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FIFTH COMMITTEE
30th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 3 November 1981
at 8.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 8.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/36/38, A/36/171; A/C.5/36/1) (continued)

1. Mr. OREBI (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that Mr. Bertrand, in his introduction to the agenda item under consideration, had correctly underlined the importance of co-ordination for mobilizing all the resources of the United Nations system in the social, economic and humanitarian fields. He was, however, afraid that the reality of co-operation, as experienced by his organization, and, no doubt, by other specialized agencies, was very different from Mr. Bertrand's idealistic vision of it.

2. As the Executive Secretary of ESCAP had said when the ESCAP budget was being considered, if the specialized agencies were allowed to exercise their mandate to the full, the other United Nations bodies would have very little left to do. FAO, which had been aware of that problem for a long time, did its utmost to co-ordinate its activities with those of other United Nations bodies. It needed their assistance in their respective fields to solve the food and agriculture problems of the developing countries. However, it was important that the relationship between the various bodies in the United Nations system should be clearly defined.

3. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) said he was fully aware that programme planning in the United Nations was a very complex issue requiring co-operation between intergovernmental bodies and the Secretariat, especially between the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination. CPC had been endeavouring for several years to improve the process of planning, programming and evaluation in the United Nations and had made significant progress at its 1979, 1980 and 1981 sessions. His delegation supported the CPC recommendations on the matter under consideration.

4. Programme planning also required close co-ordination among the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in determining priorities, defining the goals of the medium-term plan, establishing outputs and evaluating programmes. In that connexion, the link between the medium-term plan and the programme budget should be maintained, bringing the programme planning cycle into line with the budget cycle. Lastly, the planning process should be stable but sufficiently flexible to allow the adaptation of programmes in response to changing circumstances.

5. However, it would be useless to establish the relative priority of programmes without indicating their financial implications. Those programmes should be reviewed by the competent sectoral, functional and regional bodies before being submitted to CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The use of an administrative structure should be an exception and, in any event, should be approved by the relevant intergovernmental body. It was known that the failure to set definite time-limited objectives was often the result of confusion between intergovernmental objectives and those of the

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administration. The setting of time-limited objectives was especially important at the level of the plan, which defined the Secretariat's programmes of activity, since that made it possible to measure both the progress and the quality of work.

6. In that respect, programme and subprogramme managers should identify all programme elements in good time, as well as all the changing circumstances which sometimes meant that adjustments had to be made in previously adopted programmes. In that way, the objectives set by intergovernmental bodies at programme and subprogramme level could be achieved.

7. The link between the plan and the budget was extremely important. The programme elements should correspond to the various administrative units of the Secretariat, and the subprogrammes and programmes to its divisions. The plan should serve as a framework for the programme budget and should contain the financial information requested by General Assembly resolution 34/224. Consequently, the major programmes of the plan should not only indicate the kind of activity to be carried out but should also describe all the programmable and non-programmable activities of the subprogrammes and identify activities that had been completed, were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective.

8. The regular evaluation of programmes, subprogrammes and programme elements had proved to be an extremely useful management tool. In the future, the following should be taken into account: first, evaluation and how it currently operated in the organizations and organs concerned; secondly, the need for measures to ensure an effective distribution of programme outputs to end-users, including the preparation of programme-elements information sheets, which should identify obsolete, marginally useful or ineffective activities; thirdly, information received from the various bodies and organs of the United Nations system should be presented in the main evaluation report. That report should also analyse the activities of the regional commissions in the same way as those of central bodies.

9. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that the Fifth Committee's discussions and subsequent decisions on the CPC recommendations regarding priority-setting would have a decisive impact on programme planning in the United Nations, since programme planning was of the utmost importance for the organic vitality of the United Nations and the effectiveness of its work. Since the introduction of the current system of planning, several conceptual tools had been developed and progress had been made with regard to methodology. The General Assembly had established the major principles, such as the identification of obsolete, completed or marginally useful activities, the identification of high-priority and low-priority programmes and the redeployment of resources from low-priority to high-priority programmes. A comprehensive system of planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation had thus been introduced in the United Nations.

