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**GENERAL
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FIFTH COMMITTEE
82nd meeting
held on
Thursday, 17 December 1981
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 82nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia)

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

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A/C.5/36/SR.82
30 December 1981

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

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/36/3/Add.2, 3, 6, 8-11, 13-23, 28, 29, 32 and 34-37)

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee recommend that the General Assembly take note of chapters II, III, VI, VIII to XI, XIII to XXIII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXII and XXXIV to XXXVII of the report of the Economic and Social Council.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 99: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)

Programme budget performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1980-1981
(A/36/821; A/C.5/36/75 and Add.1-34)

3. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/36/821), drew attention to the fact that the figures given in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/75 and addenda) for the revised net requirements for the biennium 1980-1981 did not reflect the recent decision taken in the Committee, at its 68th meeting, regarding the implementation of revised General Service salaries in Geneva. The Advisory Committee's report (A/36/821, para. 3) presented revised figures which took account of the effects of that decision. The net requirements for the programme budget as a whole were thus reduced by \$754,800.

4. Paragraphs 5 to 20 of the Advisory Committee's report offered a number of observations on various aspects of the performance report. In addition to the documents currently before the Committee, there would be another report issued in the coming year on the programme budget performance for the biennium 1980-1981.

5. He proposed that the Fifth Committee recommend that the General Assembly approve the revised expenditure and income estimates for the biennium 1980-1981 contained in the annex to document A/36/821.

6. Mrs. HOUSHOLDER (United States of America) said that her delegation welcomed the fact that the programme budget performance report for 1980-1981 was not seeking an additional appropriation and in fact indicated a net decrease in requirements of approximately \$6.2 million as against the revised appropriations approved at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

7. Nevertheless, although the increases owing to inflation and other changes were largely offset by the exchange rate savings, the inflation-related increase was very disturbing, especially in view of the fact that at its thirty-fifth session the General Assembly approved a supplementary appropriation which included the amount of \$63.1 million for inflation.

(Mrs. Housholder, United States)

8. Further, she noted that the over-all programme growth rate prior to the issuing of the performance report had been close to 3.8 per cent. She would be interested to know from the Secretariat the exact figure of the actual programme growth rate for the biennium 1980-1981.

9. In view of the inflation figures and the programme growth, and since her delegation had voted against the revised appropriations approved the previous year, she would vote against the revised estimates recommended by the Advisory Committee, in spite of the decrease in total requirements which they represented.

10. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) emphasized that the budgetary surplus which superficially seemed to be indicated in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee was in fact illusory. The revised expenditure estimate of \$1,341,351,700 now being proposed represented an increase of the order of \$2,200,500 over the revised appropriations approved for the biennium 1980-1981; the budget had therefore effectively been augmented.

11. On the basis, therefore, of the position of principle that his delegation had already expressed in detail, it was unable to endorse either the report of the Secretary-General on programme budget performance for the biennium 1980-1981 or the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. It would therefore vote against the revised estimates as it had done the previous year.

12. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that he would be in a position to answer the question concerning programme growth asked by the representative of the United States at the following meeting; he hoped that that would be satisfactory to her. The rate of growth clearly depended on how many of the "other changes" referred to were recurrent.

13. He wished to clarify for the benefit of the Committee a question arising out of the recent decision taken by the General Assembly in connexion with agenda item 102 (Financial emergency of the United Nations). It had been decided to suspend financial regulations 4.3, 4.4 and 5.2(d) relating to contributions. The effect of that suspension in connexion with appropriations that had already been approved was that any unspent balance outstanding from those appropriations would not be returned to Member States. However, the matter currently under consideration by the Committee was different; if the revised estimates for expenditure and income were approved by the General Assembly, they would be regarded as a new appropriation, and Member States would be reimbursed in the amount of the unspent balance.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee adopt the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, namely, that it recommend that the General Assembly approve the revised estimates for the biennium 1980-1981, as contained in the annex to document A/36/821.

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15. At the request of the representative of the Soviet Union, a recorded vote was taken on the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Chile, China, Congo, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mongolia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Israel, Romania.

16. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee was adopted by 64 votes to 14, with 5 abstentions.

17. Mr. PEREZ (Chile) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the recommendation, but maintained its serious reservations concerning the appropriations made under section 23 of the programme budget.

18. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he wished to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services for his earlier explanations, in connexion with the programme budget performance for 1980-1981, regarding amounts saved through Secretariat economies which would be returned to Member States. Those explanations had done much to dispel the confusion surrounding the issue.

