## General Assembly

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COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES
Substantive session
25, 26 and 28 August 1997
Agenda item 2 (b) (i)

> CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS: IMPROVED UTILIZATION OF CONFERENCE-SERVICING RESOURCES: MEETING STATISTICS OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANS

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Annex $I$ to the present document contains statistical data on the planned and actual utilization of conference resources allocated to a core sample of bodies that met in 1996, compiled in accordance with the experimental methodology adopted as final by the Committee on Conferences at its 348th meeting, on 18 May 1993. The data include compliance and availability indices for assessing compliance with the deadlines for the submission of pre-session documentation and availability of such documentation for bodies based in New York, Geneva and Vienna, which were proposed by the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 1992.
2. Annex II contains an analysis of the statistics, including the overall and average utilization factors, and a breakdown in terms of percentages of the meeting ratio and planning accuracy factor of the bodies in the sample.
3. In general, the bodies in the sample meet on a regular basis, and it may be assumed that their performance is a reflection of United Nations bodies as a whole. Clearly, however, such measures as the utilization factor can depend on particulars that do not apply to all United Nations bodies.
4. In accordance with decisions of the Committee on Conferences, the time utilized for informal meetings or consultations held before the start or after the adjournment of officially scheduled meetings is not included as time lost owing to late starting or early ending of meetings.
5. An explanation of column headings that appear in the annexes follows:

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| A | Number of meetings planned by a given organ at a scheduled session; |
| :---: | :---: |
| B | Number of additional meetings held during the session; |
| C | Number of meetings cancelled during the session; |
| D | Number of meetings actually held; |
| E | Number of unrelated reassignments; |
| F | Amount of time lost owing to late starting (hours/minutes); |
| G | Amount of time lost owing to early ending (hours/minutes); |
| MR | Meeting ratio, calculated as meetings held as a percentage of meetings available to a given body ( $D$ as a percentage of $A$ ); |
| PAF | Planning accuracy factor, calculated as meetings planned, minus additional meetings, minus cancellations, all as a percentage of meetings planned (A minus $B$ minus $C$ as a percentage of $A$ ); |
| UF | Utilization factor, the percentage of available conference resources actually used by the organ in question. The utilization factor is based on the following calculation: |

$$
\frac{(A+B)-(C-E)-(F / 3+G / 6)}{(A+B)}=U F
$$

In the foregoing calculation, the number of hours lost as a result of late starting is converted into the equivalent of meetings lost by dividing the total by three, as the standard meeting time is three hours. The number of hours lost as a result of early ending is converted into the equivalent of meetings lost by dividing the total by six: as early ending may be an indication of efficiency, it is weighted less heavily than late starting. The number of unrelated assignments is subtracted from the number of cancelled meetings. The difference between the two and the number of meetings lost is then subtracted from the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held. The result is expressed as a percentage of the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held;

CI Compliance index, calculated as the percentage of pre-session documentation issued in accordance with the six-week rule;

AI Availability index, calculated as the actual rate of delivery presented on a week-by-week basis.
6. Pursuant to a request made by the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 1995 and to a subsequent decision taken by the Committee at its organizational session for 1996 , a synoptic report by sector on meetings held during the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 will be contained in an addendum.

Annex I
A. New York







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|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Committee for Programme and Coordination, thirty-sixth session, first part 3-28 June | 40 | 8 | 2 | 46 | 1 | $\begin{gathered} 14.35 / \\ 1.25 \end{gathered}$ | 115 | 75 | 88 |
|  | CI |  |  |  |  |  | AI |  |  |
|  | 8 |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | 4 | $\underline{3}$ | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | 18 | 33 | 25 | 8 | 8 | - |
|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| ```Committee for Programme and Coordination, thirty-sixth session, second part 26 August-6 September``` | 19 | 4 | 1 | 22 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 5.4 / \\ & 1.3 \end{aligned}$ | 116 | 74 | 87 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | 4 | $\underline{3}$ | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | 100 | - | - | - | - | - |



substantive session 26 June-26 July

| General Assembly, fifty-first session, First Committee | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 38 | - | 7 | 31 | 5 | $\begin{aligned} & 6.35 / \\ & 17.45 \end{aligned}$ | 82 | 82 | 82 |
|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| General Assembly, fifty-first session, Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) | 40 | 1 | 18 | 23 | 11 | $\begin{aligned} & 2.15 / \\ & 13.35 \end{aligned}$ | 58 | 53 | 76 |
| General Assembly, fifty-first session, Second Committee | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 61 | 4 | 8 | 57 | 2 | $\begin{gathered} 9.55 / \\ 19.40 \end{gathered}$ | 93 | 80 | 82 |
| General Assembly, fifty-first session, Third Committee | A | B | C | D | E | $\underline{F} / \mathrm{G}$ | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 62 | 2 | 5 | 59 | 2 | $\begin{gathered} 9.2 / \\ 34.0 \end{gathered}$ | 95 | 89 | 81 |
| General Assembly, fifty-first session, Fifth Committee | A | B | C | D | E | $\underline{F / G}$ | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 107 | 19 | 6 | 120 | 2 | $\begin{aligned} & 24.50 / \\ & 18.55 \end{aligned}$ | 112 | 77 | 88 |



