



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 93: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

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

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee in document A/C.2/35/L.53/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 61 (c)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its twentieth and twenty-first sessions held in Geneva

Emoluments of the members of the International Court of Justice (continued)

Establishment of an Information Systems Unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 8.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/35/44 and Corr.1, A/C.5/35/13; A/C.5/35/L.24)

1. Mr. MAGARA (Uganda) noted with regret that no real progress had been made in finding a solution to the financial problems of the United Nations since the establishment by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session of the Negotiating Committee on the Financial Emergency of the United Nations. Indeed, in recent years financial problems had worsened. More than ever before there appeared to be a need to comply with the real growth rates which had been established by the General Assembly during consideration of the medium-term plan for the period 1978-1981, but his delegation took the view that such an approach had its drawbacks; it had therefore urged the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to determine new criteria for setting priorities among programmes.

2. In addition, there was a continuing need to determine the highest priority activities. It was true that, because of the Organization's diversity, its various organs did not draw up their priorities in identical fashion, but it should be possible to harmonize the views of the various intergovernmental bodies with those of the Secretariat, and to improve the co-ordination of the activities of those bodies.

3. His delegation urged those countries which had not so far paid their voluntary contributions, and those unable to pay their assessed contributions through circumstances beyond their control, to do so as soon as possible. It also wished to thank the troop-contributing States for having exercised the greatest patience by agreeing to be paid only when cash was available in the special accounts of UNDOF and UNIFIL.

4. The Secretary-General's report on the financial situation of the United Nations (A/C.5/35/13) indicated that the Organization's short-term deficit, including amounts to be repaid or credited to Member States for contributions to UNEF and for operations in the Congo, stood at \$225.7 million for 1980. At the same time, the amounts withheld by Member States totalled almost \$72 million. Taking into account the fact that, by the end of 1980, cash in hand amounted to only \$6.7 million, the constant diminishing trend in the Organization's financial "cushion" could not but be a matter of concern. With regard to the substantial amounts withheld by Member States on grounds of principle, his delegation, without questioning the rights of those Member States, wished to remind them that they also had obligations to the Organization and that they should ensure that the exercise of their rights stopped short of crippling its financial viability. The amounts withheld by Member States had been greatest in respect to peace-keeping operations. No one could, however, deny that those operations, even if they were not always successful, were in conformity with one of the fundamental aims of the United Nations, namely the maintenance of international peace and security. Member States had a clear duty in that regard: they must meet the financial obligations arising from such operations, in conformity with Article 17 of the Charter.

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(Mr. Magara, Uganda)

5. His delegation could readily understand the circumstances of some least developed countries which had been unable to pay their contributions. It urged all Member States to pay their contributions in convertible currency, particularly those intended for financing the regular programme of technical assistance. There was nothing in the Charter or the Financial Regulations to prohibit the financing of the technical assistance programme from the regular budget. At the same time, it was a matter of concern that a significant portion of resources intended for such activities was absorbed in the administrative and other support costs of funding and executing agencies.

6. There was no doubt that the racist apartheid régime of South Africa was continuing to show arrogance and intransigence by refusing to pay the arrears in its contributions to the regular budget. His delegation had noted with great disappointment that some Member States seemed reluctant to bring pressure to bear on South Africa. It called upon all Member States to take every necessary step to compel South Africa to honour its obligations. It should not be forgotten that the reason why the United Nations had found itself obliged to suspend the rights of that Member State was because that State had violated, and was continuing to violate, the principles of the Organization of which it sought to remain a Member.

7. His delegation noted the efforts made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Committee on Conferences, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to ensure maximum utilization of the limited funds available to the Organization. As one of the least developed countries and one whose economy had been crippled by the world economic crisis, Uganda would none the less always endeavour to meet its financial obligations. It should be emphasized in that connexion that the poorest countries were assigning to the United Nations a substantial portion of the meagre foreign currency available to them, and there was therefore no reason why Member States with higher national incomes should not pay more and on time.

