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at 3 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 118: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 124: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION  
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 119: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued)

1. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh), speaking in his capacity as the coordinator of informal consultations on agenda item 118, said that a draft resolution had been agreed upon, subject to some minor drafting changes which had yet to be finalized. Moreover, one delegation had stipulated that the Secretariat should make an explanatory statement when the draft resolution was formally adopted.
2. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the relevant draft resolutions contained in the reports of the Sixth Committee on agenda items 144 (Convention on the law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses), 147 (Establishment of an international criminal court), 150 (Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization) and 151 (Measures to eliminate international terrorism), it was understood that the question of the additional meetings requested in connection with those resolutions had been dealt with by the Fifth Committee in the context of its draft resolution on agenda item 118 (Pattern of conferences).
3. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.57 concerning agenda item 40 (A/C.5/51/41)

4. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the adoption of draft resolution A/51/L.57 would renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) until 31 March 1997. Based on the assumptions outlined in paragraph 3 of his statement (A/C.5/51/41), the Secretary-General had estimated that the requirements for that three-month extension of the Mission's mandate would amount to \$7,102,400 net, which was roughly equivalent to the monthly rate of \$2.3 million which the General Assembly had authorized in its resolution 50/216 for the period 1 April to 31 December. The difference of some \$100,000 was due mainly to the effects of recent trends in exchange rates and inflation.
5. The draft resolution provided for only a three-month extension of the Mission's mandate because, although the United Nations would continue to operate in Guatemala after 31 March 1997, the nature and level of its presence were still uncertain. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, by 31 March 1997, the Secretary-General would submit recommendations on the restructuring and staffing of MINUGUA which would provide a clearer indication of the Mission's future requirements. The Secretary-General should have indicated in his statement the procedures he would follow if more resources were required after 31 March 1997.

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6. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/51/L.57, an additional appropriation of \$7,102,400 would be required for 1997 under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. An additional appropriation of \$500,100 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those amounts were not covered by the contingency fund.

7. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that she had been told, in informal consultations with representatives of the Secretariat, that the activities provided for in the draft resolutions referred to in the statements of programme budget implications being considered at the current meeting would not require additional contributions from Member States over and above the amount of the current budget. She asked the Secretariat to confirm that information.

8. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) recalled that, in resolution 50/216, the General Assembly had approved a monthly level of \$2,329,700 for MINUGUA, or approximately \$6,989,000 for three months. However, the Committee was currently being asked to approve an additional \$113,000. Although the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had attributed that difference to variations in exchange rates and inflation, exchange rates had recently been favourable for the United States dollar and should have reduced the Mission's requirements instead of increasing them.

9. Mr. HO (Singapore) asked for confirmation that the statement of programme budget implications under consideration did not take into account the request for military observers submitted by the Government of Guatemala.

10. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Mission's increased requirement for 1997 was due to a 1.6 per cent increase in staff salaries. He confirmed that no action had yet been taken on the request submitted by the Guatemalan Government and that the estimates included only the cost of continuing civilian operations in Guatemala. With respect to the Mexican delegation's comment, he said that the Secretariat had not given, and could not give, any official assurances that no further contributions would be needed. In fact, paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/51/41) indicated that it was not anticipated that 1997 requirements in relation to MINUGUA could be absorbed from within the provisions under section 3 of the programme budget for 1996-1997. Moreover, paragraphs 6 and 7 of the first performance report (A/C.5/51/38) noted that additional requirements were anticipated as a result of the General Assembly's actions at its current session. Because of the actions taken thus far, the total amount of the budget had risen from the \$2,602,693,800 mentioned in the first performance report to \$2,614,700,000.

11. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) asked what financial ramifications would result if the Fifth Committee deferred its consideration of the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), particularly those concerning the proposed pay increase and the common staff assessment, until the resumed session in the spring of 1997.

12. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that he would need time in which to prepare an answer based on various assumptions, which would, in turn, depend on the outcome of the Fifth Committee's informal consultations.

13. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/51/L.57, additional requirements of \$7,102,400 would arise under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. Additional requirements of \$500,100 would also arise under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements would be considered in the context of the revised appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997.

