of the salary scales in the United States Civil Service. However, there was no question of opposing the incorporation of post adjustment points in the base salaries, since that operation was entirely in accordance with the internal logic of the system of remuneration. When that system had been designed, it had not, however, been possible to envisage the necessity of dealing with inflation rates and fluctuations of rates of exchange such as those which had been witnessed in recent years and, even after the incorporation of the 30 adjustment points, the new base salaries would not be representative of the remuneration because, at the main duty stations, the post adjustment still represented a large proportion of that remuneration.

16. Another important element in the present system of adjustments was that the pensionable remuneration was increased regularly each time the weighted average of post adjustments increased by at least 5 per cent. Consequently, pensionable remuneration had risen substantially above the base salaries, as was clear from annex II. Annex V contained a table showing pensionable remuneration and the corresponding net salaries after application of staff assessment. That table showed

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that the net salary of a D-1 corresponded to the highest gross salary paid by the United States Civil Service.

17. It could also be noted that the pensionable remuneration reflecting the movement of the weighted average of post adjustments, which was currently 50 per cent above the 1977 base, was still not a full indication of the total remuneration received by Professionals stationed in New York, since at present the post adjustment index for New York stood at 176.6 (1977 base = 100). In the circumstances, the remuneration of international civil servants stationed in New York no longer bore any relation to that of members of the comparator civil service, and it was essential to study the current system closely in order to remedy that problem. He recalled in that regard the remarks by the representative of Pakistan concerning the disproportion existing at the outset between salary levels at New York and Geneva.

18. One solution would be to apply the post adjustment system in such a way that compensation for cost-of-living increases was given fully only at the lowest salary levels, with declining percentages at higher levels. There was an element of regression in the present system, but it was not sufficient. He agreed with the United States representative, who had stated that the higher one's income, the greater the savings that could be made and the greater the flexibility that could be shown in consumption patterns. With regard to the United States delegation's proposal that the staff assessment rate should be made more progressive, his delegation considered that that method would be effective only if it led to a lowering of present net salaries.

19. With regard to the determination of pensionable remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories, he considered that the scales indicated in annex V should be replaced by more realistic figures: for instance, in place of the pensionable remuneration proposed for 1 January 1981, one might use the average pensionable remuneration for the previous three years, which would result in a lowering of pensionable remuneration by approximately 10 per cent.

20. His delegation was bewildered by the results of the local salary surveys carried out in Geneva and New York. The new salary scale for General Service staff recommended by the Commission for Geneva was given in annex VII of the report. The table showed that the maximum net salary for a G-7 was 61,500 Swiss francs or approximately \$40,000, which was a very high salary. Furthermore, the calculation of the gross salary was based on the weighted average of staff assessment rates at various duty stations and not on Geneva income tax rates. Consequently, the gross salary of a G-7 amounted to 100,200 Swiss francs, which was quite near the level of compensation of the most senior officials in the Swiss Civil Service. The Commission had explained in its report that local tax rates changed too frequently for it to take them into account in its establishment of local gross salaries. His delegation was not convinced that that argument held true, since in every salary survey the starting point was gross compensation and not net salary. Moreover, the application of the weighted average of staff assessment rates at the main duty stations led to the absurd result of lowering the staff assessment for General Service staff in New York, and consequently entailing a reduction in pension,

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calculated on the basis of gross salary, while establishing rates for Geneva that were far in excess of the local tax rates. Staff retiring in New York were subject to three income taxes, the combined total of which was higher than the Swiss taxation rate. Consequently, General Service staff retiring in Geneva would be taxed at rates substantially below their staff assessment rates, while staff retiring in New York would be taxed at a very high rate, while receiving a smaller pension than their counterparts in Geneva. It was not surprising that General Service staff in New York were alarmed about that proposal.

21. His delegation went along reluctantly with the proposal to increase the education grant but was uneasy at the fact that, under the present system, the grant was paid to all expatriate officials even if their children were studying in the country of their duty station, whereas such payments were denied to nationals serving at the duty station of their home country. A redefinition of the scope and purpose of the education grant was needed in order not to perpetuate that unjust situation. His delegation also accepted the recommendation of the Commission concerning the death grant.

