

**REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

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**NOTE**

**Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 32/71 of 9 December 1977, decided to retain the Committee on Conferences established under its resolution 3351 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974 and requested the President of the Assembly to appoint 22 Member States to serve on the Committee for a three-year term. The Committee's terms of reference were defined as follows:

"(a) To advise the General Assembly on the calendar of conferences;

"(b) To act on behalf of the General Assembly in dealing with departures from the approved calendar of conferences that have administrative and financial implications;

"(c) To recommend to the General Assembly means to provide the optimum apportionment of conference resources, facilities and services including documentation, in order to ensure their most efficient and effective use;

"(d) To advise the General Assembly on the current and future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation;

"(e) To advise the General Assembly on means to ensure improved co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system, including conference services and facilities, and to conduct the appropriate consultations in that regard."

2. Subsequently, by paragraph 8 of its resolution 35/10 A of 3 November 1980, the General Assembly requested its President, after consultations with the chairmen of the regional groups, to appoint 22 Member States, on the basis of an equitable geographical balance, to serve on the Committee on Conferences for a three-year term.

3. At the 99th plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 17 December 1980, the President of the General Assembly announced that he had appointed the following 22 Member States to serve on the Committee on Conferences for a three-year period beginning on 1 January 1981:

Algeria	New Zealand
Austria	Nigeria
Chile	Peru
Cyprus	Senegal
France	Sri Lanka
Germany, Federal Republic of	Tunisia
Honduras	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Hungary	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Indonesia	United States of America
Japan	Yugoslavia
Kenya	
Mexico	

## CHAPTER II

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

#### A. Officers

4. The Committee elected the following officers to serve in 1982:

Chairman: Mr. Michael G. Okeyo (Kenya)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. B. A. B. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka)  
Mr. Tibor Gubcsi (Hungary)  
Mr. Mario Martorell (Peru)

Rapporteur: Mr. Richard J. Martin (New Zealand)

5. As the Chairman was unable to participate in the two series of substantive meetings, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur presided over those meetings.

#### B. Organization of work

6. The Committee agreed to meet regularly to take up matters related to the calendar of conferences and its implementation, in particular the consideration of intersessional departures from the approved calendar, when required. For the consideration of various substantive questions, the Committee decided to hold two series of substantive meetings.

7. The Committee also agreed to continue taking decisions by consensus, bearing in mind the substance of the items discussed and adopting, where necessary, a pragmatic and flexible approach in order not to impede the exercise of the Committee's functions.

8. The Committee held nine meetings between 18 February 1982 and 27 August 1982. The two series of substantive meetings were held from 19 to 20 April 1982 and from 10 to 19 May 1982.

#### C. Programme of work

9. On the basis of a note by the Secretariat, the Committee discussed its programme of work for the substantive meetings in 1982 and agreed upon the following agenda for its substantive meetings:

1. Control and limitation of documentation:

- (a) Provision of meeting records to United Nations organs;
- (b) Reproduction and documents distribution services;
- (c) Documentation for treaty bodies;
- (d) Report of the JIU on control and limitation of documentation.

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982-1983:
  - (a) Adjustment of the calendar to the servicing capacities within the Secretariat;
  - (b) Inter-relationship between the capacity of the documentation services and the programme of meetings;
  - (c) Shortening of sessions or a biennial cycle for sessions of United Nations organs;
  - (d) Adoption of the draft revised calendar for 1983;
  - (e) Secretariat organization for United Nations special conferences.
4. Special review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations.
5. Future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation: electronic equipment in conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters.
6. Co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system.
7. Utilization of conference resources: calculation and presentation of conference servicing costs.
8. Other business: procedures for inscription on the speakers' list for the general debate of the General Assembly.
9. Adoption of the report.
10. The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services read a message of the Secretary-General to the Committee at its organizational meeting, which is contained in annex I to this report.
11. At the conclusion of its work in August 1982 the Committee paid tribute to the excellent work of its Secretary, Mr. Hans d'Orville, who was leaving his post for another assignment after having serviced the Committee for three years.
12. A list of documents submitted to the Committee on Conferences by the Secretariat appears in annex II to this report.

CHAPTER III

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

13. By its resolution 36/117 A of 25 January 1982, the General Assembly approved the biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982-1983 as set out in annex III to the report of the Committee on Conferences 1/ and amended by subsequent decisions taken by the General Assembly in the course of its thirty-sixth session (A/AC.172/66).

A. Matters related to, and intersessional departures from, the approved calendar for 1982-1983

1. Additions to or changes in the conference programme

14. The Committee considered three requests for additions to or changes in the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982. The requests acted upon are contained in the following table.

<u>Name of body</u>	<u>Original schedule</u>	<u>Change authorized by Committee</u>
1. Drafting Committee of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea	Not scheduled, new session	Holding of session from 12 July to 13 August 1982 with an option for one additional week at Geneva
2. Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, resumed eleventh session	Not scheduled	Holding of resumed session from 22 to 24 September 1982 at Headquarters
3. <u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee on the Indian Ocean	9 to 20 August 1982, New York	3 to 20 August 1982 at Geneva

15. The Committee approved all requests on the understanding that any additional expenditure could be met within approved budgetary appropriations for the biennium 1982-1983.

