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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 108: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT  
(continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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

1. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas), after emphasizing the importance of an independent, efficient, competent, moral and contented international civil service, said that, while it was still grossly under-represented in the secretariats of the United Nations common system, her country considered its current representation to be a first step towards equitable participation.

2. On reading the Commission's report (A/36/30), her delegation had observed that there was a widespread dissatisfaction at the Commission's role in certain areas. In the first area - conditions of service of all categories of staff - despite the assignment allowance recommended by the Commission as a result of the recent reclassification of duty stations and the Commission's efforts to apply the Noblemaire principle objectively, and despite the fact that the various comparisons made by the Commission in application of that principle showed that United Nations staff members were still privileged in comparison with the United States Federal Civil Service, the Federation of International Civil Service Associations (FICSA) had requested a 10-per-cent interim salary increase. Her delegation could accept the first justification given by FICSA - that the base salary increase granted in 1975 did not compensate fully for the erosion in purchasing power since the previous adjustment in 1971 - but some of the arguments advanced in paragraph 28 of document A/C.5/36/26 were unacceptable. The decline in the quality of services was said to result from difficulties in recruiting staff of the requisite calibre. The decline in morale was portrayed as a phenomenon affecting only the Professional category and above, although the action taken by the ILO, and subsequently by other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, to increase General Service salary scales by 3 per cent showed that such dissatisfaction was not restricted to the Professional category and above. Her delegation deplored that action, which threatened the common system principle.

3. With respect to the second area - the Commission's role in maintaining a viable and stable common system - the commendation by Member States and staff members of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter contrasted with: the non-ratification of fundamental instruments such as the Conventions on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies; the practice of supplementary payments; and the behaviour referred to in paragraph 257 of the Commission's report, which had prompted the Commission to reissue the report on standards of conduct in the international civil service. Her delegation suggested that the question of supplementary payments should be kept under review.

4. In the third area - personnel management and career development - the Commission's work had been unsatisfactory, since the General Assembly, in resolution 35/210, had requested the Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit to take action in that respect. Her delegation realized that the questions concerned were complex, particularly since, as emphasized by the Joint Inspection Unit, it was a matter not simply of solving technical problems but also of clarifying all

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(Miss Zonicle, Bahamas)

personnel questions involving political choices. Her delegation would give its views on the subject when the Committee considered agenda item 107 on personnel questions.

5. With respect to the steps to be taken to ensure the effectiveness of the Commission's work, the Commission should, in her delegation's view, rationalize its activities by establishing an order of priority. ICSC had complained on a number of occasions that shortage of time and resources had prevented it from carrying out its studies in a sufficiently comprehensive and thorough manner, and had frequently requested additional resources. The step-by-step approach often adopted by the Commission gave rise to a heterogeneous aggregate of standards and arrangements. Lastly, the Commission should carry out a cost-benefit analysis of the application of the Noblemaire principle and consider whether the benefits to be expected from total compensation comparison were proportionate to the expenditure entailed by the highly sophisticated methodology adopted.

6. Without prejudice to a possible consensus decision by the Committee, her delegation proposed that the Commission should base its programme of work on the following questions, in descending order of priority: definition, in collaboration with all the competent bodies in the United Nations system, of a coherent and comprehensive personnel management policy and plan; completion of the review of the purposes and operation of the post-adjustment system; refinement and completion of the on-going study on comparison of total compensation, including expatriate benefits; and completion of the review of a coherent and fair policy towards local or national professional staff.

7. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that the questions under discussion were of extreme importance to his delegation. With respect to the comparison of total compensation, and noting the reservations expressed by organizations in the United Nations system through the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and by the staff through the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations, his delegation was of the view that the Commission should complete its review of the question as a matter of priority.

8. His delegation welcomed the Commission's decision to reconsider the question of expatriate benefits at a later stage and, for the time being, to make a comparison based only on non-expatriate compensation. The Commission had recognized that the development of a method for the comparison of expatriate benefits would be complex, costly and time-consuming. He commended the Commission on having refrained from recommending any additional benefits for the time being.