22. With regard to the Master Standard of job classification, explained in detail in annex XII, his delegation was uneasy about a system which seemed so complex and far removed from reality. Moreover, his delegation was aware that the United Nations Secretariat had already spent a considerable amount of money on classifying jobs in the Secretariat. It had been given to understand that the work was mostly done and that it was apparently satisfactory but would have to be redone so as to comply with the Master Standard established by the Commission. Further classification was needed before Member States could take a decision; his delegation was confident that ICSC would report to the Committee in greater detail the following year on the measures taken to integrate job classification into the career development system.

23. Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he regretted that the Commission had not yet completed the comparison of total compensation between the comparator civil service and the United Nations salary system, the results of which the General Assembly had asked it, in resolution 31/141, to convey to it no later than at its thirty-third session. Member States needed the results in order to be able to reach a decision on the Commission's various recommendations to increase staff members' salaries and allowances. His delegation categorically rejected such a method of working which was contrary to the Noblemaire principle on which the United Nations salary system was based. By putting off doing the work which the General Assembly had assigned to it and instead considering questions of detail, the Commission was placing Member States in a difficult position, for it was asking them to take certain decisions relating to staff members' salaries without providing them with the information they needed. His delegation hoped therefore that the Commission would be in a position to submit its conclusions to the General Assembly at its next session and proposed that, in the meantime, no decision should be taken on the proposals to increase the salary of United Nations staff members.

24. He reminded the Commission that it must comply with the priorities set by the General Assembly and carry out the requested comparison as soon as possible instead

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of dealing with a matter which it had been asked to consider not by the General Assembly but by a non-governmental body, the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions. According to paragraph 217 of the Committee's report "CCAQ considered that the Commission should proceed as a matter of urgency with the classification of duty stations and the implementation of corrective or compensatory measures where necessary". It was surprising that CCAQ, an inter-agency body, was arrogating to itself the right to establish priorities for the Commission, an intergovernmental body, and it was even more surprising that the Commission had agreed with CCAQ.

25. According to paragraph 91 of the Commission's report, the margin of United Nations remuneration over that of the United States Federal Civil Service had risen in the past year from 13.9 to 16 per cent. That being so, his delegation found it hard to understand the proposal made by FICSA on page 13 of document A/C.5/35/37 to the effect that the General Assembly should mandate the Commission to examine the level of base salaries, with a view to adjusting them in such a way that they could attract staff of all nationalities. His delegation categorically rejected that proposal and asked FICSA to be more realistic and to take the interests of Member States more into account. FICSA believed that the organizations were having increasing difficulties in recruiting and retaining the staff they needed (A/35/30, para. 97). His delegation would like the Secretariat to tell the Committee what posts had remained vacant because the persons contacted had felt that the salary offered was not high enough and what Professional staff had resigned on the grounds that they were underpaid.

26. He had looked closely at the reasons which had caused the Commission to propose the consolidation of 30 points of post adjustment into base pay (para. 101). According to the Commission the measure would redress anomalies in the base salary, would help the situation vis-à-vis the Tax Equalization Fund and avoid subjecting too many staff members to deductions from base salary on account of negative post adjustment classes. His delegation found the Commission's explanations superficial and unconvincing and asked for further clarification. In particular, it wished to know why maintaining the base salary at its present level would result in a deficit for the Tax Equalization Fund and why that deficit had not appeared earlier. It would also like to know how many staff members whose base salary was subjected to deductions would find their position altered by the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, and what the deductions eliminated would amount to in toto.

27. The Commission had prepared, under article 13 of its statute, a system of job classification which it was recommending for implementation by all organizations of the common system as from 1 January 1981. It should be recalled, in that connexion, that since 1976, pursuant to a decision by the General Assembly, the Secretariat had been preparing - and had now completed - a job classification system. His delegation would therefore like to know the cost of the work carried out, on the one hand, by the Secretariat and, on the other, by the Commission. It would also like to know how the classification system prepared by the Commission differed from the one prepared by the Secretariat. His delegation had already asked a question to that effect on 19 November in the Working Group on Personnel Questions but no satisfactory answer had yet been provided.