8. In conclusion, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.5/35/L.24, his delegation supported, as a partial solution, the creation of a special reserve account to improve the Organization's liquidity. It also hoped that the Secretary-General would be authorized to issue a special series of stamps on the earth's endangered species and that the proceeds could be used to promote the cause of conservation and the protection of the environment. His country, known to its admirers as "the pearl of Africa", was determined to protect its endangered fauna and flora, and welcomed any proposal which would make the peoples of the world more aware of the need to safeguard that precious heritage and would at the same time help the Organization financially.

9. Mr. CHU Kuei-yu (China) said that his delegation supported draft resolution A/C.5/35/L.24. However, the draft resolution was only the first step towards a lasting solution of the Organization's financial problems. In that regard, it appeared essential for the Negotiating Committee on the Financial Emergency of the United Nations, established by General Assembly resolution 3538 (XXX), to resume work. His delegation therefore hoped that the Committee would be in a position to submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

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10. Mr. FARMER (Australia) queried whether the issue of the new series of stamps on conservation and environmental protection would increase the total sales of postage stamps issued by the Organization and whether it might not in fact lead to a falling off in the proceeds from the sale of other stamps.

11. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that it was difficult to make forecasts in that field. Before issuing stamps, the Organization always gave careful consideration to foreseeable market trends. However, both the volume of sales and the income they produced had appreciably increased in recent years. It was therefore reasonable to anticipate additional income from the new series of stamps.

12. Mr. AGBEBI (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported draft resolution A/C.5/35/L.24.

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

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Second Committee in document A/C.2/35/L.53/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 61 (c) (A/C.5/35/71)

13. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the statement submitted by the Secretary-General revealed that, should the General Assembly decide to reconvene the United Nations Conference on an International Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology, conference servicing costs would amount to not more than \$535,100. Paragraph 2 of the statement indicated that summary records would be provided. The representative of the Secretary-General had informed the Advisory Committee that summary records had been provided for that Conference in the past. Since what was involved was the resumption of the Conference, there was no need to provide for an exception to the provisions of resolution 35/10, which the General Assembly had just adopted on the subject of the limitation of summary records.

14. The Fifth Committee would wish to inform the General Assembly that the adoption of resolution A/C.2/35/L.53/Rev.1 of the Second Committee would entail conference servicing costs, which would be considered within the context of the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the current session of the General Assembly.

15. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) wished to place on record his delegation's opposition to the provision of summary records for the Conference, which was in no way justified, especially in view of the cost. He proposed, therefore, that the sum of \$41,729 to cover the cost of summary records should be deleted from the conference servicing costs.

16. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the proposal just made by the delegation of the United States was in some way an amendment to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. If the Fifth Committee intended to vote on those recommendations, the United States proposal would have to be put to a separate vote.

17. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) inquired as to the procedure to be used in dealing with the United States proposal.

18. Mr. SUEDI (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the question of the summary records raised by the United States delegation had already been resolved by the Second Committee when it had decided, by adopting draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.53/Rev.1, that the United Nations Conference on an International Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology would hold a fourth session. It was doubtful whether it was within the competence of the Fifth Committee to oppose that decision.

19. Mr. BROTDININGRAT (Indonesia) pointed out in that regard that, in paragraph 2 of the statement in document A/C.5/35/71, the Secretary-General indicated that the estimate of the financial implications was based on the assumption that "summary records would be provided for a maximum of seven plenary meetings". It could be asked, therefore, whether the question of summary records had in fact been settled by the Second Committee or whether that was a working hypothesis of the Secretariat.

20. Mr. BEGIN (Director of the Budget Division) pointed out that the meetings in question were in fact the resumption of a conference whose first session had been governed by General Assembly resolution 32/188 which, in paragraph 5, arranged for the provision of summary records. The Secretariat had drawn up its estimates on the basis of that decision, adopting a cautious approach.

21. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Fifth Committee was not authorized to decide whether or not a conference of plenipotentiaries, such as the one in question, could be provided with summary records. That was clearly for the Conference itself to decide. On the other hand, the Fifth Committee could choose whether to approve the request for funds to cover the cost of the summary records, which amounted to \$41,729. But whether it granted that request or not, that did not mean that it authorized or prohibited the provision of summary records. The Conference could arrange for whatever summary records it wished, even if it financed the costs involved from resources available to UNCTAD.

22. The CHAIRMAN recalled that conference servicing costs, calculated on a full-cost basis, would be considered within the framework of the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the current session of the General Assembly, in which the Secretary-General would indicate the amount of additional appropriations needed in the light of the approved pattern of conferences for the year 1981.

23. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that he supported the view expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee: the Fifth Committee could decide on the possible cost of the summary records, but it was not required to decide whether or not they would actually be provided. If the United States delegation wished to make a proposal in that regard, his delegation would be prepared to support the deletion of the amount of \$41,729 requested for summary records. All United Nations organs, including UNCTAD, should be encouraged to do without summary records.

24. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) proposed that the Committee should immediately proceed to a vote on the financial implications under consideration. His delegation would vote against them.

25. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, if it adopted draft resolution A/C.2/35/L.53/Rev.1, conference servicing costs amounting to a maximum of \$535,100 would appear in the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the session.

26. The suggestion was adopted by 73 votes to 2, with 15 abstentions.

27. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted against the financial implications of the draft resolution under consideration because they included expenditure connected with the provision of summary records, which his delegation wanted to dispense with as much as possible.

28. He expressed concern at the manner in which the Fifth Committee dealt with conference servicing costs. He did not understand how the Committee could intervene in the process of evaluation and approval of those costs. Of course, the Secretary-General would submit a consolidated statement towards the end of the session, but the Fifth Committee would not be able to take detailed decisions at that time. The entire procedure was very unclear. The only way in which a delegation could express its opposition to an item was to vote against the approval of the financial implications.

29. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was unfortunate that the proceedings had developed in such a way that no separate vote had been taken on the request for appropriations for summary records, which he would have voted against. He had abstained in the vote on the whole of the implications under consideration, to indicate his belief that the estimates violated General Assembly decisions on summary-record coverage of meetings. In preparing the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the session, the Secretary-General would certainly take account of the observations made by delegations. If not, the Fifth Committee would take the necessary decisions.

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its twentieth and twenty-first sessions held in Geneva (A/C.5/35/46)

30. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General indicated in his report (A/C.5/35/46) that the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its twentieth and twenty-first sessions would give rise to conference servicing costs; those costs were set out in detail in sections A to E. With regard to *section F, which gave a summary of the cost of conference services for the various sections*, he said that the total cost was \$807,500, and not \$808,400 as was indicated in the fifth line of paragraph 18.

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(Mr. Mselle)

31. Of that total, an amount of \$272,722 was for the servicing of meetings held in 1980 in pursuance of resolution 216 (XX) and decision 217 (XX) of the Trade and Development Board. The Secretary-General was not at that stage requesting any supplementary appropriations for those meetings: if necessary, he would request supplementary appropriations in the first performance report on the programme budget for 1980-1981. The amount corresponding to the expenditure to be incurred for meetings scheduled in 1981 (\$534,778) would be considered within the context of the consolidated statement of conference servicing costs which would shortly be submitted to the Fifth Committee. For the time being, the Fifth Committee therefore had no recommendation to make to the General Assembly.

32. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that his Government had always supported and encouraged economic co-operation among developing countries. Nevertheless, his delegation was firmly opposed to making additional appropriations to finance four weeks of meetings devoted to economic co-operation among developing countries, as proposed in document A/C.5/35/46, paragraphs 5 and 6. It was inadmissible as a matter of principle that meetings from which some Member States were expressly excluded should be financed by all Member States. His delegation could not agree to the allocation of Secretariat resources for the exclusive use of one group of Member States, even if the United States were a member of that group. Other delegations should also oppose that violation of the principle of universality.

