



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th 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 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/36/9, A/36/624 and Corr.1, A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1, A/C.5/36/L.7/Rev.1, A/C.5/36/L.8-L.10)

1. Mr. CAPUTO (United States of America), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1, pointed out that operative paragraph 2 had been reworded so as to delete mention of a specific statutory retirement age. The revised draft resolution merely requested the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board to study the possible effects of raising the statutory retirement age. There was no question of forcing United Nations staff members to retire later or to lose any of their acquired rights. The purpose of the draft resolution was to restore the actuarial balance of the Fund. It was true that some developing countries might argue that postponing the statutory retirement age might reduce their nationals' chances of securing a post in the United Nations. In effect, if the statutory retirement age was raised from 60 to 65, the average period of service of Secretariat staff members would increase by only a few months and nationals of developing countries would not be placed at a disadvantage. Compulsory retirement at the age of 60 was perfectly arbitrary since in most national civil services the retirement age was not 60. His delegation only hoped that the Joint Staff Pension Board would undertake a study without obligation on the part of Member States. Once they knew the results of the study Member States could make a decision in full knowledge of the facts.
2. Draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.7/Rev.1 and draft decision A/C.5/36/L.9 had already been introduced at the previous meeting.
3. Mr. GREN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), introducing draft decision A/C.5/36/L.8, recalled that his delegation was deeply concerned at the continuing deterioration in the actuarial balance of the Fund. His delegation had already pointed out that the main cause of the deficit was the extremely high level of benefits paid to retirees; everyone knew that they were higher than the benefits paid to members of national civil services. His delegation hoped that, when submitting its recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, the Joint Staff Pension Board would emphasize the need to take steps to make good the actuarial deficit of the Fund by adjusting the benefits. Since delegations would need detailed information in order to be able to take a decision, his delegation proposed to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and to the International Civil Service Commission that they should study the question of the amount of all the types of pensions paid in the United Nations as compared with the amount of the pensions paid to employees of corresponding occupations and levels belonging to the civil services of countries in which the headquarters of organizations of the United Nations system were situated.
4. Mrs. de HEDERVARY (Belgium), introducing draft decision A/C.5/36/L.10, said that her delegation wished to ascertain all possible measures for reducing the actuarial imbalance of the Fund and to obtain information concerning situations

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(Mrs. de Hedervary, Belgium)

where staff members, otherwise eligible for participation in the Fund, were excluded therefrom. The draft decision had no financial implications and was aimed solely at ensuring that the report to be submitted by the Joint Staff Pension Board to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session contained information on those situations.

5. Mr. BUNG (Yugoslavia), referring to draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1, said that although he agreed that the future stability of the Fund depended on its actuarial balance he did not think that the draft resolution should ask for anything more than a study of the problem. Any specific mention of a statutory retirement age at the present stage would be premature. Delegations did not have sufficient information to be able to take a decision on that matter.

6. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) noted that the draft resolutions and decisions currently before the Committee all requested studies. In order that members of the Committee should not waste their time and efforts he proposed that the sponsors of the various texts should jointly work out a new draft resolution asking the Joint Staff Pension Board and the International Civil Service Commission to carry out a single study which would cover all the aspects referred to in the various texts. That single draft resolution should be worded in clear and general terms and should not refer to problems that were too controversial.

7. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) thanked the representative of the United States for the information concerning draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1. However, he had not noted any difference of substance between the revised text and the original. He was anxious to ensure the strict implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 33/143 and was not sure that was the right time to ask for a study of all possible measures to restore the actuarial balance of the Fund, in particular, of the proposal to raise the statutory retirement age. However, in view of the comments made by the representatives of Yugoslavia and Egypt, he would go along with the consensus.

8. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Egypt. The measures proposed in draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1 went beyond the problem of the actuarial imbalance of the Fund and touched on personnel questions. His delegation did not wish, at the present time, to reopen the very complex debate which had taken place concerning the statutory retirement age and, like the Egyptian delegation, it would want to see a comprehensive study carried out before the Committee was asked to take a decision.