19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should entrust the Rapporteur with the task of preparing a draft resolution incorporating the decision just adopted and the decision taken at the 69th meeting concerning an additional appropriation for UNITAR for the current biennium and of submitting it to the plenary Assembly.

20. It was so decided.

21. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, had there been time for a vote on the matter, his delegation would have opposed that suggestion. A procedure by which the Fifth Committee, was called upon to approve the transformation of its decisions in such a fashion was highly irregular and resembled nothing so much as a conjuring trick.

22. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that no wizardry was intended. The Fifth Committee has approved the report of ACABQ in document A/36/821. The annex to that document contained the elements to be embodied in the draft resolution, which would give a definitive picture of the 1980-1981 appropriations.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)
(A/36/6, A/36/7)

Administrative and financial implications of the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in paragraphs 477 to 514 of its report on its twenty-first session (continued) (A/36/38; A/C.5/36/40 and Add.1)

23. The CHAIRMAN said that in consultations since the Committee's previous meeting the Canadian and Brazilian delegations had arrived at a compromise concerning the recommendation contained in paragraph 501 (d) of the report of CPC (A/36/38). He accordingly suggested that the Committee should approve the following text for that recommendation: "Programme element 9.1 is retained with the exception of the two meetings on international rivers, which are to be deleted."

24. It was so decided.

25. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said he thought it highly unorthodox for part of the report of CPC to be amended as a result of negotiations between members of the Fifth Committee. He was reluctant to take part in such a consensus, and would have abstained in any vote on the matter.

26. The CHAIRMAN said it had come to his attention that the General Assembly had adopted a decision contradictory in sense to the recommendation contained in paragraph 483 of the report of CPC. If there was no objection, he would assume that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it not endorse the recommendation appearing in that paragraph.

27. It was so decided.

28. The CHAIRMAN, recapitulating the results of the Committee's consideration of this item, said that the Committee had decided to recommend that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations of CPC made in paragraphs 474 to 514 of its report with the exception of the recommendations in paragraphs 479, 483 and 509, while paragraph 501 (d) would be amended as the Committee had just decided.

29. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) informed the Committee of the effect of its decisions on the statement of administrative and financial implications contained in documents A/C.5/36/40 and Add.1. As indicated in that statement, most of the recommendations of CPC would have no immediate financial implications. The recommendation in paragraph 501, regarding UNEP, would result in the elimination of two ad hoc expert groups, one of which was financed from extrabudgetary resources. The implications for the regular budget would thus be a reduction of \$31,100 under section 18, due to the elimination of the other group.

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(Mr. Ruedas)

30. The CPC recommendations relating to section 7 (Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) and section 9 (Transnational corporations) set forth in paragraphs 486 and 489 (a) respectively, would release a certain amount of staff time in each case. Since Professional and General Service staff time was budgeted in terms of established posts for full biennia only, the adoption of the CPC recommendations could not be translated directly into reduced appropriations. Unless the Fifth Committee instructed the Secretariat otherwise, he would assume that it agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal to redeploy those resources to activities of higher priority.

31. Responding to a point raised by the Japanese delegation, he indicated that the recommendation in paragraph 482 (c) of the CPC report would result in a reduction of \$11,500 in the appropriations required under section 6 (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs).

32. The total reductions arising out of the recommendations of CPC would therefore be \$42,600, of which \$11,500 would be under section 6 and \$31,100 under section 18.

33. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) commented that when an intergovernmental body expressed opinions on the administrative and budgetary aspects of matters coming before the Fifth Committee, that opinion tended to circumscribe the role of ACABQ in reviewing and recommending approval of the budgetary proposals concerned. He intended to say more on that subject when ACABQ reviewed the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. For the moment, in view of the Fifth Committee's decisions on the CPC recommendations and the supplementary statement just provided by the Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of a total reduction in the budget estimates of \$42,600.

34. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services had made it plain that the deletion of programme element 2.2 (Corrupt practices) under section 9 (Transnational corporations) in accordance with paragraph 489 (a) of the CPC report would not lead to a reduction in the budget. He felt that that programme element was vital to the work of the Centre on Transnational Corporations, and its deletion would also affect the Commission on Transnational Corporations and some of its working groups. In the circumstances, he appealed to the Committee to retain the element and to recommend to the Assembly that it should not endorse the CPC recommendation in paragraph 489 (a).

35. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) supported the Egyptian proposal.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the Egyptian proposal.