10. However, in his delegation's view, that system had so far not operated satisfactorily: it was being implemented only very slowly. As Mr. Bertrand had pointed out in his introductory statement, priority-setting was encountering

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resistance from the Secretariat. In fact, the introduction of that system, however well developed it might be, would have little impact on programme delivery unless all programme managers controlled every stage of programme planning, from medium-term planning to programme delivery, and unless the relevant intergovernmental bodies were more actively involved in the review and control of programme results.

11. The identification of obsolete or completed activities remained inadequate. That was indeed an extremely difficult endeavour; programme managers were quite naturally reluctant to identify their own activities as "obsolete", since that could cast doubt on the value of their work and lead to a reduction in staff. Nevertheless, the results obtained so far were disappointing: according to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/40), the amount of resources freed as a result was very small. He regretted that the report on the high-level review of activities carried out under the leadership of the Director General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was not yet available. It would have been useful to find out which activities in the programme budget for 1980-1981, the basis for the proposed programme budget under consideration, were now obsolete.

12. His delegation also noted with regret that, despite the instructions given in General Assembly resolution 32/206, many sections of the programme budget either did not state the priority of programmes or indicated only the high-priority programmes. A possible reason for that was that many sections were organized not by programme but by organizational framework. Furthermore, in the sections relating to common services and to administration, finance and management no attempt had been made to establish an explicit order of priorities among the programmes.

13. In 1980, the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/9, had given the CPC the responsibility of determining new criteria and methods to be employed in setting programme priorities. At its twenty-first session, CPC had, after considering the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/71) and the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/1), made recommendations to that end, and his delegation fully endorsed those recommendations. The Secretary-General had agreed with them, expressing reservations only on the planned methods of implementation. In that connexion, his delegation wished to recall that the object was to redeploy resources from low-priority to high-priority activities.

14. It was no longer a question of discussing methodology but of effectively implementing those CPC recommendations. The General Assembly should first formally approve them, so that the preparation and review of the medium-term plan for 1984-1989 would be conducted in strict conformity with the guidelines adopted. The Japanese delegation agreed with the time-table proposed by the Secretary-General in table 7 of his report (A/C.5/36/1). All programme managers in the United Nations system should be fully acquainted with every detail of the priority-setting system. Therefore, his delegation endorsed the recommendation of CPC on the adoption of rules and regulations governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget and performance monitoring and evaluation

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procedures (A/36/38, para. 465). It hoped that the Secretary-General would submit proposals on the subject to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session through CPC. There was no doubt that if the system of priority-setting was established throughout the United Nations system, not only for the common services and the activities financed by extrabudgetary resources but also in specialized agencies, the setting of priorities in the system as a whole would give rise to serious problems. That was an ambitious undertaking, as Mr. Bertrand had pointed out, but it was one that was worth pursuing. It might be a good idea to invite CPC to study the matter at a future session in which all the United Nations organs involved would actively participate.

15. The main responsibility for priority-setting and the identification of obsolete activities lay with the Secretariat, which was in the best position to determine how effective programmes were. For their part, intergovernmental bodies should, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/9, regularly review programmes within their areas of competence in order to make their views and concerns known. Many sections of the programme budget were not considered, or at least not from the point of view of priorities, by intergovernmental bodies before being submitted to the General Assembly. There were also cases of intergovernmental bodies setting conflicting priorities, which the Secretariat then found impossible to observe. Priority-setting should therefore be a co-operative effort between the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies. The latter should be centrally involved in programme review so that they could provide clearer and more precise mandates to the Secretariat. In that connexion, the CPC had recommended that when the General Assembly adopted resolutions or decisions with financial implications, a statement of financial and programme implications should be submitted to the intergovernmental bodies concerned. A similar idea had already been put forward by the General Assembly in resolution 32/197 (annex, para. 49). Such statements should also indicate, as appropriate, related programmes already included in the medium-term plan, the percentage increase in expenditures of the Secretariat units concerned and the resources which could be released by eliminating any particular activity. The fact was, however, that when considering draft resolutions, the General Assembly had available to it statements of financial and administrative implications, but rarely did it have a statement of their programme implications.