33. Naturally, if the Secretary-General could meet the other expenditure referred to in document A/C.5/35/46 from existing resources, his delegation would scarcely oppose a redeployment of those resources. He requested a recorded vote on the expenditure referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report of the Secretary-General.

34. Mr. ROOBAERT (Belgium) said that the delegations of the nine member countries of the European Economic Community had reservations on the financial implications of the meetings provided for by resolution 216 (XX) of the Trade and Development Board (A/C.5/35/46, paras. 5 and 6). It was not the Organization's normal practice to assume responsibility for servicing meetings of experts which served one group of Member States exclusively, in violation of the principle of universality. The member countries of the European Economic Community also requested a separate vote on document A/C.5/35/46, paragraphs 5 and 6.

35. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, as had been stated by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General was not, for the time being, requesting any additional appropriation for the meetings to be held in pursuance of resolution 216 (XX), which were objected to by certain delegations. In any event, a vote should be taken on the Advisory Committee's recommendations as a whole. It did not appear possible to take a separate decision on amounts for meetings held in 1980, which, as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had stated, did not appear in the consolidated statement of the cost of conference services to be considered by the Assembly at the end of the session.

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36. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he wondered whether all delegations knew exactly what they were being asked to decide upon. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had made a statement on the report of the Secretary-General, and the United States delegation, supported by the Belgian delegation, had proposed a separate vote on part of the expenditure. Moreover, paragraph 18 of the report of the Secretary-General stated that no additional requirements had been requested in the report, since actual supplementary needs with respect to meetings in 1980 would be examined, and revised appropriations requested, if necessary, under section 29 in the first performance report on the programme budget for 1980-1981. As regards conference servicing requirements for meetings scheduled in 1981, those would be considered in the context of a consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should thus clearly inform the Fifth Committee what it was to vote upon. Perhaps it would be preferable to defer consideration of the item to the following meeting.

37. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the situation was the following: the amount of \$272,722, corresponding to the cost of conference services for meetings held in 1980, would be considered within the context of the first performance report on the programme budget for 1980-1981, which should be submitted shortly. If the Secretary-General was not able to provide that amount from existing resources, he would request supplementary appropriations in the context of that first report: the request would be considered by the Advisory Committee and submitted to the Fifth Committee.

38. The amount for meetings scheduled in 1981, which was estimated at \$534,778, would be considered within the context of the consolidated statement of conference servicing costs, which would also be submitted to the Fifth Committee at the current session.

39. The meetings scheduled in pursuance of resolution 216 (XX) and decision 217 (XX) had probably already been held. With regard more specifically to the meetings held in pursuance of resolution 216 (XX), the United States representative had asked whether the cost of conference services for those meetings, which was estimated at \$153,800, was to be charged to the regular budget of the Organization.

40. The CHAIRMAN said that the sessional committee established in pursuance of decision 217 (XX) of the Trade and Development Board had already met from 15 to 27 September 1980. With regard to the meetings of experts provided for as a part of economic co-operation among developing countries, he did not know the exact date. Consequently, the objections which the representatives of the United States and Belgium had already raised in connexion with those meetings could be restated when the first performance report on the programme budget for 1980-1981 was submitted.

41. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that the procedure for approving conference servicing expenditure had been amended a few years before, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. In earlier years, the Fifth Committee had not waited until the end of the session to consider costs as a whole but had voted in first reading

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(Mr. Stuart, United Kingdom)

on the conference services relating to each draft resolution. A return to that earlier procedure was highly desirable, since the Committee had to some extent lost control over conference servicing expenditure. It was no longer able to ascertain the exact cost of servicing a particular meeting.