14. It was so decided.

15. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that, like the Mexican delegation, his delegation had been given to understand that no additional contributions would be required for the missions under consideration.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.58 concerning agenda item 40 (A/C.5/51/42)

16. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that draft resolution A/51/L.58 provided for the closure of the United Nations Verification Office in El Salvador (ONUV) after 31 December 1996; for periodic visits to El Salvador by a special envoy of the Secretary-General; and for the establishment of a support unit in El Salvador, which would remain active for six months to assist the special envoy in key areas, with administrative support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The unit would include three Professional posts, one General Service post, one civilian police officer and seven local-level posts.

17. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/51/L.58, the requirements were estimated at \$408,700 for the period from 1 January to 30 June 1997. The support unit's functions were expected to end by 30 June 1997. Active collaboration with other United Nations agencies would facilitate the latter's take-over of those functions at that time. In view of the Secretary-General's request for the appropriation of \$886,000 net (\$1,021,900 gross), which appeared in document A/C.5/51/42 and in the first performance report (A/C.5/51/38), the Advisory Committee recommended the additional appropriation of \$408,700 for 1997, under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, and \$68,200 under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those amounts were not covered by the contingency fund.

18. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) asked why the staff travel provision, which had been rejected by the Advisory Committee the previous year, had been reinstated in the programme budget implications for the current year.

19. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that she had the same understanding with respect to ONUSAL as she had expressed in reference to MINUGUA.

20. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the travel of staff included in the cost estimates related to the regular visits to El Salvador from United Nations Headquarters by the high-level envoy of the Secretary-General, who, in order to reduce costs and the United Nations presence in the field, was now based in New York instead of El Salvador.

21. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) supported the comments made by the representative of Mexico with respect to the Secretariat's potential for absorption. The Controller's response was disingenuous, since the same number of trips would be taken by the Assistant Secretary-General in the following year as had been requested in the previous year.

22. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the previous year, the Advisory Committee had concluded that the amount requested for travel might be in excess of actual requirements. At that time, four visits had been envisaged. For 1997, three were proposed. The level of the budget itself was cause for greater concern. There was very little room to absorb that additional expenditure. While the number of trips had been reduced, the amount involved was slightly more than in 1996. The Advisory Committee had concluded that the funds for travel would be required for six months. Subsequently, support for the high-level envoy would be given by agencies in the operational area. The Advisory Committee would bear in mind the amounts for travel and the comments by the representative of the United States when it reviewed the Secretary-General's next statement on the matter.

23. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the cost estimates for the previous six months had been more than 100 per cent higher than the estimates for the next six months. The Secretariat had made every effort to reduce costs such as staff travel, salaries and the number of staff, and hoped that such efforts were appreciated. However, if some Member States felt that the costs were still too high, the issue would be re-examined. Assurances given informally by some officials had to be confirmed officially and be reflected by the Secretary-General in his report.

24. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ-ABASCAL (Cuba) said it was regrettable that two different views had been expressed with respect to the financial implications for Member States of draft resolutions A/51/L.57 and A/51/L.58. It was equally regrettable that the other staff had given views that were different from those of the Secretary-General, which reflected the Organization's official position.

25. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/51/L.58, additional requirements of \$408,700 would arise for 1997 under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. Additional requirements of \$68,200 would also arise under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements would be considered in the context of the revised appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997.

26. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.49 B concerning agenda item 39 (A/C.5/51/40)

27. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMIA) played the lead role in the United Nations efforts to help bring peace in Afghanistan. The

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continuation and strengthening of the Special Mission, which had started in 1996 in response to General Assembly resolution 50/88 B, required a staffing component of 37 posts for 1997 - an increase of two posts when compared to 1996. That included the addition of 2 civilian police and of 3 additional military advisers, 7 professional posts, including a Head of Mission at the Assistant Secretary-General level instead of the Under-Secretary-General level, 4 Field Service posts, 2 General Service posts and 17 local level posts. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of that request.