16. His delegation felt that it was high time to request intergovernmental bodies to undertake, in their respective fields of competence, an over-all review of all existing programmes, in the light of the proposed medium-term plan, and to make the necessary arrangements so that the programme implications of a draft resolution could be considered at the same time as the administrative and financial implications. For that purpose, thought might be given to revising the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly or to convening CPC, as the need arose, to examine the programme implications of a resolution in the same way as the Committee on Conferences had the responsibility of reviewing the administrative implications of resolutions affecting the schedule of conferences, before they were adopted.

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17. The lack of mechanisms to terminate mandates which had become obsolete was a burden on the resources of the Secretariat. For example, the Organization was obliged to draw up annually a large number of reports which could well be issued only every two or three years. It might be useful for intergovernmental bodies to impose time-limits on the mandates they issued to the Secretariat; every mandate would cease to be operative unless renewed by the appropriate intergovernmental body.

18. The role of CPC and its secretariat in programme planning should also be strengthened. Regarding the review of programme budgets, delays in the publication of budget documents had in the past seriously hampered the work of CPC, but in 1981 it had been able to make a number of specific recommendations on the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983. As indicated in paragraph 469 of the CPC report, the Fifth Committee, when considering the programme budget, did not always have available the CPC recommendations on the programme aspects. That was why CPC would like to be able to complete its review of the proposed programme budget before the Advisory Committee began its consideration of the administrative and financial aspects, so that its recommendations could be incorporated into those of the Advisory Committee. The Chairman of ACABQ had explained that that Committee could not review the recommendations of CPC before they had been adopted by the General Assembly. Furthermore, the experience of the past few weeks had shown that the recommendations of CPC did not really allow the General Assembly to review all aspects of the proposed programme budget. The Fifth Committee must put off its review of the programme aspects of the budget proposals until it had before it a statement of the financial implications of the recommendations of CPC.

19. Before new rules for priority-setting were adopted, it must be ascertained whether the current situation was satisfactory. If the advice of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee was followed, the Fifth Committee would in the future have to consider at the beginning of the session the recommendations of CPC on the proposed programme budget and, consequently, its programme aspects. Only afterwards would the Advisory Committee be able to consider the financial implications of the CPC recommendations. That was not satisfactory. It would be better to consider the programme aspects of each section of the budget at the same time as the administrative and financial implications. If that was not possible, the Secretariat should at least establish the financial implications of the CPC recommendations so that they would be known before the General Assembly convened.

20. If programme planning was to work successfully, the Secretariat must exercise its monitoring function effectively. The CPC recommendation that a central programme monitoring unit should be created was therefore extremely important. The Secretary-General had taken a cautious stand on that proposal and had suggested that a decision on it should await the outcome of the deliberations of the Committee of Governmental Experts to Evaluate the Present Structure of the Secretariat in the Administrative, Finance and Personnel Areas. His delegation, however, felt that the system of programme planning should be implemented without

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waiting for that Committee to complete its work. As recommended by CPC, a central and independent unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of commitments made by the Secretary-General in the programme narrative of the programme budget should be established. That unit could also provide support to CPC. Consequently, his delegation would urge the Secretary-General to submit as soon as possible a revised plan for establishing the unit, so that the necessary machinery and instruments would be operational by the start of the medium-term plan for 1984-1989.

21. Finally, his delegation welcomed the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the status of internal evaluation in United Nations system organizations, since evaluation was the final stage of the programme planning process. It approved the recommendation that more resources should be allocated to enhance the programme impact of United Nations activities.

22. Mrs. MUCH (Austria) said that in spite of the vast amount of documentation before it, the Fifth Committee was not really able to establish priorities within the framework of the programme budget, or the future medium-term plan: it had not yet received the report of the Secretary-General on the special programme review now being carried out, which might have enabled it to establish priorities for a number of chapters. Indeed, there was no over-all document giving a general view of the expenditures, the budget or the medium-term plan. The proposed programme budget was very detailed, but its foreword did not deal with the content of the programmes. The introduction to the medium-term plan had been promised for two years and should have been before the Committee by now, long before the beginning of the debate on the coming medium-term plan.