9. Mr. LANDAU (Austria) said that the proposal of the representative of Egypt was a little premature. His delegation agreed, in essence, with the proposals contained in draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1, on the understanding that the results of the study requested would have to be interpreted as flexibly as possible. His delegation was pleased with the wording of the seventh preambular paragraph, which showed that the raising of the statutory retirement age was only one of the measures which would help restore the Fund's actuarial balance. Other possible causes of that imbalance must not be overlooked and the acquired rights of staff members to retire at the age of 60 must not be denied.

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10. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) stressed the political impact of draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1. He recognized that the actuarial imbalance of the Fund was a serious problem but was not sure that the solution proposed by the United States representative was the best. Raising the statutory retirement age was a matter of personnel policy of the United Nations and his delegation had very definite opinions about that policy. Whatever the results of the study they must not jeopardize the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which had been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in many resolutions. His delegation would have no difficulty in going along with the proposal of the representative of Egypt.

11. Mr. GREN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation would have no difficulty in accepting draft resolutions A/C.5/36/L.7/Rev.1 and A/C.5/36/L.8. Draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1 and draft decision A/C.5/36/L.10 raised certain questions of principle. The purpose of the draft resolution was to restore the Fund's actuarial balance by raising the statutory retirement age. His delegation, like the delegation of the United States, was deeply concerned at the actuarial imbalance but it felt that the solution proposed by the United States did not take into account the main cause of that imbalance, namely, the very high benefits. The proposed solution would lead to only a temporary improvement which would be followed by an even sharper deterioration. Moreover, adoption of the recommendation submitted by the United States would adversely affect the Organization's personnel policy and would jeopardize the geographical distribution of posts. It was not by chance that the General Assembly had set the statutory retirement age at 60. It had sought thereby to ensure the efficient operation of the Secretariat whose duties were increasing in number and complexity. The solution proposed by the United States would merely increase the period of service of staff members holding permanent contracts and would be detrimental to the efforts of Member States to ensure equitable geographical distribution.

12. Draft decision A/C.5/36/L.10 was based on the assumption that increasing the number of contributors to the Fund would reduce the actuarial imbalance. His delegation believed that, on the contrary, it would merely increase the deficit. In fact, according to the report of the Joint Staff Pension Board, current retirees were being supported by future participants. The measure proposed by the Belgian representative, far from reducing the imbalance between contributions paid by participants and benefits received by retirees would actually increase it. His delegation would therefore have very great difficulty in accepting the draft decision.

13. Mr. BASSOLE (Upper Volta) said he doubted whether increasing the retirement age to 65 would be the best way of eliminating the Fund's actuarial deficit. As the question was important and had a bearing on personnel matters, he believed that it should be the subject of an in-depth study.

14. Mr. NAGAGGA (Uganda) supported the proposal made by the representative of Egypt. He suggested that the various drafts submitted should be combined in a

(Mr. Nagagga, Uganda)

single text. With respect to draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1, he shared the opinion expressed by the representative of Kenya; although not actually opposed to a comprehensive analysis of all possible measures to restore the actuarial balance of the Fund, his delegation considered that such a study should not be geared to any particular aim, such as an increase in the retirement age.

15. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas) considered that it would be inadvisable to undertake the study requested in draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1. The draft, by stressing a well-known fact, namely that the increase in the statutory retirement age to 65 would make it possible to remove the actuarial imbalance of the Pension Fund, called for an analysis which would not give rise to any new information.

16. Mrs. de HEDERVARY (Belgium) said that the statement by the representative of the Soviet Union confirmed the need for the study by the Pension Board which her delegation proposed in draft decision A/C.5/36/L.10.

17. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) endorsed the proposal by the representative of Egypt and said that the Pension Board should conduct a comprehensive study of the deterioration in the actuarial deficit of the Pension Fund.

18. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation was prepared to take part in discussions aimed at reaching a consensus, as suggested by the Egyptian delegation. He feared, however, that such consultations would not lead to the desired outcome, as the positions of delegations were in some instances irreconcilable. It would be difficult to avoid voting on drafts which expressed divergent opinions, and there was, therefore, little point in deferring action on them.

19. Mr. LANDAU (Austria) drew the Committee's attention to the draft resolution in annex IX of the report of the Joint Staff Pension Board. He recalled that the Pension Fund had decided that the Standing Committee should conduct a comprehensive analysis of all possible measures designed to reduce the actuarial deficit of the Pension Fund, and of their timing, to enable the Board to make specific recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

20. The CHAIRMAN said it appeared that the Committee was not ready to take a decision at the current meeting on the various drafts before it. In the spirit of the proposal made by the representative of Egypt, he suggested that the sponsors of the drafts in question (A/C.5/36/L.6/Rev.1 and L.10), together with all interested delegations, should hold informal consultations with a view to submitting a single text which the Committee could endorse.

21. Mr. CAPUTO (United States of America) supported the suggestion made by the Chairman and said he hoped that in the course of the informal consultations the drafts would be reworded and simplified and that a more broadly based text which the Committee could adopt by consensus would emerge.

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AGENDA ITEM 108: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)  
(A/36/30; A/C.5/36/26, A/C.5/36/29)

22. The CHAIRMAN, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/213, invited the representative of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations to introduce, from the floor of the conference room, the document of the Federation submitted through the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/26).

23. Mrs. STEWARD-GOFFMAN (Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations) said that the United Nations staff were seriously concerned at the absence of a coherent career structure in the United Nations system and were anxious to see existing deficiencies and anomalies redressed. The Federation urged the Committee to defer action on the subject, at least until the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, in order to allow for genuine consultations at the interorganization level between all the parties concerned, with the participation of staff representatives. Concerning the JIU report on personnel policy options (A/36/432), she observed that, under its statute, JIU was not bound to consult the staff, and she urged the Committee to consider ways of remedying that anomaly. The Federation had reservations about the procedure followed in preparing the two separate reports requested by the Assembly in resolution 35/210, particularly as the co-operation between JIU and ICSC could have been closer. The Federation was also concerned at the fact that the above-mentioned JIU report drew almost exclusively on the experience of the United Nations, even though it had clear implications for the system as a whole.

24. She reaffirmed the Federation's conviction that there could be no independent international civil service as long as threats to physical security hung over all its members. International civil servants should have the assurance that their civil rights would be protected. The Federation also stressed the need to call a halt to political pressures in respect of recruitment and personnel policies.

25. As far as conditions of service were concerned, she regretted that ICSC, in its report, gave only limited coverage to the question of General Service staff assessment and confined its attention to certain technical problems. The revised staff assessment rates applicable to the General Service category had been recommended by the Commission without meaningful staff consultation. The scale adopted overlooked the fact that at many duty stations the level of net and gross salaries was very low. By reducing pensionable remuneration at all duty stations, the new scale affected most adversely those at the bottom of the ladder. It was difficult to understand why ICSC had not mentioned the strong opposition of the staff in its report to the Fifth Committee, and she suggested that ICSC should be asked to undertake an early and comprehensive review of the scale of assessments applicable to the General Service category.

26. The Federation urged the Committee to look at the question of Professional staff remuneration in a broader perspective than had hitherto been the case. The United Nations system, which should give the best possible technical

(Mrs. Steward-Goffman)

assistance to the developing world, should surely be able to attract the best staff. Yet, a growing number of agencies were now admitting that they had difficulty in attracting qualified staff unless they recruited them at a higher grade than the post would normally justify; in addition, the fact that some staff were receiving payments from their Governments over and above their regular remuneration was evidence of the inadequacy of the remuneration for Professional staff. She urged the Committee not to underestimate the seriousness of the situation. In that area, as in others, ICSC was undertaking study after study without any conclusive results.