9. The Commission has been wise not to support FICSA's request for a 10-per-cent interim increase in base salary for staff in the Professional and higher categories. Such salaries were automatically indexed to compensate for the effects of inflation and currency fluctuations, and United Nations salaries were nearly 18 per cent higher than those in the United States Federal Civil Service, which had been chosen as the comparator.

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

10. With respect to the post adjustment system, his delegation had read with special interest the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions concerning the cost-of-living measurement surveys, and had noted the progress made so far in improving those methods. It would be interested to know, however, how the Committee had reached the conclusion that the spendable income system used by the United States Government compensated for the differences in purchasing power along the same lines as the United Nations post adjustment system. Lastly, it supported the Commission's recommendation that separation payments should continue to be based on gross salary, adjusted by movements in the weighted average of post adjustments.

11. The United States strongly supported the Commission's recommendation that the General Assembly should call upon Member States to renew their efforts to foster the development of a unified international civil service. His delegation was therefore unable to support the ILO decision to grant a 3-per-cent increase on the pre-1978 net salaries payable to its General Service staff recruited before 1 January 1979, and it strongly opposed the Secretary-General's proposal to apply the revised salary scale. Even before the increase had been proposed, the salaries of the personnel concerned were higher than the best local salaries.

12. In 1980, his delegation had opposed the accelerated home leave and family travel provision for staff at difficult duty stations, because the financial implications had not been accurately assessed. In 1981, the Commission had added a financial incentive of between \$1,200 and \$2,400, with no indication of the number of staff concerned. His delegation would therefore like to be informed of the number of staff members serving at duty stations designated as difficult, and the cost of the incentive to the United Nations, as distinct from the common system as a whole.

13. With respect to the Master Standard, his delegation had difficulty in understanding the Commission's recommendation in paragraph 176 of its report that the responsibility for job classification decisions up to the D-2 level should be delegated to executive heads, since that implied that Member States would no longer be in a position to contain unnecessary budget growth by controlling personnel classification through the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee.

14. The development of classification standards for the General Service category in New York was a matter of interest to his delegation, which would comment on the subject when the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/36/495) under agenda item 107. It, meanwhile, noted with satisfaction the progress made in developing job classification standards for various categories of staff.

15. His delegation was pleased to endorse several of the Commission's recommendations and conclusions, which should contribute to staff development. He referred, firstly, to the importance of training for the United Nations agencies. The United States warmly endorsed the Commission's recommendation that training activities should undergo a thorough evaluation of their utility to the Organization and the tangible results they were expected to achieve. In his view,

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

such evaluation should be assigned to the Administrative Management Service. Another element that should contribute to staff development was the use of the performance appraisal form recommended by the Commission. His delegation hoped that the supervisors would use the periods between performance appraisals to discuss with staff members any difficulties they encountered so as to help them to overcome such difficulties. The third area opening up career prospects for staff consisted of interorganizational exchange programmes, which his country had long supported. Such programmes should not, however, be allowed to impede the recruitment of fresh talent.

16. Lastly, his delegation associated itself with the suggestion of other delegations that the Commission should review its activities and establish an order of priority.

17. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that many of the important points raised in the report of the International Civil Service Commission had already been referred to by other representatives, and he would therefore confine himself to commenting on those which he considered particularly important. Firstly, his delegation was very unhappy about the ILO decision to increase by 3 per cent, from 1 March 1981, the base salaries of General Service staff recruited prior to 1979. That decision was directly contrary to the ICSC recommendations, which had been accepted by the other six Geneva-based organizations, and it was all the more regrettable in that it would impede the establishment of a unified international civil service. The executive heads of the other organizations had meanwhile decided to draw the Commission's attention to the consequences of the ILO decision, since they intended to grant a comparable increase to their staff. FICSA had drawn attention in that connexion to the erosion of the purchasing power of staff salaries; that was a problem which no one could escape in present circumstances, and his delegation shared the view of preceding speakers that the 3-per-cent increase should not have been granted.

18. Even though their conclusions were not always in agreement, the work done by ICSC and the Joint Inspection Unit in the personnel field was extremely useful, since the discussions it had stimulated facilitated the search for solutions. It would be useful, in particular, for the questions raised in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which had system-wide implications, to be referred to the organizations and their staff, so that ICSC could take the relevant comments into account when making recommendations under its mandate for the establishment of a unified international civil service.