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28. His delegation was concerned at the fact that, in working out that system, the Commission had drawn most of its models from systems used in the private sector. The remuneration of United Nations staff members was set on the basis of the remuneration of the comparator civil service, that of the United States of America. Applying a job classification system that was different from the one used in the United States Civil Service and which was based, in part, on practices followed in the private sector could only lead to abandoning the Noblemaire principle.

29. The Commission recommended in paragraph 253 of its report that the authority to grade posts should be delegated to the Secretariat. It was clear that that recommendation, if followed, would have adverse consequences. The right to determine the number and level of posts was and must remain the prerogative of the General Assembly, which approved the Organization's budget.

30. The classification system proposed by the Commission had other serious shortcomings. A highly respected specialist in such matters, Mr. Bertrand of the Joint Inspection Unit, had criticized the proposed classification system in the Working Group on Personnel Questions. His delegation was therefore unable to accept the Commission's recommendation that the system should be applied as from 1 January 1981. The defects to which his delegation had drawn attention should be remedied, above all, so that the United Nations post classification system would strengthen, and not jeopardize, the Noblemaire principle. As far as the General Service post classification was concerned, the Commission was responsible, under its statute, for formulating common standards in that respect.

31. In chapter V of its report, the Commission made recommendations for improving the emoluments of General Service staff members in several duty stations. The Commission had not thought it necessary to inform the Committee of the financial implications of those recommendations. That was inadmissible. All subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly must comply with the rules in that regard. His delegation therefore requested that the Committee should be informed of the financial implications of all the Commission's recommendations.

32. His delegation had observed that several pages of the Commission's report were devoted to a statement of FICSA's views on the questions concerned. The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/37) containing comments by FICSA. It was difficult to see the point of submitting FICSA's views in two separate United Nations documents, and thus entailing useless expenditure. It was to be hoped that there would be no repetition of that procedure.

33. His delegation was surprised at the Commission's observations on the General Assembly's decision concerning payment of the repatriation grant, as set forth in resolution 34/165, and at the procedure proposed by the Commission for revising that decision. As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Commission could not question decisions taken by the General Assembly. Moreover, to go back on the decision concerning the repatriation grant, as the Commission desired, would involve the Organization in additional expenditure. The Commission should endeavour in all circumstances to achieve economies and to make effective use of the resources placed at the Organization's disposal by Member States; it should

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discharge the responsibilities placed on it by the General Assembly in the interest of all Member States, and not merely in the interest of staff members.

34. Lastly, his delegation noted the steps taken by the Commission to improve the presentation of its report. That, however, was only a first modest step in the right direction. The report was still far too long and was frequently focused on points of minor importance. In addition, the lack of simplicity in dealing with various issues made it difficult to read. The Commission's report suffered in that respect by comparison with the report of the Committee on Contributions and with the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

AGENDA ITEM 101: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)

- (a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/35/585 and Corr.1 to 3, A/35/653)
- (c) REVIEW OF THE RATES OF REIMBURSEMENT TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF TROOP-CONTRIBUTING STATES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.5/35/38; A/35/653)

35. Mr. ÅLGÅRD (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that those countries had provided troops for almost all the peace-keeping forces and observer missions established by the United Nations so far. Of the present strength of approximately 10,000 troops serving in peace-keeping operations, some 2,300 were from the Nordic countries, which were represented in all five current operations. In the view of the Nordic countries, peace-keeping operations were fundamental to United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security and to the effective implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. All Member States therefore had an obligation to support and strengthen the financing of those operations.

36. The Nordic countries wished once more to emphasize the responsibility of all Member States, in accordance with the Charter, to share equitably in financing such operations. It was therefore most regrettable that some Member States refused to pay their assessed contributions, thereby placing an additional and unreasonable financial burden on other Member States. The status of contributions appearing in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/35/585 and A/35/653) showed that, in the case of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), \$54.5 million, or 10 per cent of the total apportionments for 1974-1980 had been apportioned to Member States which had declared that they had no intention of paying. For the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the situation was still more serious, involving as it did a sum of \$84.1 million, or nearly 25 per cent of the total amount apportioned.

