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FIFTH COMMITTEE
33rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 5 November 1981
at 3.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

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

1. Mr. YEGOROV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that improvement of the medium-term planning process should make it possible to implement United Nations' programmes more efficiently. He hoped that the evaluation of the first measures taken to that end by the Secretariat, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination would facilitate the preparation of the next medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989.
2. The plan provided a framework for the preparation of the programme budget of the Organization. The main element to be taken into consideration should be the level of the resources which Member States could make available to the Organization for each biennium during the planning period. The programmes, whatever their level of priority, should thus be drawn up taking account of the resources available to the Organization for implementation of the plan. That concept did not always appear in the documents before the General Assembly in the current year.
3. His delegation did not deny the necessity of a more effective system for setting priorities. It had noted with interest the comments made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 8 and 9 of his report (A/C.5/36/1). As the Secretary-General emphasized, allocating resources to activities consisting of ad hoc and pragmatic decisions not guided by any order of priorities made it necessary to squeeze substantive activities for the benefit of support services which required increased resources in order to be able to function. It was therefore necessary to have a method which made it possible to determine high priority activities and thus better utilize the resources of the Organization.
4. His delegation endorsed the recommendations of CPC concerning the system for setting an order of priorities applicable to substantive activities in the economic, social, legal and humanitarian sectors and in the field of information and common services. However, it was in his view, undesirable for that system to apply also to substantive activities of a political character. In that sector, the priorities of the international community had already been defined in the Charter of the United Nations, which had set as the purpose of the Organization the maintenance of international peace and security.
5. The criteria for priority setting set forth in paragraph 464 of the report of CPC were acceptable. The essential criterion should be the contribution made by the activities envisaged to the objectives of the Organization. New programmes which did not relate directly to the main mission of the Organization should be financed from resources released by the identification of obsolete activities or activities of marginal usefulness.
6. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic attached great importance to medium-term planning which, in addition to making it possible to set an order

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(Mr. Yegorov, Ukrainian SSR)

of priorities and establish a link between programme and budget, was also the essential instrument for determining obsolete programme elements and those that were of marginal utility or ineffective. It regretted, in that regard, that CPC confined itself to reaffirming that it was essential to eliminate such activities, without indicating the measures taken to that end by the Secretary-General at the time of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983. A global report on the implementation of resolution 3534 (XXX) and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly would be submitted to the thirty-seventh session, but information on programmes, projects or activities which were regarded as obsolete, of marginal utility or ineffective should be given annually.

7. His delegation therefore supported the recommendations of CPC, which aimed at improving the structure of the Organization and planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation methods.

8. Mr. SLØRDAHL (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that to design, introduce and implement a planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation system for the United Nations was necessarily a long and difficult process. It was, in fact, a question of laying the foundations of a management system which should be applied throughout the Organization. At the present stage, two points raise serious difficulties: the setting of priorities among the programmes, in particular, the elimination of activities which no longer had any raison d'être, and the monitoring and evaluation operations.

9. In order to resolve those problems, it was not only a question of choosing criteria and methods to be used; three requirements must be met. Firstly, the need for better information for the planning-programming work and for the performance reporting. That could not be accomplished without the development of new, administrative information systems, based on electronic data processing. Secondly, the need for improved performance in the management and administrative areas. That meant introducing training programmes that would make it possible to utilize the staff better at all levels of the hierarchy. Thirdly, the need to change the present machinery and structures in order to install the new system. In that regard, responsibility for taking decisions and establishing precise rules should be entrusted to the central unit, as was the case for the financial system. In the view of the Nordic countries, the criteria and methods proposed by CPC constituted a good basis for testing out a new process of priority setting. An effort should be made to resolve the difficulties which remained and to submit to the General Assembly, in 1984, through CPC, a report on the functioning of the new system.

10. The system of setting priorities should cover all activities, i.e., the substantive activities in the different sectors and the common services and the administrative services. As CPC had recommended, information on extrabudgetary resources and priorities applied to extrabudgetary funds should be provided. CPC had also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, proposals for official rules and regulations governing programme planning and programme aspects of the budget, performance monitoring and evaluation procedures.