27. She drew attention to the situation of the field staff, who were all too often overlooked. Their conditions of service were very different from those of staff serving in headquarters cities and should be dealt with differently. The Federation trusted that, following the meetings of the CCAQ/FICSA working party on field staff, which was scheduled for early 1982, ICSC would shoulder its responsibilities towards the field staff and give the necessary priority to their conditions of service in its work programme.

28. The status of women was not an item in the ICSC work programme; however, in view of the importance of the question and the fact that most of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/210, section V, related to all the agencies of the common system, the Federation considered it appropriate to bring its views on the subject to the Committee's attention. The question, unfortunately, had not been included in the work programme of ACC for 1981. As problems persisted, the Federation looked to the Committee to take the action required.

29. The Federation had taken note of the appeal made by ICSC to staff representatives to renew their efforts to foster the development of a unified international civil service and to enable the Commission to carry out the mandate with which it had been entrusted. The Federation would continue to support an inter-agency approach to global issues. When ICSC submitted a recommendation, there was always the possibility that the staff and administrations of the organizations concerned might jointly propose a different course of action. The solidarity of the common system required the efforts of all concerned, efforts which should be designed primarily to foster dialogue and agreement and avoid acrimony and imposed solutions.

30. Mr. CULLEN (Argentina) said that the report of ICSC gave a very clear explanation of particularly complex questions. He noted with satisfaction that the Commission had made progress in its review of the purposes and operation of the post adjustment system, which was of fundamental importance because of its financial implications, and he hoped that the Commission would be able to propose solutions to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

31. With regard to conditions of service of General Service staff, his delegation noted that the secretariat of ICSC had prepared detailed proposals on a general methodology for conducting salary surveys, but that the consideration of that question had been deferred at the request of CCAQ and FICSA. It was

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(Mr. Cullen, Argentina)

hoped that the General Assembly, at its thirty-seventh session, would be able to approve the Commission's report on that question. The difficulties caused by the implementation of the revised General Service salary scales in Geneva demonstrated an alarming shortcoming in the common system. His delegation urged all the organizations which applied the common system to do everything to preserve the unity of the international civil service.

32. Annex I to the report of ICSC described action taken by the Commission at its fourteenth session with regard to the study which the General Assembly had requested that the Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit should undertake on concepts of career, types of appointment, career development and related questions. JIU had drawn up a report entitled "Personnel policy options" (A/36/432) which contained recommendations on that question. His delegation attached great importance to the work of JIU; nevertheless, he did not feel that the Fifth Committee should consider the recommendations of JIU at the current session. It was ICSC that had been entrusted by the General Assembly and the organizations in question with the task of submitting substantive recommendations on staff policy. The report of JIU should therefore be submitted to ICSC in order to respect both the mandate of JIU and that of the Commission.

33. Lastly, his delegation supported the Commission's conclusions concerning the level of remuneration, as contained in paragraph 84 of its report, in view of the fact that the margin between the remuneration of the United Nations common system and the United States civil service was widening, since it was now 19 per cent.

34. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) said that his delegation appreciated the importance of ICSC. It was essential to institute uniform and equitable rules governing the remuneration, conditions of service and career development of international civil servants in order to prevent any type of discrimination.