23. Such a synthetic and global view of the Organization's activities was even more difficult to obtain in the economic and social field than in the political field. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/36/1) gave an interesting view of the political activities of the United Nations, whereas in the economic and social field there was no available document that could be used for determining the impact made by the Organization during the past few years.

24. Important advances had been made during the past several years in the field of evaluation, as was clear from the two reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on the question (A/36/181 and A/36/182), but a great deal must still be done to improve methods and produce usable results that could be integrated into the decision-making process. The Committee should approve all of the recommendations appearing in the two reports, while finding that, in their essential aspects, they had already been carried out in earlier years and that progress in that field was unfortunately very slow.

25. Her delegation wished to make a distinction between monitoring reports and evaluation reports. For the past few years, the Committee had had before it reports on programme performance, the latest having been issued as document A/C.5/35/1, which made it appear that in some departments and some regional

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economic commissions programme performance was sometimes extremely meagre. Unfortunately, the Committee had taken up that document too late to be able to remedy those defects and to verify, by a chapter-by-chapter comparison, whether the demands made on a number of services actually matched their delivery capacity; there was, indeed, reason to doubt that services which had been unable to carry out their programmes in 1978-1979 would be able to do so in 1982-1983. The Committee on Programme and Co-ordination had recommended the establishment of a central independent unit which would be entrusted with responsibility for monitoring the execution of the output commitments made by the Secretary-General. Her delegation believed that that recommendation should be very strongly supported.

26. All Member States were keenly interested in the effectiveness of results, and priority-setting was not purely theoretical: it was a matter of choice. The chiefs of service or heads of department were in the best position to evaluate the results obtained, and they should have an opportunity for self-evaluation. They could be asked to describe in a few pages the results obtained by their services over a period which might vary from 5 to 10 years; such a perspective from the past was necessary. It would then be sufficient to assemble those reflections in a single document which could be submitted to CPC when the medium-term plan was taken up, under the title "General evaluation of the results obtained by the United Nations in the economic and social fields during the past decade: successes and failures, lessons for the future".

27. Her delegation fully supported all the recommendations made by CPC with regard to priority-setting, in particular, the recommendation to establish a monitoring unit in the Secretariat (para. 466) the recommendation concerning the regulation of programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, performance monitoring and evaluation procedures (para. 465) and the recommendation relating to common services (para. 461). Her delegation also believed that each chapter of the proposed medium-term plan should be submitted to the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly before the plan as a whole was adopted by the General Assembly in plenary meeting (para. 471).

28. With regard to the JIU recommendation to establish a single intergovernmental committee which would combine the functions currently exercised by CPC and the Advisory Committee, she recalled that her delegation had already raised that possibility five years earlier. It continued to believe that the examination of the budgetary aspects and programme aspects of the proposed programme budget and of the medium-term plan should be conducted by a single committee.

29. The Joint Inspection Unit's recommendation concerning the possibility of a special session of the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly on the problem of priorities was reasonable, in her delegation's view; however, her delegation felt that such an expensive procedure could be dispensed with: it would be sufficient for the General Assembly at its next session to hold plenary meetings for one or two weeks to examine the programme of the Organization.

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30. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the fundamental principles of the United Nations system in the field of co-operation and development were being increasingly challenged, and there was reason for serious concern about the effectiveness of the machinery for implementing policies and objectives adopted by consensus.

31. It was essential to use resources judiciously. However, the concept of development should evolve to meet increasingly pressing needs. The time had therefore come to evaluate the quality of United Nations programmes, to draw up a detailed balance-sheet on multilateral co-operation and to appraise the advantages offered by external assistance channelled through the United Nations system. That evaluation should be carried out as a matter of urgency. The objectives of the International Development Strategy, which was a quarter of the way to completion, had been realized only to a very disappointing extent. Moreover, the General Assembly would have to adopt, at its next session, the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. The previous medium-term plans had not been prepared with sufficient rigour, and there had been considerable waste of resources. It was now necessary to apply the cost-effectiveness principle analysis, in order to assure Member States that multilateral assistance would not be interrupted in mid-course by ineffective planning or depletion of resources. It was therefore essential to undertake an analysis of the capacity of United Nations bodies, which should be based on a precise definition of objectives, a distinction being made in each case between the objectives of Member States and those of the United Nations system.