(Mr. Slørdahl, Norway)

11. The establishment of a central and independent unit with responsibility for monitoring, within the Secretariat, the implementation of the commitments made by the Secretary-General in the programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for the delivery of outputs raised the problem of the autonomy of the units responsible for programme execution and the links which they should have with such a central unit. Other structural changes might also be considered, in particular, for staff requirements analysis functions, the preparation of performance reports and evaluation. The redeployment of resources raised in that regard a particular problem: how could one make sure that the staff resources were flexible enough to be redeployed to activities of a higher priority? There was also a need to clarify and codify the role of the Director-General in development and in international economic co-operation, as had been pointed out by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report A/36/419.

12. Structural changes would be required also at the intergovernmental level. Co-ordination between CPC and ACABQ was currently not satisfactory. The Joint Inspection Unit advocated the establishment of a single committee replacing both CPC and ACABQ. CPC had only recommended closer co-operation between CPC and ACABQ.

13. As had been clear from the discussion in the Fifth Committee, the task of improving the programming and budgeting process was an urgent one. It was a question of harmonizing, if not integrating, the programming and budgeting aspects of the programme budget both at the Secretariat level and at the intergovernmental level. The Nordic countries supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit that a detailed and extensive study should be undertaken to find an answer to that very complex question. They were prepared, in concertation with other interested delegations, to participate constructively in the search for a satisfactory outcome.

14. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that the establishment of an explicit order of priorities was one of the most complex questions arising in the field of programme planning. It was also one of the most important, because it offered Member States the only possibility for indicating explicitly the areas towards which the action of the Organization should primarily be directed. It was an urgent problem, because, in the elaboration of an appropriate system for setting priorities, planning and programming, in spite of the progress made in recent years at the methodological level as a result of the work of CPC, might long remain non-functional concepts.

15. Mr. Bertrand had emphasized what was at stake in determining priorities and the need for Member States to keep that constantly-changing subject under continued and thorough review. The very concept of priority might be defined in two different, even contradictory, ways, depending on whether the aim was to limit and save resources or to rationalize programme management. As part of a planning exercise, the second approach of dealing with actual activities seemed preferable, since the allocation of resources was only the result of decisions taken by deliberative bodies on proposed programmes.

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(Mr. Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

16. Nevertheless, to set priorities was not merely to take decisions on the elimination or the setting up of activities; it also, and primarily, involved deciding on the main emphasis in individual programmes. Unlike JIU, his delegation did not view priority-setting as a transfer of resources but rather as a way to rationalize activities and allocate the resources of the Organization accordingly.

17. Member States had not so far been able to exercise fully their power of decision in that sphere because of the complexity of United Nations structures and procedures. The structures must be modified as required so as to enable Member States to exercise control either through limited membership or regional bodies, such as CPC or the regional commissions, or through the Main Committees of the General Assembly.

18. JIU had recommended that programme managers, together with a new central monitoring unit to be established in the Secretariat, should take part in the decision-making process. While the concept of a central, independent unit needed to be explored further, particularly in the light of the work of the Committee of Governmental Experts to Evaluate the Present Structure of the Secretariat in the Administrative, Finance and Personnel Areas, his delegation believed that such a mechanism would make for improved efficiency in programme implementation. It should not, however, serve as a means for programme managers to question the priorities set by Member States. In that connexion, the real rate of programme delivery, which it would be the task of the central unit to determine, would have to be established in such a way as to give Member States a complete understanding of the reasons why programmes had not been implemented, in order to avoid precipitate changes. At all events, as recommended by CPC, intergovernmental organs should have some control over significant departures from commitments.

19. His delegation had some reservations about the CPC recommendation that the programme budget must continue to identify elements within each programme to which the highest priority was to be assigned and those to which the lowest priority was to be assigned, each representing approximately 10 per cent of the resources requested. Such a system should not lead to the systematic elimination of any activity connected with a low-priority element; that would be to forget that assigned levels of priority were not immutable. Moreover, there was no assurance that a redeployment of resources on that basis would really enable the United Nations to accomplish the many tasks that fell to it in a world in disarray. The report of the Steering Committee appointed by the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth evaluation of programmes might well confirm that fact.