28. The Advisory Committee had sought further clarification regarding the \$752,000 requested for rental and maintenance of aircraft, and had been informed that the Special Mission had been using the aircraft operated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA). The amount proposed was to cover the lease/charter of a separate aircraft after January 1997. However, the Committee had also been informed that the use of the UNOCHA aircraft would cost \$100,000 less than such an arrangement. It believed that there was room for closer coordination between the Special Mission and the humanitarian operation carried out by the Department for Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan; and recommended that a full review should be carried out with a view to streamlining and bringing efficiency to both operations in order to reduce operational costs wherever possible.

29. The Committee also noted that requirements for furniture and equipment of \$106,000 for 1996 had not been utilized and were rolled over into the total amount proposed for 1997 of \$116,100. The Committee recommended that the Mission should explore the possibility of using existing stock from the United Nations before making new acquisitions.

30. As indicated in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's statement, total requirements for 1997 were estimated at \$3,741,200. However, since expenditures for 1996 were estimated at \$2,109,800, as compared with the approved amount of \$2,617,400, the Secretary-General was proposing that the savings of \$507,600 for 1997 should be applied. Paragraph 13 indicated that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/51/L.49 B, the resources required for 1997, under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 would amount to \$3,233,600.

31. In view of its comments regarding the rental of aircraft and the purchase of furniture and equipment, the Advisory Committee recommended an additional appropriation of \$3,100,000 under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. An additional appropriation of \$282,600 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under Income section 1. Those amounts were not covered by the provisions of the contingency fund.

32. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said the understanding that her delegation had received from Secretariat officials regarding the other two missions also applied to the Mission to Afghanistan.

33. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation felt that it would be useful to indicate that the staff level of the five political affairs officers for the Special Mission should reflect the varying degrees of responsibility inherent in such positions and that the Special Mission should

not be staffed exclusively at the senior professional level. That would not conflict with the General Assembly resolution 50/88 B, which was designed to increase and reinforce the military adviser and police adviser contingents of the mission.

34. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that it should be borne in mind that in paragraph 2 of resolution 50/88 B, the General Assembly had expressed its support for the decision of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Special Mission by stationing four additional political counsellors in Afghanistan, and had urged the Secretary-General to initiate the necessary arrangements as soon as possible. The political counsellors were not all located in the same place; they were each stationed at a different outpost in Afghanistan.

35. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee should decide to inform the General Assembly that should it adopt draft resolution A/51/L.49 B, additional requirements of \$3,233,600 would arise under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. Additional requirements of \$282,600 would also arise under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements would be considered in the context of the revised appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997.

36. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 124: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION  
(continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.20

37. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.20, said that in paragraph 7, the words "address the relevant findings and to" should be added after the words "take all necessary actions to". During informal consultations, concern had been expressed in connection with paragraph 28 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/51/700 and Corr.1). The General Assembly would trust that the salary paid by contractors to local workers would be competitive, fair and reasonable, so that the United Nations would not be perceived as condoning the exploitation of cheap labor.

38. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.20 was adopted.

39. Ms. RIECK (Germany) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus but was concerned that, since one Member State had announced its intention to reduce its assessed contribution to peacekeeping budgets to an amount which it deemed convenient, no peacekeeping budget would be fully covered by contributions of Member States. That unilateral action would further contribute to the already difficult cash-flow situation of the Organization and, in the long run, would jeopardize the implementation of all peacekeeping operations. Her delegation felt that the commitment authority of the Secretary-General for each peacekeeping budget should be adjusted to the predictable income level.

40. Germany fully supported UNAVEM; however, it could not accept either non-payment by other Member States or a change in its effective share in the current scale of assessments.

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AGENDA ITEM 119: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.21

41. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.21, said that her delegation had noted on a number of occasions that the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations was at variance with the current financial situation of the United Nations and the reform of the Organization. The current financial situation derived primarily from the failure of certain Member States to make their financial contributions to the Organization on time and in full.

42. In draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.21 the Committee on Contributions would be requested to recommend to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a scale of assessments for the period 1998-2000, on the basis of elements on which there appeared to be broad agreement.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.