42. The question under consideration provided a striking illustration of that loss of control, since it had been stated that the meetings of experts had already taken place and that, consequently, the funds appropriated had already been spent. His delegation found that situation deeply disturbing and believed, in the case in point, that the Committee should take a decision on paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report of the Secretary-General.

43. Mr. FARMER (Australia) said he was astonished to see that paragraphs 5 and 6 of document A/C.5/35/46 referred in the conditional tense to meetings that had actually taken place and had lasted two weeks.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that two weeks of meetings had taken place but that provision was made for a further series of meetings of two weeks' duration.

45. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the calendar of conferences was approved each year for the following year. Thus, with regard to meetings held in 1980, for which conference servicing costs had been approved in 1979, it would not be known whether supplementary estimates were necessary until the first performance report on the programme budget was issued. It was questionable whether there would be any point in voting on the amount of \$272,722 for the 1980 meetings, when it was not yet known whether or not that amount could be provided from existing resources.

46. Mr. FARMER (Australia), referring to paragraph 5 of the report of the Secretary-General, said that if two weeks of meetings actually remained to be held, the corresponding financial allocations must be authorized; it was surprising that the report of the Secretary-General made no reference to such allocations.

47. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the discussion on the question should be deferred to a later meeting, so that the Secretariat could explain what was being submitted for the Committee's approval.

48. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that he wished to explain his views on the meetings of governmental experts referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 of document A/C.5/35/46 at the present meeting rather than when the Committee came to consider the consolidated statement of conference servicing requirements. The question was a most important one for his delegation, which wished to state a position of principle. It would oppose any attempt to deny it that opportunity. It therefore wished to vote on the revised estimates item by item; if necessary, it was prepared to request an opinion from the Legal Counsel.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that he had no intention of denying anyone the opportunity to vote on any item; he merely wanted an explanation of the question on which the Committee was to take a decision. At present the Committee had no clear proposal

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(The Chairman)

before it, and there was nothing to prevent delegations from voting separately on paragraphs 5 and 6 of the revised estimates. He suggested that the discussion should be suspended pending a full clarification of the situation.

50. Consideration of the question was suspended.

Emoluments of the members of the International Court of Justice (continued)
(A/35/7/Add.10; A/C.5/35/33)

51. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said it was his understanding that the proposal made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 21 of his report (A/C.5/35/33) was designed to increase the daily fees of members of the International Court of Justice from \$84 to \$118, the main effect of which would be to increase the pensions of retired judges or their survivors. His delegation was unable to endorse that proposal, which it considered premature and unjustified.

52. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the draft resolution contained in the report of the Advisory Committee and divided into two sections, one relating to the emoluments of the members of the Court and the other to the pension scheme. He invited the Committee to vote on the draft resolution annexed to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/35/7/Add.10).

53. The draft resolution was adopted by 73 votes to 10, with 4 abstentions.

Establishment of an Information Systems Unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (continued) (A/35/7/Add.9; A/C.5/35/32 and Corr.1; A/C.5/35/L.26, L.28)

54. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America), referring to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/32), said that he first wished to correct the historical review of the Information Systems Unit as given in paragraphs 1-8. The decision to establish the Unit in question had been taken at a meeting of service chiefs of the former Department of Economic and Social Affairs in November 1975 - not in 1976 as stated in paragraph 1 of the report of the Secretary-General - and thus before Member States had been properly informed about the project.

55. In the same paragraph, the Secretary-General stated that the establishment of the Unit had been proposed "in recognition of the need to utilize more effectively the information in the many unpublished reports and studies being generated within the United Nations, in order that the knowledge required for project and programme planning be made available". Unfortunately, those admirable principles appeared to have been more often breached than observed.