37. It was so decided.

38. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) observed that in paragraph 11 of document A/C.5/36/40 resource requirements were listed for a programme element which, given the Fifth Committee's approval of the related CPC recommendation, should be deleted. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 13 of his statement, however, that he intended to redeploy the resources released to other programme elements. His delegation believed that the redeployment of resources from deleted programmes was a matter to be determined by the General Assembly or a subsidiary body. It was curious, moreover, that, while the Fifth Committee had endorsed a recommendation by CPC for high priority to be given to programme element 2.4, the Secretary-General was proposing to redeploy the resources in question to other programme elements.

39. His delegation's views regarding programme element 2.2 under section 9 were different from those of the Egyptian representative, but he had gone along with the proposal in a spirit of compromise.

40. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that if the Fifth Committee wished the resources released as a result of the CPC recommendation in paragraph 486 of its report to be redeployed to programme element 2.4, as suggested by the Japanese representative, rather than the programme elements which the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 13 of his statement, the Secretariat would proceed accordingly.

41. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that, in view of the statement just made by the Assistant Secretary-General regarding the resource requirements for programme element 2.3, he proposed that the cost of those requirements, estimated at \$54,000 in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's statement, should be deleted from section 7.

42. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said the fact that 12 Professional work-months were required for programme element 2.3 could not be interpreted as meaning that only one staff member was involved. It might not be easy, therefore, to identify a specific post and to eliminate it from the staffing table under section 7. That was why the Secretary-General was suggesting the redeployment of the resources in question.

43. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that, in view of the explanation just given, he withdrew his proposal but would pursue the matter in more detail at the following session.

44. The CHAIRMAN suggested the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the Committee's decision relating to the recommendations of CPC, a total reduction of \$42,600 would be required in the appropriations under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

45. It was so decided.

Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations (A/36/7/Add.15; A/C.5/36/46; A/C.5/36/L.48)

46. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the new definitions, proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/46), for consultants and ad hoc expert groups, which, if strictly applied, could result in reduced expenditure on consultants.

47. The Advisory Committee also proposed that the practice of annual reporting on the use of experts and consultants in the United Nations should be dispensed with, and that the Secretary-General should be requested to produce his next report in 1983 in time for review by the Advisory Committee in the context of its examination of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985. That recommendation was contained in paragraph 6 of the report of the Advisory Committee in document A/36/7/Add.15.

48. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that his delegation had taken note with interest of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/46) and the report of the Advisory Committee (A/36/7/Add.15), and especially of the proposed new definition of the term "consultant", as distinct from an individual contractor, and the replacement of the term "expert" by the definition "participant in an advisory meeting". Those new definitions raised a question: he would appreciate clarification as to whether the new terms had any implications for the figures which appeared under the entries relating to consultants and expert groups in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983 (A/36/6, vol. I, annex VI).

49. It was highly regrettable that the report of the Secretary-General should have been issued so close to the end of the session that it had not been possible to give it proper examination, especially in view of the fact that General Assembly resolution 35/224 explicitly requested the Secretary-General to submit the report at an early stage during the session; the General Assembly had a particular interest in monitoring the implementation of the principles and guidelines established in 1975, but was unable to do so owing to lack of time.

50. The draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the United States of America (A/C.5/36/L.48) was a very important document. However, since a discussion on substance had been rendered practically impossible, he proposed that, rather than taking a decision merely for form's sake, the Committee should defer consideration of the item to the thirty-seventh session.

51. In the meantime, the Secretary-General should go ahead with the proposed new procedure. During the year it would be possible to collect data and to supplement the figures and generally refine the tabular material concerning the use of experts and consultants already contained in A/C.5/36/46. For example, the question of the geographical distribution of consultants was of great interest to delegations, but there was very little information as yet available; what data there were revealed some very striking inequalities.

(Mr. Abraszewski, Poland)

52. Also, with the additional information obtainable during the year, the Secretary-General might be able to draft some more specific conclusions on the status of implementation of the principles and guidelines; the few conclusions which had been drawn in the present report were very general in nature. The whole question should then be given full consideration at an early stage in the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

53. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), in reply to the question raised by the representative of Poland, said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/46) essentially concerned procedural matters relating to the recruitment of contractors to provide specific services and the definition to be given to those services. The changes in terms which had been proposed did not therefore have any financial implications as such. However, while there would be no effect on the appropriations in the various sections of the programme budget, there might be some redistribution of expenditure among the individual subheadings, since in some cases the Secretariat might regard newly redefined services as falling into the category of temporary staff rather than consultant services.