20. United Nations activities fell into four categories. In the first category were the concepts and dominant ideas expounded in the Charter or in resolutions regarding the new international economic order or the economic rights and duties of States. The second category contained the 10-year international development strategies, the third the medium-term plan, and the fourth the programme budget. In the plan and the budget, programmes were subdivided into major programmes,

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(Mr. Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

programmes, subprogrammes and programme elements. The question to be asked was at which of those levels priorities should be set. Actually, since Member States were sovereign, they would be well advised to exercise their decision-making power where they wanted to do so. At the first level, priorities should be based solely on the idées-force to which Member States attached particular importance. At the second level, the priorities set should likewise derive from the general trends emphasized by Member States, although some effort of formulation and evaluation was needed. At the third and fourth levels, where objectives and programmes were more specific, the setting of priorities became a management matter. The first step must be to choose at which level to act: his delegation believed that it was at the subprogramme level that decisions should be made, as had been recommended by CPC, JIU and the Secretary-General. Subsequently, the priorities so determined should be made consistent with trends manifested at the highest level, because the priority-setting system itself was at stake.

21. That exercise was therefore everyone's business. The medium-term plan seemed to be the most suitable instrument for assisting the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to conduct such an analysis. Moreover, the text of the plan should, as recommended by CPC, be sent to Member States early enough to enable them to make comments.

22. His delegation held that the scope of priorities should extend to both substantive activities and common services. Caution should be exercised with regard to common services, as had been pointed out by the Director of the Budget Division (A/36/38, para. 108), because one of the principal functions of the United Nations was to provide a forum where Member States could exchange views. With regard to activities financed from extra-budgetary resources, current procedures were particularly satisfactory because they enabled priorities to be adjusted and adapted to prevailing circumstances.

23. As for the structural changes recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit, particularly the establishment of a "single intergovernment committee" to review plans, programmes and budgets, his delegation believed that such action would be premature. The need remained, however, for closer co-ordination between CPC and the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee should be authorized to consider the administrative and financial implications of CPC decisions and to include, in a special chapter of its report, recommendations to be reviewed by the General Assembly together with the CPC decisions. His delegation accepted the conclusions and recommendations in chapter VII (D.1.) of the CPC report.

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AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)
(A/36/6 (Vols. 1 and 2); A/36/7)

First reading (continued)

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa

24. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) suggested that the Fifth Committee should approve an appropriation of \$35,462,300 under section 13, which was \$550,300 less than the Secretary-General's estimate.

25. His first comment concerned paragraph 13.10 of the Advisory Committee's report, in which it was proposed that the turnover deduction should be increased from 5 per cent to 7 per cent, with a consequential reduction of \$487,400 in the estimate. Similar recommendations had been made in the case of ESCAP, ECLA and ECWA and under sections 6 and 7, and all those recommendations had been approved by the Fifth Committee in first reading. Since he had already explained in detail the Advisory Committee's approach to the question of vacant posts, and since the proposed reduction would not freeze those posts, he trusted that the Fifth Committee would endorse the present recommendation, just as it had approved the recommendations he had referred to.

26. His second comment was that section 13 contained the largest number of requests for reclassification, as compared with those for sections of the other regional commissions. According to the Secretary-General, the proposals constituted an implementation of the recommendations made by the Classification Section, which had found that a number of posts in ECA were graded at a lower level than they should be. The Advisory Committee had been unable to accept all the proposals and, as was indicated in paragraph 13.7 of its report, recommended approval of 9 out of the 12 reclassifications requested by the Secretary-General.

27. Mr. ADEDEJI (Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa) observed that Africa was having to struggle harder than ever before for economic survival against the threat of famine, the energy crisis, a heavier debt burden and mounting balance-of-payments deficits. At the same time, Africa was having to lay the foundation for restructuring national economies to quicken the pace of the self-generating and self-sustaining development envisaged by the Lagos Plan of Action. ECA was encouraged by the general support expressed for the Plan and by the appeal made to all countries in General Assembly resolution 35/64.

28. It would be unfortunate if the international community failed to support the building up of the human and institutional capabilities required for setting the development of the African continent in motion. That supportive role could be exercised in two ways, through the United Nations system and through ECA itself. With respect to the United Nations system, ECA had been working very closely with United Nations agencies, as was evidenced by the report of the Secretary-General on the contributions by organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations to the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action (A/36/513).

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(Mr. Adedeji)

29. ECA was the main economic and social development centre within the United Nations system for the African region. It was also the lead agency for the Transport Decade and was jointly responsible with UNIDO for the Industrial Development Decade. UNIDO had been given additional resources for the latter purpose, but ECA had not been so lucky.

30. The budget proposals for ECA were limited by the concern to maintain zero budget growth. The 0.6 per cent rate of real growth for section 13 was due entirely to the proposed reclassification of nine posts. With regard to the three posts which the Advisory Committee had recommended should not be reclassified, he pointed out that the requests for reclassification were the result of thorough work by a team of experts from Office of Personnel Services. Those experts had initially recommended a reclassification of more posts, but because of the financial implications involved it had been decided to put forward only 12 for reclassification in the 1982-1983 budget.