19. His delegation noted with considerable satisfaction the work undertaken by ICSC, under article 14 of its statute, in such areas as the establishment of job classification standards and standards of recruitment, training and career development. It could endorse most of the Commission's recommendations in that respect, and it considered that that body should be encouraged to continue its work, together with its studies on remuneration, and in particular the comparison of total remuneration.

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20. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) said that he wished to ask the Chairman of ICSC for further details concerning paragraphs 188 to 192 of the annual report of the Commission; he would be interested, in particular, to know the views of ICSC on the introduction of self-revision, more specifically from the viewpoint of career development and consequent reclassification of language staff. He asked whether ICSC had considered that question and whether it supported the principle of self-revision.

21. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) thanked representatives for their very helpful comments and said that he wished to answer the questions which had been raised during the debate.

22. First of all, regarding the presentation and format of the ICSC report, he was pleased to note that the representative of the USSR had welcomed certain refinements which had been introduced including a section on financial implications; he had taken note of the comments made, *inter alia*, by the representative of the United States concerning further improvements which could be made.

23. With regard to the programme of work, it was clear from the observations made by representatives that ICSC had been addressing a broad range of issues of fundamental importance to Member States and to the organizations applying the United Nations common system, albeit with limited resources. Pressures on the Commission to undertake additional studies made it essential for the Commission to define and limit its work programme, taking into account the observations made during the debate.

24. With regard to margin between the remuneration of officials of the United States Federal Government and that of United Nations officials, he pointed out that, according to the studies made to date on the basis of comparisons of total compensation, the margin was 14.2 per cent as compared with the traditional margin of 17.8 per cent based on comparisons of net base salary only. Most speakers had taken note of the latter margin and had considered that the Commission had been right in rejecting a request by FICSA for a 10 per cent increase in professional salaries. The Commission would welcome an indication from the Committee on which basis it was to calculate the margin. Perhaps it could continue to use both until the methodology for comparison of total compensation was sufficiently refined to command unqualified acceptance.

25. With regard to General Service salary scales, the representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, and other speakers had referred to the difficult situation which had been created in Geneva when six out of the seven organizations had accepted the Commission's recommendations on the subject and one organization had approved significant departures from those recommendations. That demonstrated the need to ensure co-ordinated action among organizations at the same duty station and among Member States themselves in response to recommendations of the Commission for without such co-ordination there would be erosion in the common system. ICSC was therefore confident that the Fifth Committee would recommend to the Assembly that it call the situation to the attention of both Member States and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination so that the Commission could carry out the mandate with which it had been entrusted.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

26. The unilateral action taken by ILO related not only to General Service salaries but also to the implementation of the new staff assessment rates, which the General Assembly had approved at its thirty-fifth session, and family allowances. While it was true, as had been stated by the representative of the ILO, that some organizations had, on occasion, made slight modifications to recommendations of the Commission, those changes had been very minor. That was not true of the decision recently taken by the ILO in Geneva for it had resulted in financial implications of some \$5.4 million for all the organizations in Geneva in the period 1981-1983.

27. The problem was compounded by the uncertainty hanging over the institutional role of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. The ILO stated that the Tribunal had "advised" the Governing Body that it had a responsibility to "negotiate" with the staff. The Commission had a different concept of the issue for when the Governing Body and the staff of the ILO had requested an advisory opinion from the Tribunal, in 1978, the judges had been the first to recognize that they had no authority to provide an advisory opinion. Strangely enough, they had then proceeded to give such an opinion "in their individual capacities". The Commission regarded that opinion therefore as legally questionable. The Governing Body and the staff of the ILO had, nevertheless, concluded that the opinion granted them a "special position" which the other organizations did not have. That threw into focus once again the disturbing role of the ILO Administrative Tribunal; the Fifth Committee had already requested ACC - because of the difficulties created by that Tribunal - to study the feasibility of having a single tribunal for the entire common system. With respect to the "special position" of the ILO administration which was "negotiating" with its staff, the United Nations also consulted with its staff before taking decisions. Moreover, since the ILO staff and the staff of the other organizations in Geneva were subject to the same cost-of-living conditions it was difficult to see what "special position" the ILO staff were in.

