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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 74th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. STEIN (Germany)
(Vice-Chairman)

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

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Stein (Germany),
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 7.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 112: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.90

1. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.90, said that the draft resolution, which was the result of extensive informal consultations, set forth important guidelines for the use of gratis personnel at the current time and in the future. In the first line of paragraph 5 the word "resolution" should be changed to "resolutions" and in paragraphs 10, 11, 13 and 14, the word "regular" should be inserted before the word "session", since the Committee wished to receive the reports requested in the draft resolution during the fifty-second regular session for consideration during that session.
2. She wished to stress that gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities to carry out supplementary activities additional to mandated activities did not come within the scope of the draft resolution and that the provisions of the draft resolution on the elimination of the use of such personnel did not apply to them.
3. Mr. DVINIANINE (Russian Federation) said that the Russian text of paragraphs 11 and 13 must be brought in line with the English.
4. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation could join in the consensus on the draft resolution only on the understanding that the draft resolution had no financial implications and the Secretariat did not intend to issue a statement of programme budget implications.
5. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller) said that that understanding was correct. Although the Secretariat would do its best to produce the reports requested in the draft resolution it could not guarantee that all five would be ready by the end of the first part of the fifty-second session.
6. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that information would need to be provided at the fifty-second session regarding the financial implications of the elimination of gratis personnel.
7. Mr. SIAL (Pakistan) said that the Committee had requested only a few reports, some of which merely required a little modification or revision of existing information. In view of the urgency and importance of the issue, the Secretariat must produce the reports so that the Committee could take action on them.

8. The CHAIRMAN noted that the Controller had already given assurances that every effort would be made to issue the reports within the prescribed time-frame.
9. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.90, as orally revised, was adopted.
10. Mr. MANLAN (Côte d'Ivoire), said that the Group of 77 and China, on whose behalf he spoke, could agree to withdraw draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.83.
11. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.83 was withdrawn.
12. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union was satisfied that draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.90 could meet its concerns that the gradual elimination of gratis personnel already working in the Secretariat would be carried out in an orderly manner to ensure that there were no sudden complications for the work of the Secretariat and that new procedures would be implemented to give the Secretary-General the necessary guidelines for accepting gratis personnel, while respecting his prerogatives and his right to accept voluntary contributions.
13. The European Union was concerned about the special regime that applies to the United Nations Special Commission. Based on the draft resolution and the principles regulating type I gratis personnel, as defined by the Secretary-General in his report (A/51/688), the European Union was confident that the work of UNSCOM would not be jeopardized either during the transitional period, or when the new procedures were fully applied. The European Union expressed appreciation to the Governments which had for some time provided gratis personnel to the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to perform its tasks.
14. Mr. WATANABE (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.90. However, the gap between the ideal and the reality needed to be narrowed.
15. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus with the expectation that the draft resolution would not result in any increase in the human or non-human resources required by the Secretariat or any increase in assessments on Member States and that it would not affect the Secretary-General's proposals to reduce or abolish posts. It was also the expectation of her delegation that the activities of the war crimes tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda would not be affected by the draft resolution. Her delegation took the position that, pending action by the General Assembly on administrative support, delegations would not be charged for support costs in connection with gratis personnel currently being made available to the United Nations.

Draft decision on the strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms

16. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, said that agreement had been reached in the informal consultations on a draft decision on the strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms, according to which the General Assembly would decide to resume consideration of the question at the earliest possible stage of

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the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. Informal agreement had also been reached during the consultations that the basis for discussion would be the coordinator's draft elements for agreement.

17. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision outlined by the Vice-Chairman.

18. It was so decided.

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

Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.86

19. The CHAIRMAN introduced draft decision A/C.5/51/L.86 on the construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa, which had resulted from informal consultations.

20. Mr. MANLAN (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the countries concerned would join the consensus on the draft decision on the understanding that the final payments should be funded through the use of the interest on the construction-in-progress account.

21. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller) said that the understanding of the Côte d'Ivoire delegation was correct.

22. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation would join the consensus on the understanding that no increase in appropriations would be required, that the payment would not be reflected in the performance report for the biennium, and that the interest on the construction account for Bangkok was not included in the \$7 million to be disbursed.

23. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller) confirmed those understandings.

24. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) asked how the use of the interest from the construction account could not be reflected in the performance report.

25. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller) said that the procedure was the same as had been followed in the case of the construction project for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in 1991. No additional appropriation was required; therefore, the expenditure would not appear in the performance report, but would be entered in the construction-in-progress account.

26. Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.86 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.87

27. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution regarding access to the optical disk system, which he was submitting following informal consultations.

28. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.87 was adopted.

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

Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.85

29. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, introduced the draft decision agreed upon in the informal consultations, which would have the General Assembly decide to defer consideration of the procedural aspects of consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter to its fifty-second session.

30. Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.85 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 141: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.88

31. Ms. ARAGON (Philippines) introduced, following informal consultations, a draft decision recommending that consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services should be continued at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

32. Draft decision A/C.5/51/L.88 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 120: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (continued) (A/51/955; A/C.5/51/58)

33. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A/C.5/51/58, containing the response of the Secretary-General to a letter from the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China (A/51/955) concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/226.

34. Mr. MANLAN (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, supported by Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) and Mr. SAHA (India), said that although the Group of 77 appreciated the Secretary-General's response, it was not yet in a position to comment on it. Therefore, he requested that consideration of the document should be deferred until the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

35. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria) agreed that clarifications were needed regarding the Secretary-General's responses. Selective treatment of staff with short-term appointments by nationality could be found: for example, of staff who had been asked to leave the Organization pursuant to the resolution, eight were from third-world countries while only four from the industrialized North. Similar

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inequities could be found among staff being exempted from the application of paragraph 26 of resolution 51/226.

36. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation would also welcome an opportunity for a full briefing on the application of resolution 51/226, since some questions remained about the exemptions granted to the application of its paragraph 26. In the view of her delegation, if an insufficient number of candidates had been received for an advertised post, as indicated in the Secretary-General's response, the post should have been advertised again, as paragraph 26 did not allow for exemptions on that basis.

37. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee could continue its consideration of the application of General Assembly resolution 51/226 during the fifty-second session.

38. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 140: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.89

39. Mr. ARMITAGE (Australia), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.89, recommended the draft resolution for adoption by consensus.

40. Mr. NICOLAS (France) suggested a number of stylistic changes to the French text of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.89.

41. Ms. CHEN Yue (China) said that there were serious inaccuracies in the Chinese version of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.89. In particular, the dates in paragraph 4 were incorrect. The Chinese text must be brought into line with the English text.

42. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.89 was adopted.

43. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus on the understanding that the current capacity of the Lessons Learned Unit would continue or would be strengthened. The Organization had recognized the important role of the lessons learned capacity and had created a mandate for the Lessons Learned Unit to be funded from assessed contributions. It was also her delegation's understanding that the phrase "budget proposals" in paragraph 4 referred only to budget proposals to be presented under agenda item 140.

44. Mr. MENKVELD (Netherlands) said that the language of the draft resolution left it to the Secretary-General to present the issue of support for lessons learned in whatever budget he saw fit.

45. Mr. NICOLAS (France) said that he agreed that the draft resolution left it open whether the issue would be taken up in the context of the support account for peacekeeping operations or the regular budget.

OTHER MATTERS

46. Mr. SULAIMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had made a statement at the 57th meeting which had not been reflected in the record. He requested that the omission should be rectified.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

47. After an exchange of courtesies in which Mr. MANLAN (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. SULAIMAN (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia), Mr. GREIVER (Uruguay) and Mrs. FRITSCHÉ (Liechtenstein) spoke on behalf of the regional groups of States, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work for the fifty-first session.

The meeting rose at 9.20 p.m.