32. If the United Nations intended to perform its role effectively, it should inform national planners, who could in turn establish national development plans in keeping with the resources they expected from the United Nations. While the definition of programme objectives did not in itself pose any difficulties, it raised more problems at the subprogramme level; that was where consultation between officials of United Nations bodies and representatives of national or regional authorities became fully meaningful.

33. Evaluation, which consisted in informing Member States of the results obtained, was another element of planning. His delegation welcomed the fact that a self-evaluation system was being prepared in many specialized agencies.

34. The need to establish close co-ordination between development plans at the local, regional and national levels was particularly evident in the case of the Monrovia Strategy for the economic development of Africa and the Lagos Plan of Action. His delegation believed that a redeployment of the resources of the United Nations system in favour of the priority projects identified in the African strategy would be the best guarantee of the development of the African continent.

35. He accepted the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit as essential. With regard to the possibility of convening a special session of the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly, he believed that the holding of a general conference of national planners would be less costly and more useful. In connexion with the problem of co-ordination between CPC and the Advisory Committee, it would be desirable to set up machinery which, without sacrificing any essential functions of either, would avoid both overlapping and divergences.

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AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)
(A/36/6, A/36/7, A/36/38 (chaps. V and VII D))

First reading (continued)

Section 6. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (continued)

Programme of activity 4. Social development and humanitarian affairs

36. Mrs. de HEDERVARY (Belgium) observed that the posts requested by the Secretary-General for the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs represented no real growth; in fact, the estimate for the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was slightly lower in real terms than in the budget proposals for 1980-1981.

37. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was at Vienna, and the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Centre was required to travel frequently. In order to assure the proper functioning of the Centre, he must be able to rely on a deputy with adequate authority. The Advisory Committee was recommending that the D-2 post requested for that role should be redeployed to the Advancement of Women Branch and that the incumbent should combine the functions of Director of the Branch and Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General when the latter was absent. The Belgian delegation believed that the two functions were incompatible.

38. On the other hand, it had no objection to the Centre's having two D-2 posts. It hoped, however, that in future biennia the Secretary-General would consider the possibility of reducing by one the number of Director posts for the Centre; he could eliminate the D-1 post, thereby reducing the staff of the Centre to the level recommended by the Advisory Committee.

39. Mr. KABONGO TUNSALA (Zaire), referring to programme of activity 1 (Development issues and policies), said that the explanations advanced by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6.20 of the proposed programme budget were insufficient to warrant the reclassification of two G-4 posts to G-5.

40. With respect to programme of activity 4, he said that his country attached a great deal of importance to the emancipation of women and consistently favoured any step designed to attain that goal. His delegation therefore supported the conversion to an established basis of the five posts financed till now from allocations for temporary assistance in the Advancement of Women Branch. Such conversion would be in line with the intentions expressed by the General Assembly in resolution 35/131. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the Algerian proposal, which would add a D-2 post to the staffing table of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

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Programme of activity 5. Statistics

41. Mr. KABONGO TUNSALE (Zaire) agreed with the Advisory Committee (A/36/7, para. 6.7) that there was insufficient justification for the Secretary-General's request for a new P-5 post for the Chief of the Social and Housing Statistics Section; it should be possible to redeploy to the Section one of the 12 P-5 posts in the Statistical Office.

42. Mr. RIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs), replying to a question raised by the representative of the United States of America on the need to enlist the services of an outside consultant to produce the Handbook of Population and Housing Census Methods referred to in programme element 4.3, explained that the consultant would be required for three work-months only. The handbooks produced under subprogramme 4 (Social and demographic statistics), were destined for use by national administrations, and outside experts contributed specialized skills and the most recent ideas to their preparation. It was normal, and necessary, to convene a meeting of experts when the work was completed in order to verify whether the handbooks were of the highest quality. That procedure was followed in drawing up nomenclatures and accounting methods. The same approach was employed by some national administrations.