28. If the Commission proceeded, in determining General Service salaries, on the basis of "best prevailing conditions" - a principle accepted by all the organizations, including the ILO - and, if at the same time, ILO proceeded on the basis of a "special position" then there was a contradiction between the two premises to the detriment of any sort of common system in Geneva. It might be useful for the Fifth Committee to request ACC to resolve the issue and to consider the feasibility of a single tribunal for the common system.

29. With regard to salaries and allowances, the representative of Belgium, in particular, had recalled that the intention of the Noblemaire principle was that the totality of conditions of employment - including pensions - in the comparator country should be considered. He assured the Committee that the Commission would continue to improve the methodology for comparisons of total compensation and would include expatriate benefits as many delegations had requested; the additional funding of \$350,000 was needed to engage experts to write and analyse the computer programmes. Certain delegations had stated that they were opposed to expatriate benefits being taken into account; since ACC had recently taken decisions on the subject the representatives of the Secretary-General might be able to give the Committee more details in due course.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

30. The Commission would certainly take into account the suggestion made by the representatives of Belgium and Ghana that the Commission should discontinue studies on other possible comparators; however, the Noblemaire principle required the issue to be studied from time to time.

31. Concerning the post adjustment system, the representative of Pakistan, in particular, had made some suggestions as to the possible causes of some anomalies of the system and the crucial roles of the three headquarter duty stations (Geneva, Vienna and New York); the Commission would examine his excellent suggestions. Commenting on the observations made, in particular, by the representative of Australia, he said that the Commission would continue its efforts to improve the post adjustment system. Noting that the representatives of the Soviet Union and Belgium had expressed the hope that a report on the study of the post adjustment system would be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, he said he hoped that would be possible. The improvements in the methodology for cost-of-living measurements, which had been recommended by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions and approved by the Commission, would be implemented step by step, starting in 1982, and would play a central role in improving the system. Meanwhile, the Commission would continue its studies on the subject.

32. Replying to the observations made by the representatives of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR, he said that it was the Commission's normal practice to hire pricing agents on a temporary basis to collect price data in the various duty stations. It was adhering strictly to the principle that a pricing agent should have no family ties with United Nations personnel and should be a person whose remuneration was not affected by the results of the survey. The Commission fully realized the importance of ensuring objectivity, accuracy and comparability of basic price data and was trying to involve the staff of the cost-of-living section more in price collection, supervision and spot checks. Considering that the Commission monitored 600 duty stations in some 170 countries, it would not be feasible - unless substantial additional resources were made available - to limit actual price collection to the Commission's staff.

33. The representatives of the USSR and Belgium had made interesting comments and suggestions about pensions and pensionable remuneration. With regard to the suggestion that the Commission should study the levels of pensions of United Nations officials vis-à-vis those prevailing at the seven headquarters duty stations, that would seem to be primarily a function of the Joint Staff Pension Board. He would suggest, however, that the point should not be pressed because the Soviet representative's other suggestion, namely, that total compensation including pensions and expatriate benefits should be studied against the equivalent entitlements in the comparator country, would be more consistent with the trend the General Assembly and the Commission were now following.

34. With regard to the request of the Belgian delegation that the Commission should study the effects of the Washington formula in the context of pensionable remuneration, he said that the formula had been adopted only the previous year in the full knowledge that it would result in an actuarial loss of some \$160 million. Moreover, it would be better to observe the relative movements of WAPA and the United States CPI for some time before coming to definite conclusions on dual indexing.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

35. The representative of the USSR had felt that high priority should be given to the development of a special index for pensioners. The Commission would make every effort, in collaboration with the Joint Staff Pension Board, to complete the first phase of the study - the effects of lower rates of taxation on the cost-of-living differential factors in countries where those factors had been applied to pensions in accordance with the Washington formula - and to report to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. As to the development of a special index for pensioners taking into account the expenditure patterns of retirees in various countries, that was a complex and time-consuming task; the Commission nevertheless assigned the highest priority to it.