31. Of the three posts rejected by the Advisory Committee, two were posts for economists in the Socio-economic Research and Planning Division, which called for advanced technical skills. Given the level of responsibility associated with those posts, the only way of attracting and retaining econometricians was to recruit them at the P-3 level. Since ACABQ accepted that argument for one of the two posts in question, it was difficult to understand why it should not be valid for the other.

32. With regard to the request for reclassification of two P-4 posts to P-5 in the International Trade Programme, ACABQ had recommended reclassifying only one of the two posts. It would be difficult to justify placing one head of section at the P-5 level while the head of another section in the same programme, carrying similar responsibilities, occupied a P-4 post. Finally, the post of recruitment officer deserved to be reclassified to P-4, as ACABQ had recommended.

33. In conclusion, he said that the 50 member States of the Economic Commission for Africa put a great deal of hope in the United Nations, which should provide ECA with the necessary resources to enable it to discharge its mandate effectively at all levels and to develop the vast potential of the African continent.

34. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that development in Africa was an internal process based on the political will of the States concerned and on the plans and strategies drawn up by Africa's own heads of State, ministers and experts. If, therefore, Africa turned to the international community, it did so not in order to make it responsible for development in Africa but in order to get the help it needed for implementing its objectives. Since the Organization of African Unity did not possess all the resources needed for that purpose, ECA should be able to assist it.

35. Turning to the matter of post reclassifications, he said that reclassifications were not promotions but simply reflected actual responsibilities, which had to

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(Mr. Lahlou, Morocco)

be assessed fairly. Detailed technical explanations had been provided by the Classification Section, which had to make the initial determination as to whether reclassifications were justified. The role of the Advisory Committee was to ensure that savings were effected, and not to question the recommendations of a body which had been established for that purpose. It had been admitted that ECA posts had been under-classified from the outset, and ECA was simply asking for the situation to be normalized. After all, ECA's mission was to raise a young continent, where everything still had to be done, to an acceptable level of development, and that could not be accomplished by submitting to the zero-growth principle.

36. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that his delegation had already criticized the zero growth rate principle during the general debate on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. Applying that principle to the resources of ECA was particularly misguided in that ECA's programmes and activities were indispensable to African States.

37. He failed to understand why the Advisory Committee had rejected three of the reclassifications proposed by the Secretary-General. He also wanted to know why the Committee had recommended increasing the turnover deduction to 7 per cent; in his view, a uniform turnover deduction should be applied to all the regional economic commissions.

38. As for the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) established by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1977, he noted that the Executive Secretary had told the Second Committee that the inadequate budgetary resources allocated to them made it impossible for them to achieve their objectives and jeopardized their very existence. He cited the statement in the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that: "Concerning the question of decentralization of activities, the representative of ECA said that the implementation process had not gone as far as was expected, despite meetings held on the subject in the last two years. The issue was a delicate one, but with more discussions and a better analysis of the activities required it to arrive at a certain level and quality of output, taking into account the capability of the regional commissions, it was expected that the progress would be made in that regard" (A/36/38, para. 254). His delegation hoped that the Executive Secretary would explain what steps he had taken to encourage the decentralization of operational activities, together with any obstacles he had encountered, and would say how soon he expected progress to be seen, if indeed progress was possible at all.

39. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) said that he recognized that while responsibility for development devolved primarily upon the Governments of African States, successful implementation of the 13 ECA programmes of activity was still a necessity.

40. He hoped that the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 13.7, 13.8, 13.9 and 13.10 of its report would not disrupt the implementation

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(Mr. Ziniel, Ghana)

of the Commission's programmes. He also took note of the Advisory Committee's assurance that the increase recommended by it in the turnover deduction would not be reflected in a recruitment freeze. Subject to that, his delegation could approve the Advisory Committee's recommendation with reservations.

41. Mr. MOHAMMED (Nigeria) said that, given the problems that ECA had to face, he found the proposed budget submitted by the Secretary-General realistic and reasonable. The appropriation requested by the Secretary-General in section 13 was a minimum and the least the Committee could do was to approve it. He also supported the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 13.8 and 13.9 of its report.