56. His delegation had found that the reports of the Secretary-General, of the independent UNESCO evaluator and of the Advisory Committee referred sometimes to the Information Systems Unit and sometimes to the Development Information System. Having been informed that the two names covered the same reality, it did not wish to delve into the reasons for that state of affairs. It was stated in paragraph 4 of the report that, at its eighteenth session, the Committee for Programme and

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(Mr. Saddler, United States)

Co-ordination had considered the Development Information System in connexion with the medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983. That paragraph gave the impression that even though the maintenance of the System depended on a decision of the General Assembly, CPC had concluded that the System's activities should be maintained. The Development Information System had, however, never formed part of the medium-term plan for 1980-1983; a careful reading of the report of CPC on its eighteenth session would show (A/33/38, para. 672) that 'the Committee decided to recommend that /the Development Information Services/ should not be submitted as part of the medium-term plan'.

57. It was true that the Secretary-General emphasized in paragraph 4 of his report that CPC had noted that the activities of the Development Information System and those of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development were complementary and should be co-ordinated or integrated. In order to understand that comment, however, the context in which it had been made should be considered. In its report on its eighteenth session, CPC had focused its attention on the work of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems and had noted with regret that the information operations of the United Nations system were poorly co-ordinated, with consequent increased costs for development activities and harmful effects on the development of essential information. It was because of its awareness of the need to improve co-ordination that CPC had concluded that the activities of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development should be co-ordinated or integrated, and emphatically not because it believed that the activities of the Information Systems Unit should be maintained at all costs. That example and many others showed that the report of the Secretary-General should be read with caution.

58. In the face of such a complex and uncertain situation, it was easy to understand why the General Assembly, in section I of its resolution 34/233, had decided that the use of the pilot system should be carefully monitored and that the system should be submitted to the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities. The understanding that the Development Information System would be no more than a pilot project and that the opinion of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems would be available to the Fifth Committee when it next considered the topic had been the basis for the General Assembly's decision in 1979 to extend the project for a year. His delegation had been sorry to read in paragraph 7 of the report that the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems had been unable to include a review of the Development Information System in its work programme for 1980 because it had not met since the resolution had been adopted by the General Assembly. That was all the more unfortunate because one of the representatives of the United Nations to the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems had been present at the meeting at which the Fifth Committee had decided to request the Inter-Organization Board to review the activities of the Information Systems Unit and had not informed the Committee that the Inter-Organization Board was not scheduled to meet before the next session of the General Assembly.

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(Mr. Saddler, United States)

59. In order to comply with the General Assembly's wish to have an independent evaluation of the System, the Secretary-General had requested UNESCO to carry out an evaluation (A/C.5/35/32, para. 7). Unfortunately, the UNESCO evaluator's report had not been made available to the members of the Committee through the normal channels and had been very difficult to obtain. It was to be hoped that such a practice would not be followed in future.

60. His delegation wished to make some positive comments on the report. It particularly welcomed the fact that the Information Systems Unit (ISU) was staffed entirely by women, thus improving the rather lamentable record of the United Nations with regard to female employment. It was also pleased to note that, in paragraph 11, the Secretary-General, in response to the instructions of the General Assembly, indicated a number of ineffective programmes.

61. Paragraph 13 stated that the activities of ISU were concentrated in two areas: (a) the establishment of an information system to provide access to the unpublished reports and studies related to development produced by or for the United Nations; and (b) co-ordination and co-operation with substantive units involved in information analysis and dissemination activities. In connexion with the second field of activity, it should be recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit and the independent evaluator had emphasized that the only justification for ISU's existence was its retrieval activities and not its ancillary activities. The evaluator particularly welcomed the fact that ISU had been relieved of most of its co-ordination responsibilities in order to concentrate on its role as an information system. Paragraph 30 stated that in 1980 ISU's activities had been concentrated on the Development Information System (DIS) owing to a reduction in ISU's staff. Had there been no such reduction, ISU would also have engaged in interorganization co-operation activities. The last sentence of the paragraph went so far as to say that "arrangements for future support of such activities will be made once a decision has been reached on the future of ISU". The Secretary-General's efforts constantly to expand the mandate of ISU should be firmly discouraged.