43. Referring to his statement at the 29th meeting of the Committee, he feared that he might have implied that the provision for his Department was somewhat scanty. Since he wished to dispel any impression of that nature, he must stress the fact that the Organization's budget was a concerted effort and that he assumed responsibility for the estimates for international economic and social affairs. Despite the principle of zero growth, the funds requested should suffice to carry out the tasks during the biennium, provided that Member States co-operated with the Secretariat, for example, by reducing to a minimum requests for reports or studies.

44. Mr. BANGURA (Sierra Leone), referring to the new P-5 post which the Secretary-General was proposing for the Chief of the Social and Housing Statistics Section, said he was convinced by the explanations which the Under-Secretary-General had given. Moreover, that Section was currently faced with an enormous amount of work since, in addition to populations as a whole, it must deal with such groups as the disabled, women, children and the elderly.

45. His delegation proposed that the Committee should approve the Secretary-General's request for a new P-5 post in the Social and Housing Statistics Section.

46. Mr. PAL (India) considered that a new post was necessary. CPC had stated that the Statistics programme of the United Nations should be strengthened and that some of its work could be accelerated. Consequently, the redeployment from another programme of the post requested would doubtless present difficulties.

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47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in the past the Advisory Committee had accepted most of the requests of the Secretary-General concerning the Statistics programme because it realized that the programme was one of the Organization's activities most respected and valued by Member States and delegations. Referring to table 6.18 of the proposed programme budget, he noted that there were already 12 P-5 posts included in the regular budget for the Statistical Office, not to mention the five P-5 posts financed from extrabudgetary funds. The new post requested by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6.58 was apparently intended for the Chief of the Social and Housing Statistics Section, and the Advisory Committee had concluded that it was quite possible for the Secretary-General to strengthen that Section by assigning to it one of the P-5 posts available to the Statistical Office.

48. As the representative of India had remarked, the United Nations Statistical programme was a high-priority programme. The Advisory Committee had always borne that fact in mind, but in his opinion a high-priority item did not necessarily call for an automatic increase in resources; the one did not, automatically follow on the other. For example, if a low-priority programme was badly managed, it might consume more resources than a comparable high-priority programme that was efficiently managed.

49. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that he was satisfied by the explanations which the Under-Secretary-General had given. He unreservedly supported the comments of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning the importance of the Statistics programme, whose output was always greatly appreciated by the United States. However, he saw no reason why the consultants' work should be verified; if the consultants were well selected, their work could be revised by correspondence.

50. Mr. RIPIERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) replied that the method used by the United Nations Statistical Office to prepare documents for Member States - use of United Nations experts, communication of documents thus prepared to the statistical services of the United Nations system and to the regional commissions for information, consultation by correspondence, expert meetings - had proved to be the only feasible method of comparing the views of practitioners and theoreticians, so as not to have to rely exclusively on the opinion of a handful of experts, and of preparing documents which found favour with Member States and were therefore useful from a practical point of view.

51. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) expressed satisfaction at the work done within the framework of the statistics programme and accordingly approved the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning the establishment and reclassification of posts. He hoped that in future the statistical services would pay closer attention to the explanations given by Member States concerning the methods they used to calculate national income. Those explanations would be essential for the Committee on Contributions and the Fifth Committee when the time came to devise new methods for calculating the real payment capacity of Member States, which had hardly been attempted in the past.

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(Mr. Bunc, Yugoslavia)

52. He would like to know whether it was intended to prepare a handbook which would enable Member States to calculate their national income.

53. In addition, he supported India's proposal that subprogramme 1: "National accounts, income distribution and related statistics" should be reclassified at a higher level of priority.

54. Mr. PAL (India), referring to the proposal of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, said that he would be reluctant to establish a systematic relationship between the granting of a high priority and an increase in resources. However, since CPC had noted that in certain fields, such as the compilation of statistics, such a backlog had accumulated that all available staff had to be mobilized to make up for lost time, he did not see how it would be possible to redeploy one of the posts of the Statistical Office to the Social and Housing Statistics Section.