42. In his view, the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres were the nuclei of future subregional organizations, and accordingly the primary criterion in appointing the persons to be in charge of them should be competence and efficiency, with geographical considerations coming only second. As for the post reclassifications, he proposed that the Committee should approve the Secretary-General's proposals, which were already something less than the reclassifications recommended by the Classification Section.

43. Mr. EL HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) stated that the application to the ECA budget of a zero growth rate was completely unjustified, particularly in the light of the economic difficulties of the African continent. His delegation was concerned over the inadequate resources allocated to the Commission at a time when additional responsibilities had been entrusted to it; he was afraid that its work would suffer.

44. He asked the Executive Secretary to clarify the matter of vacant posts in ECA and to indicate what measures he had taken to recruit people to fill them, what obstacles he had encountered in that connexion and how he intended to fill them during the current biennium. He supported the requests of earlier speakers for clarification of the reclassification proposals. The decentralization of operational activities was not a new issue, and he asked the Executive Secretary how he had applied the decisions adopted by the deliberative bodies on that subject, particularly those relating to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres.

45. Mr. MUGUME (Uganda) said that during the general debate his delegation had opposed the application zero budgetary growth to ECA. The tasks to be undertaken in the region proceeded directly from the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa. In that context even the real growth rate of 0.6 per cent proposed by the Secretary-General was insufficient.

46. His delegation did not understand why the Advisory Committee had opposed the reclassification of three posts proposed by the Secretary-General, particularly

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(Mr. Mugume, Uganda)

since ECA was already out of line with other regional economic commissions in the matter of post classification. In his view, the Fifth Committee should approve the Secretary-General's original proposal.

47. He hoped that the Executive Secretary would be able to fill the vacant posts mentioned in paragraph 13.10 of the Advisory Committee's report, and in the belief that the ECA staff should be strengthened immediately, associated himself with the preceding speakers who had asked why he had not yet found it possible to solve that problem.

48. Mr. DENEKEW (Ethiopia) said that the very limited resources allocated to the Commission did not correspond to its needs and that it was necessary to fill the gap. His delegation was against the application of a zero growth rate, particularly to the ECA budget. It agreed with the Secretary-General, however, that it was necessary "to curtail activities of lesser importance through increased emphasis on the review and reassessment of priorities" and to effect "a change of emphasis from activities of lower importance to those of higher priority by a corresponding redeployment of existing resources" (A/36/6, Foreword). He believed that ECA should be the focus of particular attention. Its programmes of activities benefited approximately one third of the States Members of the United Nations, including 21 of the least developed countries, and it was a lead agency for implementing the Lagos Plan of Action and many programmes adopted by the international community, including the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, the African Industrial Development Decade, the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

49. His delegation had not been convinced by the Advisory Committee's arguments against the three post reclassifications recommended by the Secretary-General and wanted further clarification. In any case, he approved all the reclassification proposals made by the Secretary-General.

50. Mr. MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) welcomed the fact that the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa had taken a number of initiatives to implement the Lagos Plan of Action. On the other hand, he regretted that the concept of zero real growth had been applied to a section of the budget which affected almost a third of the States Members of the United Nations, including the largest number of least developed countries. The real rate of growth in the estimate for section 13 was only 0.6 per cent and that minute increase was attributable solely to the proposed reclassification of posts and not to an expansion of the programmes. Even the requests for reclassification were very modest, given that it had been concluded in 1979 that 27 of the Commission's posts warranted reclassification. Now, in 1981, the Secretary-General was content to propose the reclassification of 12 posts, a number which the Advisory Committee was recommending should be reduced to 9. He did not know what to think: did the Advisory Committee consider that the Classification Section (Office of Personnel Services) had not provided sufficient

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(Mr. Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

justification for its request, which was after all below the real needs? The Advisory Committee's recommendation could only have a dampening effect on the morale of ECA staff and he challenged its validity.

51. He would like to ask the Executive Secretary the reason for the high rate of post vacancies, which was 9.2 per cent for the current biennium and seemed to justify the Advisory Committee's recommendation to increase the turnover deduction from 5 per cent to 7 per cent with a consequential reduction of the estimate for section 13.

52. His delegation would like to know if effect had been given to the recommendation in paragraph 494 of the CPC report (A/36/38). At the twenty-first session of CPC, the Secretary-General had stated that he had still not been informed of the recommendations of the Conference of Ministers of Transport of the African Region held in March 1981, but that it might perhaps be necessary to modify the estimates as a result of those recommendations. His delegation would like to have more information, even though it knew that the Committee was to be informed later about the administrative and financial implications of a draft resolution on the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa which was currently being considered by the Second Committee.