35. His delegation expressed satisfaction that the Commission had studied, as in 1980, pensionable remuneration and pension entitlements as elements of total remuneration, because that issue was fundamental to the smooth functioning of international organizations. Nevertheless, that satisfaction had been somewhat lessened by the Commission's inability, because of the complexity of the question, to elaborate a special index for pensioners which would take account of the varying rates of national taxation and by the fact that the Commission's recommendations would not take effect until 1 January 1983. It was hoped that the Commission would be able to submit concrete recommendations on the special index for pensioners at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Although the question of the reductions to be made in the cost-of-living differential factors to account for lower rates of national taxation was extremely complex, the Commission should do everything possible to complete the study of that problem in co-operation with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board. In that respect, his delegation supported the Commission's decision that the pensions of all retirees, regardless of the date of retirement, would be

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(Mr. Sagrera, Spain)

recalculated in accordance with the recommendations to be made to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

36. The Commission, furthermore, should make the necessary improvements in the methods used in determining differences in the cost of living for the purposes of the post adjustment system. In that regard, the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions should undertake an in-depth study of the problems related to consumption expenditure, price comparisons, subsistence allowances, study grants, etc. in order to provide the Commission with the data needed to formulate its recommendations.

37. His delegation had always been concerned about the methodology used in comparing the total remuneration of international civil servants. The task of establishing equitable remuneration gave rise to some extremely delicate problems. It was therefore important to adopt a strict methodology for comparing all elements of total remuneration, including pension insurance and other monetary benefits. However, the comparison of total remuneration should not lead to salary increases which would be unjustified and truly inflationary.

38. With regard to the conditions of service of the professional and higher categories, his delegation expressed particular satisfaction at the Commission's effort to apply the Noblemaire principle. The comparison between the remuneration of the United States federal civil service and that of the United Nations system had been carried out over a period of 12 months, taking into account the differences in the cost of living between Washington and New York. The results - however important they might be - were still incomplete because of the difficulties which the Commission had encountered in comparing retirement benefits and the relative level of remuneration. Other elements were needed in order to determine whether it was necessary to choose as a point of comparison, on the basis of the Noblemaire principle, a civil service other than the United States federal civil service. His delegation supported the Commission's decision to continue to consider that question and submit its conclusions to the General Assembly at an appropriate time. He hoped that the Commission would be able to do that as soon as possible.

39. With regard to the supplementary payments received by staff members from their Governments, his delegation took note of the Commission's view that such a practice was unnecessary, inappropriate and, moreover, inconsistent with the staff regulations.

40. His delegation expressed regret at the measures taken by ILO, which had increased by 3 per cent the net salary of the majority of General Service staff in Geneva. His country, which supported the principle of a unified and homogeneous civil service, deplored the fact that ILO had deviated from the practice of establishing a common salary scale for all General Service staff in Geneva.

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(Mr. Sagrera, Spain)

41. His delegation considered that the ICSC performance appraisal form, reproduced in Annex X to the report, was fully in accordance with the principles governing the United Nations personnel policy and should be applied by all the organizations of the common system.

42. His delegation associated itself with the plea made by FICSA in paragraph 47 of its comments (A/C.5/36/26). The security and independence of the international civil service should be guaranteed. Respect for the privileges and immunities accorded to officials of United Nations organizations and for their status as international civil servants should become a reality and not remain simply a pious wish. For that reason, his delegation had co-sponsored at the previous session the draft resolution submitted by the Netherlands expressing the concern of the General Assembly at the fate of officials who had been arrested or detained, in flagrant violation of the most fundamental principles of human rights and the solemn commitments undertaken by the Member States in question.

43. Lastly, his delegation felt that greater efforts should be made to raise the proportion of women at the D-1 level and above. It hoped that some of the few Spanish women officials in the Secretariat would be given the opportunity for promotion to responsible posts.

44. Mr. MOWAFY (Egypt) shared the concern expressed by other delegations at the supplementary payments made to international officials by certain Governments. Egypt was opposed to any privileged or discriminatory treatment of a kind that might compromise the independence or integrity of the international civil service. It therefore shared the opinion of ICSC that the practice was contrary to the provisions of the Staff Regulations.

45. The Egyptian delegation was also alarmed at practices which resulted in decreasing the salaries of some categories of United Nations officials, since it called into question the principle of "equal pay for equal work". Such practices were contrary to the spirit of the Charter and harmful to the morale of international civil servants.