Decisions on section 6

55. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) recalled that his delegation had proposed approving the request submitted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6.48 of the proposed programme budget for two established D-2 posts (the established D-2 post in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General and the temporary D-2 post recommended in that paragraph for conversion to an established post) in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

56. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said he thought the recommendations of the Advisory Committee should be upheld as a whole and not examined "a la carte" to the detriment of logic and uniformity. Therefore, his delegation requested that Algeria's proposal should be put to a vote. It would vote against it, for the reason he had just given.

57. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) observed that it was not the first time that recommendations of the Advisory Committee had been reopened by means of parliamentary manoeuvring. Adoption of the Algerian proposal would create a dangerous precedent. He accordingly proposed that the temporary D-2 post should remain unchanged until 1983. When the Committee had before it the programme budget performance report it could decide, in full knowledge of the facts, whether to convert it to an established post. Under rule 130 of the rules of procedure, the Committee should vote on that amendment first.

58. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), summarizing the situation, said that there was a proposal to convert a D-2 post to an established basis and that the Committee should take a decision on the matter.

59. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said he was glad to note that some delegations which voted as a matter of principle in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendations had realized that those recommendations were actually opinions that might be seen in a new light as new information became available.

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(Mr. Monthe, United Republic of Cameroon)

Since the incumbent of the D-2 post which the Committee recommended for redeployment to the Advancement of Women Branch would perform the functions of Deputy to the Head of the Centre, a modification of the Advisory Committee's recommendation seemed justified. His delegation would accordingly vote in favour of Algeria's proposal.

60. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that \$191,700 for the temporary D-2 post should be deducted from the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General. He would therefore vote against the Algerian representative's proposal.

61. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said it was his understanding that the conversion of the temporary D-2 post to an established basis proposed by the representative of Algeria was not dictated by any increase in the responsibilities attached to that post, and he would therefore be unable to support the proposal. However, because of the importance which his country attached to the question of the advancement of women, his delegation would abstain in the voting.

62. Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) said he supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and would therefore vote against the Algerian representative's proposal.

63. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) said that his delegation was in favour of any initiative aimed at promoting the purposes of the United Nations Decade for Women. It would therefore support the Algerian proposal, which would enhance the prestige of the Centre and help it to attain its objectives.

64. Mr. QUINN (Australia) stressed his country's dedication to the cause of the advancement of women. However, since in the present instance the establishment of the proposed post was not justified by administrative and financial considerations, and since, in addition, it would constitute a bad precedent, his delegation would vote against the proposal before the Committee.

65. Mr. PAL (India) said his delegation would vote in favour of Algeria's proposal because of India's interest in the advancement of women.

65a. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) said that he too was in favour of the proposal because the Centre had heavy responsibilities to fulfil in promoting the integration of women in development.

66. Mr. KABA (Guinea) said that he supported Algeria's proposal because of his Government's position of principle with regard to the advancement of women.

67. Algeria's proposal to convert to an established basis the temporary D-2 post in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was adopted by 63 votes to 14, with 6 abstentions.

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68. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to consider the proposal of Sierra Leone that it should approve the establishment of a P-5 senior officer post requested by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6.58 of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee had not approved the establishment of that post in paragraph 6.7 of its report and had recommended that the appropriation for section 6 should be reduced by \$67,000.

69. Mr. RIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) explained that the post was intended to strengthen the Social and Housing Statistics Section for work under programme element 4.6: "Collection, compilation and dissemination of social and housing statistics". He had taken note of the recommendation of CPC regarding the higher priority which should be given to national accounts statistics. In the coming months the execution of the programme would be modified as necessary to take account of that recommendation.

70. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said he was opposed to Sierra Leone's proposal because it would be tantamount to rejecting a recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

71. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that he would not oppose Sierra Leone's proposal.

72. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he would prefer to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposal of Sierra Leone approving the establishment of a P-5 senior officer post as Chief of the Social and Housing Statistics Section.

74. It was so decided.

75. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on section 6 as a whole, having regard to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the decisions which the Committee had just taken.

76. An appropriation of \$45,310,600 under section 6 for the biennium 1982-1983 was approved in first reading, by 72 votes to 1, with 9 abstentions, subject to any adjustments that might be necessitated by the decisions to be taken by the Committee on the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

The meeting rose at 11.25 p.m.