|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization <br> 21 February-5 March | 20 | 1 | 3 | 18 | 3 | 10.0/9.5 | 90 | 80 | 76 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 34 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | $\underline{5}$ | $\underline{4}$ | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | - | - | - | - | 33 |
| ```Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 1-26 April``` | A | B | C | D | E | $\underline{F} / \mathrm{G}$ | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 36 | - | 8 | 28 | 6 | $\begin{gathered} 12.2 / \\ 6.3 \end{gathered}$ | 78 | 78 | 81 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 100 |  |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | $\underline{5}$ | $\underline{4}$ | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | - | - | - | - | - |







|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ```UNDP/UNFPA - Executive Board, third regular session 9-13 September``` | 10 | - | - | 10 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 2.4 / \\ & 0.3 \end{aligned}$ | 100 | 100 | 90 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | $\underline{4}$ | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 14 | 14 | 26 | 9 | 31 |

## B. Geneva




29 July-3 August

| Committee on the Rights of the Child, thirteenth session <br> 23 September-11 October | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 30 | - | - | 30 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 5.5 / \\ & 4.0 \end{aligned}$ | 100 | 100 | 90 |
|  | CI |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 56 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | $\underline{4}$ | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | - | - | 6 | 6 | - |
| Committee against Torture, sixteenth session 30 April-10 May | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 20 | - | 2 | 18 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 1.35 / \\ & 1.40 \end{aligned}$ | 90 | 90 | 85 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 23 |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | 2 | 12 | 17 | 6 | 14 |




| Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, forty-ninth session 5-25 August | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 30 | - | 1 | 29 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 1.25 / \\ & 1.30 \end{aligned}$ | 97 | 97 | 97 |
|  | CI |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 17 |  |  |  |  | Issued | en | of we |  |
|  |  |  |  | $\underline{6}$ | 5 | $\underline{4}$ | $\underline{3}$ | 2 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | 16 | 5 | 4 | 19 | 26 |
| Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods 2-11 December | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
|  | 16 | - | 2 | 14 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 0.2 / \\ & 2.4 \end{aligned}$ | 88 | 88 | 88 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 57 |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | $\underline{6}$ | 5 | $\underline{4}$ | 3 | $\underline{2}$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | 18 | 9 | - | 4 | - |


|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, twelfth session 1-12 July | 20 | - | - | 20 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 1.00 / \\ & 0.15 \end{aligned}$ | 100 | 100 | 100 |
|  | CI |  |  | AI |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 9 |  |  | Issued by end of week: |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 6 | 5 | 4 | $\underline{3}$ | 2 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  | - | - | 33 | - | 47 | - |
|  | $\underline{\text { A }}$ | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| Human Rights Committee, fifty-seventh session 8-26 July | 30 | - | - | 30 | - | 0.50/- | 100 | 100 | 100 |
|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| Human Rights Committee, fifty-eighth session <br> 21 October-8 November | 30 | - | 1 | 29 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 7.20 / \\ & 0.55 \end{aligned}$ | 97 | 97 | 90 |
|  | $\underline{\text { A }}$ | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| International Law Commission, forty-eighth session 6 May-26 July | 93 | - | - | 93 | - | $\begin{aligned} & 12.20 / \\ & 11.05 \end{aligned}$ | 100 | 100 | 94 |



|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Special Committee to Investigate Israeli | 6 | - | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0.4/ | 67 | 67 | 83 |
| Practices Affecting the Human Rights of |  |  |  |  |  | 1.2 |  |  |  |
| the Palestinian People and Other Arabs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| of the Occupied Territories |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28 February-1 March |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| $\underline{\mathrm{A}}$ | $\underline{B}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{C}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{D}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{E}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{F} / \mathrm{G}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{MR}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{PAF}}$ | $\underline{\mathrm{UF}}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 47 | 10 | 9 | 48 | - | $17.4 /$ | 102 | 60 | 70 |
|  |  |  |  |  | 11.2 |  |  |  |

UNCTAD - Trade and Development Board,
twelfth executive session
26 February-29 March

|  | $\underline{A}$ | $\underline{B}$ | $\underline{C}$ | $\underline{D}$ | $\underline{E}$ | $\underline{F} / G$ | $\underline{M R}$ | $\underline{P A F}$ | $\underline{U F}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| UNCTAD - Trade and Development Board, | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | $0.35 /$ | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| thirteenth executive session |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 July |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |


|  | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | MR | PAF | UF |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| UNCTAD - Trade and Development Board, | 28 | - | - | 28 | - | 12.4/ | 100 | 100 | 79 |
| forty-third session |  |  |  |  |  | 9.0 |  |  |  |