36. He welcomed the support given by several delegations to the Commission's recommendation on the question of supplementary payments. In reply to the question raised by the Brazilian delegation, he could report that on 16 October the Federal Republic of Germany had replied to the Commission's request for further information. The reply provided information similar to that received from Japan and the United States of America, contained in annexes V and VI to the Commission's report, and did not therefore change the Commission's position. With regard to the suggestion of Barbados that the matter should be kept under review, it seemed to the Commission that it was now time for the Fifth Committee and the executive heads in charge of Staff Rules and Regulations to decide what further action should be taken.

37. The Commission welcomed the positive comments made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the Nordic countries regarding training and other aspects of personnel policy. It believed that the provision of adequate training programmes within the organizations of the common system was consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the statute of the Commission, particularly article 14. In fact, it was absolutely essential if the efficiency and effectiveness of the international civil service was to be improved. The Commission therefore shared the regret expressed by the representative of Finland that low priority had been given to training and supported the suggestion that it should study the possibility of establishing, to the extent possible within existing resources, a common fund for training through which programmes involving all organizations would be financed. As several delegations had indicated, the implementation of such programmes, coupled with a common system of job classification standards through the Master Standard, would no doubt facilitate career planning and mobility. In that regard, the Commission had taken several steps to increase interorganizational exchange and was grateful for the positive response that the Japanese and other delegations had expressed on ICSC initiatives such as the central vacancy announcement procedure and common prospection procedures. In view of the importance of training and recruitment, which so many representatives had recognized, he trusted that the Committee would approve the modest request for an additional P-4 post to strengthen the Personnel Division of ICSC secretariat.

38. With regard to job classification, the representative of Austria had raised some interesting questions on the Master Standard. He had pointed out that the number of reclassifications (236) proposed by the Secretary-General for 1982-1983 was three times more than the number requested in the 1980-1981 budget and had

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

therefore wondered whether some other system based on different criteria could not be used. He (Mr. Akwei) believed that that was more a question for the representative of the Secretary-General, as it concerned implementation by only one organization of the common system. The Master Standard, as promulgated by the Commission, was in process of being implemented by all the organizations, and to the Commission's knowledge the United Nations was not applying any other standard. ICSC had organized training programmes for the officials concerned with applying the Master Standard in their respective organizations and did not yet know how it had actually been applied, since implementation had started only on 1 January 1981 and the Commission was to review the first year's work in that field only in March 1982. Of the 236 reclassifications proposed by the Secretary-General, 168, or approximately two thirds, were not the result of the application of the ICSC Master Standard but rather of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its report (JIU/REP/80/7), which had been reviewed by the Committee in 1980. Those reclassifications had been based on rank-in-person and had therefore been opposed by ICSC because of the inflationary effect they would have on the grading pattern within the United Nations. Paragraphs 184 to 292 of the Commission's report described that situation in greater detail. He shared the view of the representative of Austria on the use of insufficiently objective criteria. That type of grade creep might be understandable within the United Nations, given the pressures that were brought to bear for the use of different and sometimes contradictory criteria. It could not, however, form an acceptable basis for the development of a truly unified and rational international civil service of the kind referred to by the representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, by the representative of Australia and by other representatives who had commended the work of the Commission in the area of job classification for the common system.

39. The representative of Japan had asked for clarification of the criteria for the classification of duty stations. Information on that subject was to be found in paragraphs 150 to 161 of the current report (A/36/30) and paragraphs 215 to 228 of the 1980 report (A/35/30). The representative of Japan had also requested ICSC to include in future reports the trends in relation to such classification. ICSC would take that request into consideration in preparing its next report.

40. The representatives of ACC and FICSA and many delegations had expressed their views on the question of studies on concepts of career, types of appointment and career development and on related questions entrusted to JIU and ICSC. Virtually all the speakers had stressed that the issues were of concern to all the organizations which applied the common system, that because of their importance they required in-depth consultations with the organizations and the staff, and that the Commission was the body statutorily entrusted by organizations and Member States alike with the task of co-ordinating and unifying the international civil service. He thanked the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Finland (speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries), Ghana, Japan, Pakistan and Uruguay for their expressions of support for the Commission. ICSC also welcomed the views of the delegations which believed that, in the light of the Commission's mandate, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit should be referred to it. When preparing recommendations on the relevant issues, the Commission would take fully into account, not only the views of the organizations and the staff, but also those of Inspectors Bertrand and Khalifa.