37. That situation posed serious problems for Member States which were troop contributors. It must be borne in mind that the Secretary-General must give priority to the settlement of certain operational expenses. That meant that withholdings by some Member States inevitably affected the level of reimbursements made to Governments of troop-contributing States. That was illustrated by the

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(Mr. Ålgård, Norway)

fact that troop contributors to UNIFIL had not yet been fully reimbursed at current rates for wear and tear on personal clothing, gear and equipment, for depreciation of contingent-owned equipment or for supplies provided by Governments to their contingents at the request of the United Nations. Neither had such costs been fully reimbursed to countries contributing troops to UNDOF. The Nordic countries found that situation intolerable, and once again urged Member States that were withholding all or part of their contributions to pay their apportionments without delay.

38. The picture of financial problems with respect to peace-keeping operations would be incomplete without a mention of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus. That operation was financed exclusively through voluntary contributions. Unfortunately, the collection of contributions was far from satisfactory. According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/13972), the total cost of the Force from its inception in March 1964 to 15 June 1980 amounted to \$339.8 million. Payments made to the Special Account for the Force at the time of the report had amounted to approximately \$265.1 million. The difference (\$74.7 million or 22 per cent of the total cost) was borne by the troop-contributing countries, which had so far received reimbursement for troop costs only up to 1 April 1976. That amount was in addition to costs that were always borne by those countries because not all expenses were reimbursed and because, as a result of inflation, the standard rates of reimbursement represented only a very small part of actual troop costs.

39. That situation was of particular concern to developing countries, which could hardly be expected to absorb additional costs. The fundamental principle of equitable geographical representation in peace-keeping forces might thus be jeopardized. A reduction in the number of Member States that were willing to place troops at the Organization's disposal so as to help in maintaining international peace and security would be a serious setback for the Organization.

40. There were also certain practical measures which were of considerable significance. One was payment of apportioned shares at an early date. In his report on the collection of contributions the Secretary-General had stated that in many cases payments were lagging considerably behind. Furthermore, Member States should, as invited by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/114, supply the Secretary-General with information relating to possible stand-by capacities, including logistics, which could, without prejudice to the sovereign decision of the Member State on each occasion, be made available if required, in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of current and future peace-keeping operations.

41. The Nordic countries subscribed to the conclusions reached by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/35/38 to the effect that the reimbursement rates adopted in 1977 no longer provided fair and reasonable compensation to troop contributors for the pay and allowances of their contingents. They therefore supported the proposal to establish new rates of \$950 per man-month for all ranks plus \$280 per man-month for a limited number of specialists. The new rates proposed took into account inflation and escalating costs in the last three years. It should be noted, however, that those rates did not give full compensation to any of the 12 countries which had presented data to the Secretary-General. Furthermore, States

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contributing troops would inevitably have to absorb progressively higher proportions of their costs, due to inflation. Developments in that field should be closely monitored in order to ensure timely adjustment of reimbursement rates.

42. In the view of the Nordic countries, there was every likelihood that peace-keeping forces and military observers would again be used in the future for the peaceful settlement of conflicts, Namibia being the most obvious case in point. However, it might be increasingly difficult to find Member States willing to participate in such operations unless they could be assured that they would be reimbursed in accordance with rules established in advance. It was therefore of vital importance to the future of peace-keeping operations that a solution to the financial problems should be found.

AGENDA ITEM 91: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)

United Nations accommodation at Nairobi (A/C.5/35/35 and Add.1; A/35/7/Add.11)

43. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he preferred not to introduce the report of the Advisory Committee at the current stage but was ready to reply to any questions which the members of the Fifth Committee might wish to put.

44. Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme), introducing the report in document A/C.5/35/35/Add.1, recalled that in 1977 the General Assembly had approved the construction of a permanent headquarters for the United Nations Environment Programme and in 1979 had approved the construction of three office buildings for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, together with additional common service facilities. Preliminary site works (contract I) at Gigiri had commenced in September 1979 and had been completed in May 1980. The tendering process for the main construction (contract II) had started in May 1979. Offers had been received and opened on 31 January 1980. As of the beginning of March 1980, it had been assumed that the Contracts Committee at United Nations Headquarters would make a final recommendation regarding the award of contract II which would be signed by the authorized officials in New York and by the selected contractor.

45. At the request of United Nations Headquarters in New York a two-month extension of the validity of the bids had been secured from all bidders (namely, through 31 May), and another three-week extension from the three lowest bidders (namely, through 21 June).

46. At the end of May 1980, the United Nations Legal Counsel had advised that he (the Executive Director of UNEP) was responsible for awarding the proposed contract II on the recommendation of the UNEP Committee on Contracts (Building).

47. The UNEP Committee on Contracts had met in June 1980 and had had before it the results of bidding, the exchanges of memoranda at Headquarters concerning the construction project and resolution 34/228 of the General Assembly, in which it had declared itself concerned by the increasing costs of construction projects and

(Mr. Tolba, UNEP)

desirous of ensuring that United Nations resources were expended in the most economical manner. The UNEP Committee on Contracts had to take into account the fact that the World Bank and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had decided that they did not require office accommodation at Gigiri. It also took into account the nature of the conferences convened by UNEP, Habitat and other United Nations offices in Nairobi over the past seven years. Under those circumstances, the UNEP Committee on Contracts had recommended that, in the interests of economy, he (the Executive Director) should review the proposed office space requirements of the agencies and the proposed conference facilities and should submit a revised plan to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. The Committee had also recommended that all the bids received should be rejected. He had approved the recommendations of the Committee and had undertaken to review the project in detail with a view to ensuring that economy was secured; he had consequently reappraised real needs with regard to office accommodation, conference and related facilities and common services. Following that detailed analysis, the architect had drawn up a new plan with an estimated cost of 216.6 million Kenyan shillings. Since publication of the report of the Advisory Committee, the quantity surveyor had revealed that an error in estimating costs with respect to the library should reduce that figure to 213.3 million Kenyan shillings.

48. It should be emphasized that the review of the initial project had been undertaken in order to meet the concern expressed by the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly at the increasing costs of construction projects. Other factors could perhaps have been taken into consideration, but that was a matter for the General Assembly and not for him to decide. He was pleased to note that the Advisory Committee had recommended approval of his proposals; the Committee concluded that they were based on a more accurate assessment of current and future requirements than had been the earlier proposals of the Secretary-General.

49. He also wished to clarify certain items of information which he had conveyed to the Advisory Committee and which appeared in its report in document A/35/7/Add.11. The reduction by 708 square metres of the office accommodation for UNEP to which reference was made in paragraph 4 corresponded to an average per capita space allocation of 12 square metres, taking account of the fact that 25 of a total of 481 staff members would not need office space. Concerning foot-note 3 to paragraph 6, he thought that, on the basis of the information of the quantity surveyor, the estimated cost of construction was exaggerated and could not reach the figure of 19 million Kenyan shillings mentioned for 1984. Furthermore, it was because the management of the Kenyatta Conference Centre had informed UNEP that after 1982 the host Government could not assure UNEP that the facilities of the centre would be available for its use for the periods desired and that it would not be possible to award it priority beyond that date that he had recommended the construction of one conference room for 200 participants. With regard to paragraph 11, part of the reduction of the area for information services was accounted for by the conference rooms which would not be built; another part was included in the proposed conference room. Concerning documents and publications,

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a matter dealt with in paragraph 15 of the report of the Advisory Committee, reproduction capacity would increase from 20 million to 60 million pages due not only to the replacement of the existing machines but also to the planned purchase of three new machines before 1982 and of six new machines beginning in 1984. The elimination of 646 square metres of the area of the library should be seen in relation to the total area of 1,996 square metres approved by the General Assembly. The figures given in paragraphs 19 and 20 of the report of the Advisory Committee concerning the financial implications of the approved project had been provided by the representative of the Secretary-General and not by himself; he was therefore not responsible for them.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.