54. Mrs. HOUSHOLDER (United States of America) said that her delegation had no objection to postponing the consideration of its draft resolution (A/C.5/36/L.48) to the thirty-seventh session, as proposed by the representative of Poland.

55. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee take note of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/36/46 and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in document A/36/7/Add.15, that it request the Secretary-General to present an updated report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, and that it decide to discuss the whole matter, including the draft resolution in document A/C.5/36/L.48, at the thirty-seventh session.

56. It was so decided.

The formulation, presentation, review and approval of programme budgets (continued)
(A/C.5/36/L.41/Rev.1)

57. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria), introducing the revised draft resolution in document A/C.5/36/L.41/Rev.1 on behalf of the States members of the Group of 77, reminded the Committee that the basis of the draft was the concept of zero budgetary growth, since the Group of 77 rejected in principle the imposition of any particular growth rate in advance, and drew particular attention to the last preambular paragraph, which referred to the need to ensure within the United Nations system coherence, co-ordination and efficient management of all activities financed by the regular budget and by extrabudgetary resources.

58. After reviewing the salient points of the operative paragraphs, he introduced several revisions, which had resulted from the consultations held previously on the draft resolution. In section I, paragraph (c), the semicolon should be replaced by a comma and the following words should be added: "unless the General Assembly

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(Mr. Bouzarbia, Algeria)

decides otherwise;". In the first line of paragraph (k) of the same section, the words "on the lines" should be replaced by the word "as" and, in the third line of the French version of the same paragraph, the word "devrait" should be replaced by the word "doit". In section VII, the word "reports" in the second line of the chapeau should be replaced by the word "studies". Also in section VII, a new paragraph (c) should be added which would read: "The issue of the predictability of extrabudgetary resources;". The subsequent subparagraphs would therefore become subparagraphs (d) and (e).

59. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) requested that consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/36/L.41/Rev.1 should be postponed in order to allow delegations sufficient time to examine it further.

60. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) suggested that the current meeting should be suspended in order to allow delegations to hold further consultations on the draft resolution.

61. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the suggestion put forward by the representative of Algeria, especially since he wished to give due consideration to the revisions submitted on such an important document.

62. The meeting was suspended at 5.20 p.m. and resumed at 6.20 p.m.

63. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) said that a representative group of delegations had held consultations and had reached agreement on the following proposal: because of the importance of the document under consideration, delegations should have time to consult their Governments, and the question under consideration should be discussed further and decided upon by the Fifth Committee at a resumed thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

64. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation regretted that it had not been able to participate in the consultations, the results of which were somewhat surprising. He had been under the impression that the consultations would relate to the draft resolution itself, and he was so far unaware of any decision to hold a resumed thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The permanent missions would have to seek guidance from their Governments in view of the additional financial cost of such a session.

65. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) said it was a matter of regret that the Byelorussian delegation had not been a participant in the consultations, but that the decision had been the outcome of agreement between a representative group of some 14 or 15 delegations. The resulting proposal was intended merely to save time.

66. Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago), Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) and Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) suggested that if in fact there was no consensus in the Committee it would be better to proceed to a vote.

67. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had participated in the consultations, to which undue significance should not be attached in that they should not be regarded as binding on the Fifth Committee. He wished to ask a question not raised in the consultations, namely how much a resumed session of the General Assembly would cost. If the Committee had an approximate idea of the costs involved it would be in a better position to take a decision.

68. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that it would also be necessary to know when such a resumed session would be convened.

69. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that he understood the Algerian proposal to mean that, if the General Assembly were to hold a resumed session to discuss the proposed programme budget, the Fifth Committee could be authorized to meet in order to consider draft resolution A/C.5/36/41/Rev.1. As far as he was aware the General Assembly had not yet taken a decision on the subject.

70. Mr. BOUZARBIA (Algeria) said that the participants in the consultations had based their recommendations to postpone discussion of the question to a resumed session of the General Assembly on information available to them unofficially. There was no intention of requesting the General Assembly to allow the Fifth Committee to convene unless the Assembly intended to hold a resumed session.

71. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the clarifications just provided were satisfactory to his delegation.

72. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the light of what had been said, the Committee should agree to recommend to the General Assembly that, should a resumed session of the Assembly be convened early in 1982, the Fifth Committee could be authorized to meet for the purpose of pursuing its consideration of the question of formulation, presentation, review and approval of programme budgets. If there was no objection, he would assume that the Committee wished to adopt the Algerian proposal thus worded.

73. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.