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(Mr. Akwei, ICSC)

41. As to performance appraisal, he had taken note with interest of the comments made by the representatives of Spain and Finland, who had stressed the necessity of instituting a logical performance appraisal system. With respect to the question of the representative of Finland, he said that ICSC recognized that the size of the organizational unit played a preponderant role in applying quartile distribution. That was why it had asked each organization to determine the size of the organizational unit to which the quartiles would apply, in the light of total size and other pertinent factors. Part III of the model performance appraisal form, which required a staff member to define career goals and to assess with his immediate supervisor whether those goals were realistic, had been introduced to reinforce the principle that career development was the concern, not only of each organization, but also of the staff member concerned. He would reply subsequently to the United States representative's question on spendable income.

42. In reply to a question put by the representative of Iraq, he said that ICSC had not been favourably disposed towards the reclassification of translator and interpreter posts. It had considered that such reclassification was contrary to the Master Standard, since it was based on the principle of classification of persons rather than that of rank in the job. Furthermore, it was not convinced that self-revision warranted the reclassification. Its view was that the main purpose of the reclassification was to improve the career prospects of an occupational group which had exerted pressure on the Secretariat to attain that end.

43. In conclusion, he thanked the representatives of FAO, UNESCO and ILO for showing deep interest in the Committee's discussions on the item.

44. Mr. DEBATIN (Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management) said he wished to inform the members of the Committee of the decision taken by ACC concerning the study of total compensation. ACC had considered the matter at its most recent session, held at the end of October, and, after hearing a representative of FISCA, had decided, in the light of its own concern over the erosion of the purchasing power of the salaries paid to staff in the Professional and higher categories and the fact that it was unable to propose an increase in those salaries, to invite ICSC to study various solutions, other than the use of the United States Federal Civil Service as the comparator. ACC had noted the statement in paragraph 65 of the ICSC report that, if the General Assembly wished the Commission to continue its work on the methodology for the comparison of total compensation so as to include expatriate benefits, it must allocate the necessary resources in the Commission's budget, and had decided that ICSC should continue its work by expanding the methodology used in order to include expatriate benefits. On behalf of ACC, he urged the Committee to approve that study and to grant ICSC the necessary additional resources.

45. He would prefer to await the issue of the Advisory Committee's report before commenting on the difficulties which had resulted from the new salary scale for General Service staff at Geneva, following the decision taken by ILO.

46. Mr. DITZ (Austria) recalled that he had asked the Chairmen of the Advisory Committee and ICSC whether there was not some inconsistency in adopting a job classification system that was in theory objective and then to reject or modify reclassification proposals based on that system.

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47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) observed that the question of the Master Standard fell within the purview not of the Advisory Committee but of ICSC.

48. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) said that the Commission's position on that point was quite clear: it lamented the fact that the Master Standard for job classification had not been observed, since that gave rise to system-wide complications.

AGENDA ITEM 104: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT  
(continued) (A/36/34; A/C.5/36/41)

49. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados) observed that the Secretary-General had submitted, in accordance with established practice, a report on the major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit affecting the United Nations which had not been implemented (A/C.5/36/41). In that report, the Secretary-General explained that, in some cases, the General Assembly had not called for the implementation of the JIU recommendations as such and that, in other cases, the implementation of the JIU recommendations would require legislative approval.

50. In the light of those comments, his delegation sought clarification as to the action the Secretary-General intended to take to implement the recommendations made by JIU in its reports on the subregional offices for Central America and Panama and for the Caribbean (A/36/102), methods of determining staff requirements (A/36/168), management services in the United Nations system (A/36/296) and building construction procedures of United Nations organizations (A/36/297). His delegation was convinced that those recommendations, if implemented, would contribute towards better management, greater efficiency and increased economies in the United Nations system. Indeed, to judge by their comments on those reports, the Secretary-General and ACC appeared to appreciate fully the value of those recommendations. However, it was not clear what action the Secretary-General intended to take. Consequently, his delegation would like the representatives of the Secretary-General to state which JIU recommendations the Secretary-General already intended to implement and which would require legislative approval.