46. It emerged from the studies of ICSC that the gap between the remuneration of officials of the United Nations common system and that of members of the best-paid national civil service was tending to widen. Equity demanded that jobs having the same responsibility should have equivalent pay levels. It would be appropriate, therefore, to harmonize the salary scales of the international civil service and the best remunerated national civil service. Because of the practical difficulties entailed in attaining that objective, it might be as well to envisage a definite but reasonable time-limit.

47. The Egyptian delegation felt that the General Assembly's decision to invite a representative of FICSA to present the views of the staff to the Committee was in accordance with the fundamental principles of democracy. In that way, the Committee could receive full information which would help it to take wise decisions.

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48. Mr. OREBI (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), speaking also on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, said that both organizations supported the action of ICSC, which performed advisory functions on staff matters for all the organizations of the common system. Nevertheless, IFAD and FAO were concerned at the modest progress of ICSC in certain areas. He wondered whether the organizations of the common system might not have overburdened ICSC, and whether it was reasonable to set deadlines for the consideration of issues that were so important and so complex that in fact ICSC ought to be given all the time it needed. It might perhaps be appropriate for ICSC to take stock of its past activity - which was considerable - and study ways of coping with the many tasks with which it was faced.

49. All the organizations of the common system knew that ICSC was suffering from a shortage of manpower at a time when the work that needed to be done in fact demanded a staff increase. It would be desirable, therefore, to request ICSC to specify those objectives which it thought it could reasonably attain in the short, medium and long term, in the light of the resources available to it. At the same time, the organizations of the common system should abstain from imposing new tasks on it that it was quite unable to complete if the essential financial and administrative means were refused.

50. The Commission had well-defined competence in a specific area. The organizations should respect that competence and should avoid taking decisions on matters which were within its exclusive field of responsibility. Similarly, questions that were already being dealt with in other bodies should not be referred to ICSC. On the other hand, FAO and IFAD thought that the two studies on personnel issues prepared by JIU, which might have system-wide implications, should be examined by ICSC. Lastly, it might be examined whether it was useful and desirable for ICSC to participate in the proposed study of the actuarial imbalance of the Joint Staff Pension Fund.

51. Mr. RAFFRAY (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) associated himself with the remarks of the representative of FAO. UNESCO shared FAO's concern at the slow progress on matters submitted to ICSC and the length of time it took to complete the studies and surveys entrusted to it.

52. The very great complexity of the work of ICSC demanded detailed research, the compilation of a considerable amount of data and statistics, a systematic, minute and complete analysis of all those factors, and a laborious process of reflexion and exchange of ideas that could only be successfully carried out if ICSC had adequate resources. Therefore, UNESCO too was concerned at the multiplicity of matters referred to ICSC and the relative paucity of its resources. He hoped that the Fifth Committee would appreciate the extent of the problem and would be able to find a way of providing ICSC with the climate of serenity that it needed.

53. In the case of matters submitted jointly to ICSC and JIU, in particular the reports on career development, it would be preferable, to the extent that

(Mr. Raffray)

any decision by the General Assembly would also have repercussions on the other organizations of the common system, for such a decision to be made only after a complete examination by the organs of the system set up to that end. It was important for the organizations of the system to have an opportunity of formulating comments and suggestions on the JIU report. The latter, incidentally, contained some very fruitful ideas, which agreed in many respects with the opinions of the organizations.