53. He then raised the delicate problem of the decentralization recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 32/197. Since the adoption of that resolution, it had turned out that decentralization was not easy and that the regional commissions themselves had had considerable difficulty in promoting the development of their regions. He thought that if the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions explained the problems they had encountered to the Committee, it might perhaps be able to suggest a number of corrective measures.

54. The problem of co-ordination was felt particularly acutely in Africa, where ECA had to work in co-operation with various specialized agencies and with the Organization of African Unity. His delegation would like to know how the concept of co-ordination had been put into practice; it was perfectly aware of the particularly delicate nature of the question and would not hold it against the Executive Secretary if he saw fit to make his answer rather vague.

55. He would like to take advantage of the presence of the Executive Secretary to ask his opinion on a point which the Committee would examine later, namely, the training programme for English and French language translators/précis-writers at the Economic Commission for Africa. When the Committee had considered the estimates for section 28J, it had approved an appropriation of \$461,300 for the training programme for the Commission's translators, pending the submission at the current session of an evaluation report on the programme. It appeared from paragraph 11 of the evaluation report (A/C.5/36/17), which the Committee would be required to consider later, that ECA had not requested a single additional translator post in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

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(Mr. Monthe, United Republic
of Cameroon)

However, it had indicated that it was considering financing in subsequent years, with the aid of extrabudgetary funds, 2 translator posts in each of its multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs) and 4 additional posts at its headquarters. The appropriation of \$461,300 requested under section 28J of the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983 should therefore be deleted. He would like the Executive Secretary of ECA to give his opinion on the matter, which would help the Committee to take a decision when it discussed the Secretary-General's report on the training programme.

56. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) thought that the reclassification of 12 posts proposed by the Secretary-General should make it possible to regularize an abnormal situation to some extent: for several years, ECA's establishment had not accorded with the continent's real needs. On the other hand, he was astonished not to find any estimate in respect of the multinational programming and operational centres in the proposed budget.

57. The principle of zero budgetary growth, steadfastly rejected by the Group of 77, could only plunge the African continent further into underdevelopment, in spite of the considerable efforts being made by African Ministers and Heads of State, who were doing everything they could to implement the plans and programmes of action adopted by consensus. The Executive Secretary of ECA had made an urgent appeal to the Committee: he had asked the international community to assist a continent which had to contend with exceptional difficulties. Underdevelopment, like war, was not inevitable. Peace lay in the development of all peoples, and Member States must combine their efforts to that end.

58. Mr. KABA (Guinea) reaffirmed his Government's position of principle that Africa was the continent most seriously affected by the current crisis. The Committee therefore had to consider the ECA budget with particular attention and goodwill. The African States had shown their determination to implement the Lagos Plan of Action but, if they wished to give full meaning to their independence, they had to have the right to possess and manage material goods in the interests of their peoples. He was convinced that the African countries would either develop together or not develop at all. The Committee therefore had to help the Economic Commission for Africa to promote and co-ordinate the development of a continent which had the right to recover its freedom and affirm its independence.

59. Mr. KAMBIRIGI (Burundi) stated that the Economic Commission for Africa was doing all it could to discharge scrupulously the mandate which had been entrusted to it. But its Executive Secretary had made it clear that the provision for the Commission was small and his delegation thought it should be increased. He hoped the Committee would give a positive reply to the request of the Executive Secretary, who had asked it to examine ECA's financial situation very closely.

60. His delegation, like many others, categorically rejected the concept of zero budgetary growth proposed by the Secretary-General. As for the administrative

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(Mr. Kambirigi, Burundi)

problems reaised by the Executive Secretary, it thought that the Committee should approve the Secretary-General's request for the reclassification of 12 posts and would like to know on what criteria the Advisory Committee had based its rejection of three of the twelve requests for reclassification.

61. Mrs. HOUSHOLDER (United States of America) noted that the Economic Commission for Africa had produced very few sales publications. Perhaps it could take a decision to put on sale its technical publications, which made up the greater part of its output, and use the income so obtained to reduce the assessments of Member States. With regard to part D.2 of section 13, entitled "Management of technical co-operation activities", she noted that the estimate indicated a rate of real growth of 21.6 per cent. The Secretary-General had not presented any supporting justification, and she would like some details of the technical operations undertaken.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.