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## Annex II

Analysis of the statistics

1. The overall utilization factor for 1996 was 83 per cent. This figure is computed by totalling the data in the six columns for all bodies in the three locations and treating them as if they reflected a single body, as follows:

| Duty station | A | B | C | D | E | F/G | UF |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| New York | 1418 | 56 | 239 | 1 | 235 | 114 | $280 / 357$ |
| Geneva | 610 | 26 | 33 | 603 | 1 | $113 / 88$ | 81 |
| Vienna | $\underline{257}$ | $\underline{-}$ | $\underline{9}$ | $\underline{248}$ | $\underline{-}$ | $\underline{47 / 47}$ | $\underline{87}$ |
|  | $\underline{\underline{2} 285}$ | $\underline{\underline{82}}$ | $\underline{\underline{281}}$ | $\underline{\underline{2086}}$ | $\underline{\underline{115}}$ | $\underline{\underline{440 / 492}}$ | $\underline{\underline{83}}$ |

2. The overall utilization factor for 1996 shows a sharp gain of 7 per cent against the same factor for 1995 ( 76 per cent), as reported in paragraph 1 of the report of the Secretary-General of 2 August 1996 (A/AC.172/1996/3).
3. The average utilization factor for 1996 was 85. This figure is computed by totalling the utilization factors of each body under review at each session held during a given year and dividing that figure by the number of sessions held (i.e. in 1996, 6,594/78). The average utilization factors for the period from 1987 to 1996 were as follows:

| 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 77 | 75 | 75 | 70 | 77 | 78 | 83 | 82 | 78 | 85 |

4. The study indicates a decline in average utilization from 1987 to 1990, followed by a considerable rebound of 7 points in 1991. The improvement continued thereafter, with a particularly striking advance of 5 points in 1993, only to be followed by declines in the next two years. The average utilization factor of 85 for 1996 is a remarkable 7 per cent rise against the same factor for 1995.
5. The utilization factors for the bodies in the sample for the period from 1994 to 1996 are presented below in tabular form for purposes of comparison:

| Utilization factor <br> (percentage) | Number of sessions |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | - | 1994 | 1996 |
| $20-29$ | - | - | - |
| $30-39$ | 2 | 1 | - |
| $40-49$ | - | 1 | 1 |
| $50-59$ | 3 | 1 | - |
| $60-69$ | 8 | 6 | - |
| $70-79$ | 16 | 11 | 5 |
| $80-100$ | $\underline{47}$ | $\underline{\underline{76}}$ | $\underline{\underline{84}}$ |
| Total number | $\underline{90}$ | $\underline{\underline{78}}$ |  |

6. In 1994 and 1995, 3 per cent and 4 per cent of the bodies, respectively, fell in the lowest range of $0-49$ per cent. In 1996, 1 per cent of the bodies fell in that range. In 1994 and 1995 , 35 per cent and 43 per cent of the bodies, respectively, used 50-79 per cent of their resources; in 1996, 22 per cent of the bodies did so. As to compliance with the benchmark, in 1994 and 1995, 62 per cent and 54 per cent of the bodies, respectively, had a utilization factor of 80 per cent or higher. However, in 1996, 77 per cent of the bodies in the sample utilized 80 per cent or more of their conferenceservicing resources.
7. The figures are summarized as follows:

| Percentage of <br> resources utilized | Percentage of sessions held |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 62 | 1995 | 1996 |
| $50-79$ | 35 | 54 | 77 |
| $0-49$ | 3 | 43 | 22 |

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8. The following is a breakdown of the meeting ratios of the bodies in the sample for 1996:

| Percentage | Number of sessions |
| :---: | :---: |
| $20-29$ | - |
| $30-39$ | - |
| $40-49$ | - |
| $50-59$ | 3 |
| $60-69$ | 2 |
| $70-79$ | 8 |
| $80-89$ | $\underline{78}$ |
| $90-100$ | $\underline{\underline{78}}$ |

9. Thus, in 1996, 17 per cent of the bodies in the sample had meeting ratios below 80 per cent; 83 per cent had meeting ratios above 80 per cent. Seventyfour per cent of the bodies had meeting ratios of 90 per cent or higher, or an increase of 4 per cent over 1995.
10. The following is a breakdown of the planning accuracy factors of the bodies in the sample for 1996:

| Percentage | Number of sessions |
| :---: | :---: |
| $0-39$ | - |
| $40-49$ | - |
| $50-59$ | 4 |
| $60-69$ | 4 |
| $70-79$ | 11 |
| $80-89$ | 13 |
| $90-100$ | $\underline{46}$ |
| Total | $\underline{\underline{78}}$ |

11. Thus, in 1996, 24 per cent of the bodies had planning accuracy factors below 80 per cent; 76 per cent of the bodies had factors above 80 per cent. Fifty-nine per cent of the bodies had planning accuracy factors of 90 to 100 per cent, or an increase of 9 per cent over 1995.
12. The improved performance all around over previous years may be attributed to several causes. For example, the higher utilization factors in part reflect the decreased weight given to early endings. However, the principal reasons for the gain include the strong efforts made by the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, the vigorous campaigns carried out by the

Committee on Conferences, the numerous General Assembly resolutions on the pattern of conferences, as well as the monitoring, consultations, active dialogue and letter-writing campaigns of the Secretariat, all of which have helped to increase the awareness of United Nations bodies of the importance of utilizing conference-servicing resources efficiently and effectively.