54. Mr. VOSS RUBIO (Uruguay) wished to make a few comments on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/36/30). First, he commended the work of ICSC on the administrative unification of the organizations of the common system, although at the same time he considered that the process ought not to be solely the Commission's responsibility. Secondly, he believed that the Fifth Committee should take a final decision on such questions as the operation of the pension system, the method of calculating pensions, the indexing of pensionable remuneration, and pension entitlement. Thirdly, the system of determining pensions ought to be made more flexible and more realistic so as to reflect faithfully and fairly fluctuations in the cost of living in the country of residence after retirement as well as the effects of inflation and the fluctuations of the United States dollar. Fourthly, the adoption of such criteria ought to promote the unification of the international civil service and thus increase its effectiveness. Fifthly, it was essential that the revision of the adjustment system according to place of residence should be effected without delay. Lastly, he emphasized that his country shared the concern of ICSC at the inadequate representation of women in the international civil service and would support any initiative designed to promote the participation of women in development.

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT  
(continued) (A/36/34, A/36/95)

55. Mr. SIBAHI (Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on its work from 1 July 1980 to 31 July 1981 (A/36/34), said that the Joint Inspection Unit had carried out the work programme in document A/36/95, but, as far as the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system was concerned, for the reasons given in the report (see paras. 9-12) the programme would be spread out over a number of years.

56. He wished to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) had not yet accepted the Joint Inspection Unit's statute, a statute which had already been recognized by some 10 other international organizations or specialized agencies (see paras. 2-3 of document A/36/34). The Joint Inspection Unit requested the General Assembly, through the members of the Fifth Committee, to invite those organizations to participate in the Unit so that they could avail themselves of its services, and indicated that it was ready to provide them with any information they needed on the Unit's work.

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(Mr. Sibahi)

57. He was glad to announce that, after intensive administrative contacts with the Director-General of WIPO, the latter had informed him that he was in the process of proposing to the legislative bodies of WIPO that they should accept the status of the Joint Inspection Unit after 1982 and thus participate in its work. He read out a message from the Legal Counsel to WIPO confirming that information. The Joint Inspection Unit thus hoped that its system-wide reports would have greater value. As far as IFAD was concerned, the question of its participation had apparently not yet been submitted to its legislative bodies, and it would be very useful if steps to that end could be requested by the General Assembly.

58. Turning to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/34), he said that it should be noted that the Unit had published a series of supplementary reports which were currently being examined by the committees in question and by the General Assembly. Given that the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained a summary of the content of all those reports, he did not wish to go into the matter at length, although he would like to review the broad outlines of some of the reports submitted to the Fifth Committee, while leaving it to the Inspectors who had taken part in preparing them to give delegations any further details they might request during the subsequent examination of those reports.

59. The report on management services in the United Nations system (A/36/296) examined those services from the viewpoint of their terms of reference, their organization, staffing and staff costs, and the submission of reports to legislative and governing bodies. The report laid particular stress on the development of closer links among the management services of United Nations bodies.

60. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit on methods of determining staff requirements (A/36/168) concentrated on the administrative efficiency of international organizations and the sound utilization of their financial resources, in accordance with the provisions of article 5 of the Joint Inspection Unit statute. Since staff costs represented 70 per cent of the regular budgets of those organizations, the crucial importance of the Joint Inspection Unit's work on the subject was evident. Examination of the methods used to formulate staffing proposals and the way they were considered by executive heads and legislative bodies showed that the information provided to the latter was inadequate and did not assist them in making informed decisions on the staffing proposals submitted to them. In most organizations there was a marked tendency to continue posts from one budget to the next with little critical examination. In order to remedy those shortcomings, the Inspector had submitted a number of recommendations aimed, *inter alia*, at devising work measurement systems for repetitive work and analytical estimating techniques for non-repetitive work. The Inspector had also proposed that the central management services of the organizations should participate in the process of determining staff requirements and that they should provide the legislative bodies with information on the cost of staffing proposals when draft budgets were submitted to those bodies. The Inspector hoped that those recommendations would lead to the adoption of

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productivity norms which would guide the preparation of staffing proposals.