62. Since the setting up of ISU, its staff had endeavoured to extend its functions and had gone beyond its mandate. For example, paragraph 46 indicated that they had held demonstrations for the Commission on Human Settlements at its session in Mexico City in 1979. To his knowledge the General Assembly had not authorized the staff of ISU to travel for that purpose.

63. In connexion with the System's information activities, the Secretary-General's report indicated that the data base involved information concerning unpublished and selected documents. Information available to his delegation, however, showed that ISU's personnel exercised no discretion with regard to the documents transmitted to it and that selection was carried out by the contributing units. Those units refused to admit that some of their documents might be less important than others, and seemed to have submitted en masse their entire collection of documents.

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(Mr. Saddler, United States)

64. In order to justify the establishment of a computerized retrieval system, the Secretariat had told the Fifth Committee that the archives of the former Department of Economic and Social Affairs were of such vital importance to the process of development that it was necessary to establish a system for the retrieval of such documents. However, the only paper which the Secretariat had submitted in support of that claim contained information which, while extremely interesting, was out of date and therefore useless. It had also been claimed that the system would provide access to unpublished papers which would otherwise be lost. In his delegation's view, that was precisely the type of paper which was of no value. Moreover, those papers of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs which were published by the United Nations were automatically indexed in the United Nations Bibliographic Information System. Anyone requiring a bibliography on a development topic would have to consult two sources: the Development Information System, which would provide him with a list of unpublished papers, and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library information system, which would furnish him with a list of published materials.

65. It seemed that the bulk of the references comprising the System's data base derived from the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development rather than from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the preservation of whose archives had been the ostensible justification for the Information System. The Fifth Committee had therefore been presented with a justification which bore no relation to reality.

66. ISU had endeavoured to attract a sufficiently large clientele. To that end, it had produced and given wide distribution to the publication "Development Information Abstracts", together with a questionnaire. The independent evaluator had, however, concluded in his report that the number of responses from potential users did not permit any conclusions to be drawn. The evaluator justified the retention of ISU on the grounds that the projects which formed the archives of the former Department of Economic and Social Affairs had cost several hundred million dollars and that those substantial sums would be wasted if the documents concerned were lost. In fact, the aim of those projects had been to provide Governments or Secretariat units with specific information, and the delivery of such information itself constituted the successful accomplishment of that objective.

67. In conclusion, he said that ISU was a pilot project which from its very beginning had refused to remain within its mandate. Moreover, the evaluator had concluded in his report that in two and a half years ISU had not achieved the results hoped for in terms of actual service. Finally, while ISU was carrying out its retrieval activities in a satisfactory manner, it did not even have guaranteed access to the documents entered in its data base. Whenever a user requested one of the documents mentioned in the bibliography, the ISU staff were obliged to transmit the request to the service which had produced the texts concerned. It was for that reason that paragraph 65 (g) of the report envisaged microficheing of referenced documents, a proposal which would probably entail requests for additional appropriations.

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(Mr. Saddler, United States)

68. The evaluator had concluded that the value of ISU might be greatly enhanced if it were to become an integral and central component of a world-wide network of sources of development information. However, it would be recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit had taken the view that the only justification for ISU was in providing access to the archives of the former Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Since its inception the Unit had failed to carry out that task.

69. His delegation therefore fully supported the findings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which had concluded in paragraph 12 of its report that the need for ISU and DIS as currently constituted had not been demonstrated and had recommended that the proposed continuation of ISU by financing it from the regular budget should not be approved. His delegation was submitting a draft resolution, distributed as document A/C.5/35/L.26, under which the General Assembly would endorse the statement of reasons put forward by the Advisory Committee and would reiterate the request contained in General Assembly resolution 34/233, section I, that the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems should report to the General Assembly on ISU.

The meeting rose at 11.30 p.m.