51. He would also like clarification of some of the comments by the Secretary-General concerning the JIU report on the subregional offices for Central America and Panama and for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America. It was stated in paragraph 4 (c) of document A/36/102/Add.1 that decentralization of administrative authority from ECLA headquarters to the subregional office for the Caribbean had considerably reduced the differences between the subregional offices of Mexico and Port-of-Spain, while paragraph 4 (d) seemed to cast some doubt on the practicability of such decentralization. He would therefore appreciate an explanation of the Secretariat's position on that point.

52. His delegation also wished to be informed of the outcome of the exploratory conversations, mentioned in paragraph 6 of document A/36/102/Add.1, which had been held between the Mexican Government and the subregional office. As to paragraph 7, it wondered whether the proposed study on the desirability of amending financial rule 110.7 would be carried out and how long it was expected to take. It would

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(Mr. Maycock, Barbados)

welcome some details of the measures referred to in paragraph 11, which were designed to strengthen the contribution of the entire United Nations system to the work programme of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee. Finally, it would appreciate an account of the difficulties experienced in recruiting a French translator, as mentioned in paragraph 8.

53. With regard to the comments of ACC on the report on methods of determining staff requirements (A/36/168/Add.1), he pointed out that, according to paragraph 8 of that document, ACC, unlike JIU, was not convinced that the inclusion of a greater degree of detail in proposed budgets would be useful. For its part, his delegation believed that the furnishing of more detailed information could only be helpful to representatives of Member States who were responsible for approving the proposed programme budgets. Most representatives would be more than willing to give extra time to reading the proposed budgets if that would lead to the acquisition of additional relevant information.

54. Finally, his delegation again stressed the need to act upon or at least give serious consideration to the recommendations of JIU. If those recommendations could be implemented without the need for a legislative mandate his delegation would be happy to await the submission of the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of the JIU recommendations to the next session. However, should any aspect of the recommendations require specific legislative action, his delegation would be equally happy, with the aid of other interested delegations, to take whatever action was required.

55. Mr. QUINN (Australia) acknowledged that the Joint Inspection Unit had to walk a tightrope between its independence vis-à-vis the United Nations system, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the need to ensure that United Nations bodies implemented its recommendations. That dilemma was highlighted by the current dispute between JIU and ICSC in personnel policy. Rather than being a problem of jurisdiction, it was related to the structure of JIU itself. The fact was that the Fifth Committee had no way of monitoring the implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendations. It would be desirable for the Secretariat to inform the Committee what follow-up action it had taken on JIU recommendations on personnel policy.

56. In the field of programme planning and evaluation, the JIU recommendations had led to major progress. But, in other instances, there had been no follow-up, either because of substantive disagreement between JIU and the bodies concerned or because of inadequate consultation.

57. In those circumstances, it might be necessary to undertake an evaluation of JIU, a task which the Unit itself could probably undertake as a first step. Such a review was made all the more pressing by the fact that the Joint Inspection Unit was overburdened with a wide diversity of demands, which went far beyond its original terms of reference.

58. The right of JIU to report directly to the Fifth Committee on financial and administrative matters should be maintained. However, the Fifth Committee could do

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(Mr. Quinn, Australia)

little about following up the recommendations of JIU unless it was aware of the views of the bodies affected. In the case of personnel policy, the Fifth Committee would have to be apprised of the views of ICSC and of the staff before it could take action on the JIU recommendations.

59. Given its catalytic role, JIU should do more work collectively, especially in fundamental areas where the expertise of a broad range of inspectors could be tapped. That would add authority to JIU recommendations.