61. The report on control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations system (A/36/167) was a modest attempt on the part of the Joint Inspection Unit to follow up on comments by the many delegations which had expressed concern over the flood of documents and publications which swamped United Nations bodies and organizations every year. The volume of documentation produced by the United Nations system exceeded 1.5 billion pages and the cost was over \$100 million a year. If that huge volume of documents was conducive to the clarification of the issues faced by the international community, there would be no cause for concern. In fact, however, excessive documentation tended to obscure issues. That problem was compounded by the disdain shown for legislative bodies, which did not receive documents on time. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly had stated that the increase in documentation had become one of the most critical issues with which both Member States and the Secretariat were confronted. That was why the Inspectors had examined the majority of international organizations in their report.

62. During the formulation of the report on the evaluation of the translation process in the United Nations system (A/35/294), the Joint Inspection Unit had observed that the volume of documents and publications submitted to the Department of Conference Services had to be reduced in order to improve the level and reduce the cost of translation. The guidelines established for that purpose had been interpreted by the departments and services responsible for applying them simply as advice and not as directives. That was why, in its report, the Joint Inspection Unit had stressed the need to encourage positive initiatives and to decry, and even penalize, negative actions. The Inspectors thought that the most effective instrument for the control and limitation of the volume of documentation was to apply a quota system in the programme budget backed by the full authority of the executive heads. They also believed that the quality of documents could be improved by establishing control services and organizing training courses to improve document drafting and editorial work.

63. With regard to the problem of the late issue of documents, the Inspectors believed that guidelines and rules for the preparation of pre-session documentation, including the submission of documents to conference services, should be established, so that the latter could prepare them and distribute them in good time, on condition that documents control units were granted the necessary authority to apply those rules and guidelines. The Inspectors had made a number of recommendations on the subject to legislative and intergovernmental bodies and to executive heads, which could apply them in close co-operation so as to obtain the desired results.

64. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit on building construction procedures of United Nations organizations (A/36/297) stressed that the final cost of buildings added at United Nations Headquarters greatly exceeded the original estimates. With regard to WIPO, he said that that organization had not provided all the necessary information on its headquarters buildings at Geneva. He hoped

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that, in future, the Joint Inspection Unit could cover the activities and reports of more international organizations. The recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit had received favourable comments from the Secretary-General in document A/36/297/Add.1, and the recommendations which that document contained had for the most part been accepted by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/36/643), in which, inter alia, it was requested that estimates should be more precise. The Inspectors recommended that the necessary technical expertise should be available to the organizations before and during construction. They had indicated that, for that purpose, an in-house technical team could be formed or a consultative firm engaged, or the two solutions combined.

65. United Nations projects frequently overran initial estimates substantially. The Inspectors therefore believed that cost estimates should be obtained. They also proposed that payments to contractors to cover inflation, which should never, even in the worst of cases, exceed 100 per cent, should be included in the final cost estimates for buildings. Those payments could be covered in a special code, which could be referred to in cases where inflation at the projected rate actually occurred.

66. With regard to the report on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat (A/36/407), he said that a new discussion on that subject was not necessary, since the agreement on desirable ranges reached by the Fifth Committee and the plenary Assembly had begun to be applied on 1 January 1981, and since the Fifth Committee had decided to reconsider the question at the forty-first session of the General Assembly. The Inspectors had, however, wished to provide information on further factors that could assist in the application of the new desirable ranges, since the efforts made so far had not resulted in the principle being applied properly. The new desirable ranges, which were the fruit of arduous negotiations, had not been immune from criticism and opposition, and that was why the report had made some recommendations on the subject. The Inspectors believed that it was wrong to make the Secretary-General chiefly responsible for achieving equitable geographical distribution and increasing the percentage of women employed in the Secretariat, and that part of the responsibility in that area should rest with the heads of services and directors of departments of the organizations of the United Nations system.

67. In conclusion, he stated that the Inspectors always followed with great interest the work of the Fifth Committee in order better to respond to the wishes of Member States, which in turn benefited from the work of the Joint Inspection Unit.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.