60. With particular reference to the reports which were currently before the Committee, his delegation believed that consideration of the reports on personnel policy should be deferred until the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, thereby enabling the bodies concerned to be apprised of the JIU recommendations and to respond in detail. The report on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator warranted wider circulation and more detailed consideration before any action was taken on it. In the more concrete areas of management services building construction procedures, and control and limitation of documentation, the JIU analyses and recommendations would repay very close study because it was precisely in those areas that the Joint Inspection Unit's contribution could be the most effective. For that reason, his delegation appealed to all concerned to implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and thus bring about greater efficiency and economy in the United Nations system.

61. Mr. BROCHARD (France) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on personnel policy options (A/36/432) was of particular interest in that it provided an inducement to reflect on an over-all concept of the international civil service. The lack of any coherent system by which to govern that service was nothing new, but, for some years, an ever-increasing awareness of the need completely to rethink the rules governing the international civil service had become apparent on the part of Member States, the Secretariat and, obviously, the staff.

62. His delegation did not believe that it would be possible at the current session to consider the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in detail. Because of time constraints which meant that budgetary issues should take priority, his delegation would regrettably have to confine itself to giving its first impressions of the options proposed and to commenting on the procedure to be followed, pending in-depth consideration at the next session.

63. All the ideas expressed in that report, relating, inter alia, to the need to define the career concept and occupational groups, the system of linked grades, and the determination of the proportion of career and non-career staff, the establishment of career paths and new methods of performance appraisal, should be the subject of more detailed studies by the Joint Inspection Unit, the International Civil Service Commission and the Secretariat, so that Member States would be in full possession of the facts before taking their decision. It was not a case of Member States shrugging off their responsibilities, but their ideas on the issues were somewhat too fragmentary to enable them to arrive at an over-all view of the international civil service. The comprehensive study requested from the experts

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(Mr. Brochard, France)

of the Joint Inspection Unit, the International Civil Service Commission and the Office of Personnel Services should be carried out in an atmosphere of close consultation so that the work of the Fifth Committee would not be held up. For that reason, his delegation supported Mr. Bertrand's proposal that a further report should be drawn up in 1982 accompanied by precise recommendations. That, together with the report which ICSC had undertaken to submit on the same subject, would be of the utmost interest to the General Assembly.

64. Mr. GREN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his Government had always paid maximum attention to the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit the aim of which should be the better utilization of the resources of the United Nations system. Since the establishment of the Unit, his delegation had always urged that it should focus its efforts on the current problems of concern to the system as a whole.

65. The recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit should be put into practice through measures to restrict the budget growth rate, to increase the productivity and efficiency of United Nations staff, to eliminate duplication, and to settle certain sensitive issues in connexion with the salaries and allowances of staff members and the level of their pensions. Unfortunately, to date, the Joint Inspection Unit had wasted time studying problems of a local or partial nature, the solution of which was of little import for the system as a whole.

66. His delegation was happy to note that the quality of the Unit's reports had improved recently. He was thinking in particular of the report on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat and the report on the control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations system. The Joint Inspection Unit had a sufficient number of eminent experts to enable it to make in-depth studies of complex current issues and to propose recommendations aimed at greater economy. In addition to the issues he had already mentioned, he referred, inter alia, to the identification of activities that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, means of increasing earnings from the investment of the Pension Fund, the monitoring of programme execution, and the reduction of conference costs.

67. The JIU should not be satisfied with merely producing reports, it should ensure that its recommendations were implemented by the legislative bodies. In addition, guided by concern to improve the planning of its activities, JIU should submit to Member States and to the Secretariat a work plan listing the reports it was preparing to undertake, each of which would have to be justified by documentary evidence authorizing the work or explicit requests from legislative bodies.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

68. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) asked the Chairman of the Committee to explain the need for the night meetings planned in the Committee's programme of work. He would like information on the financial implications of the holding of night meetings.

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(Mr. Bunc, Yugoslavia)

69. With respect to the four draft resolutions which were to be submitted under agenda item 101 (United Nations pension system), he explained that he would not be in a position to take a decision unless the four draft resolutions were submitted simultaneously.

70. The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of Yugoslavia that the four draft resolutions would be submitted together. As for the night meetings planned in the Committee's programme of work, he would reply to the question raised by the representative of Yugoslavia once he had consulted the officers of the Committee and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the relevant information was available.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.