16. As regards the change in venue and extension of duration of the session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, the Committee on Conferences requested the Ad Hoc Committee to limit its requirements for summary records in order to minimize the expenditures in connexion with the holding of the session in Geneva. One delegation dissociated itself from the consensus considering that there was insufficient justification for the request of the Ad Hoc Committee to hold meetings away from its established headquarters particularly in view of the additional expenditures involved. This delegation called on the Secretariat to provide for the servicing of these meetings from existing resources.



## 2. Matters related to the approved calendar for 1982-1983

17. On several occasions the Committee dealt with problems which had arisen with regard to the schedule of meetings in certain periods of time and it took the following decisions.

(a) Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, second session, 22 May to 4 June 1982 at Headquarters:

Because of an overlap with other important meetings at a venue away from Headquarters in the week 31 May to 4 June 1982 the Ad Hoc Committee requested that its second session be advanced by one week. The Committee accepted this request on the understanding that during the week 17 to 21 May 1982 meetings could only be held on an as available basis. In addition, the Committee requested its Chairman to appeal to all bodies scheduled to meet during that week to reduce their requirements to the minimum necessary for the effective discharge of their responsibilities in order to enable all bodies wishing to meet in that period, including the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, to carry out their work.

(b) Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group on the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development and Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, fourth session:

The Committee endorsed a proposal by the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group that it be authorized to reconvene its session for three days during the period of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development, scheduled from 24 May to 4 June 1982 at Headquarters. The session of the Intergovernmental Committee was extended by three days until 9 June 1982 to compensate for the meetings released to the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group on the understanding that such additional meetings could only be held on an as available basis.

## 3. Departures not requiring action by the Committee

18. The Committee agreed that, in accordance with past practice, the Secretariat should deal with departures that do not have financial or administrative implications, do not involve matters of policy or entail significant administrative changes in the calendar of conferences, and should inform it of any actions taken. In the course of the year, the Committee was advised of several such changes.

### B. Adjustment of the calendar to the servicing capacities within the Secretariat

19. By section II, paragraph 4, of resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1981/83 of 24 July 1981 on control and limitation of documentation, to review the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1982-1983, with particular reference to the economic and social fields, with a view to adjusting the calendar to the servicing capacities within the Secretariat, taking into account the problems that are occurring with regard to the submission and distribution of documents in good time and to consult with the Bureau of the Council concerning this request.

20. When considering this question there was general agreement in the Committee that without a streamlining of the agenda and programme of work of the main organs and a reduction in their subsidiary machinery, the number and volume of documents, no substantial relief could be achieved. The Committee noted the various suggestions which were before the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1982 in the context of the revitalization of the Council (see document E/1982/28). It endorsed the suggestions that improvements in the timely delivery of documentation could be achieved through:

- (a) A better distribution of agenda items among main organs of the United Nations, on the one hand, and among subsidiary bodies, on the other;
- (b) Integration of items on related subjects provided this would reduce the number and volume of reports required;
- (c) A review of reporting requirements, having as its objective a reduction in the periodicity with which certain items need to be considered;
- (d) Shorter sessions of bodies, with more selective agendas.

21. As regards the schedule of sessions of the Economic and Social Council itself, the Committee on Conferences noted that there could be advantage in postponing the first regular session by, say, two weeks in order to allow more time for the processing of reports by the Council's subsidiary organs to be considered by the Council at that session.

22. The Committee on Conferences was also inclined to the view that requests should not be made during General Assembly sessions for new reports to be submitted to the Council at its first regular session of the following year, as this generally did not allow enough time for the preparation of useful reports. The Committee considered, however, that an analysis of the Council's problems should not be dealt with in isolation from the conference and documentation problems of other United Nations bodies and, therefore, that it might be timely to conduct a comprehensive review covering all United Nations bodies as well.

23. In view of the consideration of the subject by the Council itself during 1982, the Committee on Conferences was of the opinion that active discussion of the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 36/117 A would in the meantime not be appropriate. The Acting Chairman of the Committee, however, was requested to transmit the result of the Committee's consideration to the President of the Economic and Social Council (see document E/1982/60).

C. Inter-relationship between the capacity of the documentation services and the programme of meetings

24. By section I, paragraph 4, of resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly decided that in drawing up future calendars of conferences and meetings the capacity of the documentation services of the Secretariat to process and issue in good time the documentation required for the sessions of all scheduled organs should be taken into account.

25. To assist the Committee in its consideration about future procedures to deal with calendars of conferences the Secretariat circulated a background note (A/AC.172/71). It pointed out that it was the present pattern of conferences - clustering a number of documentation-intensive bodies such as the Governing Council of UNDP, the Executive Board of UNICEF, the Economic and Social Council, and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in the period March to May - that caused overloading of the documentation services in the second quarter of every year and resultant delays in the issuance of documents. The documentation to be produced for such bodies in 1982, for example, added up to some 14,000 pages per language, which was 5 per cent higher than that produced for the thirty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly.

26. The Secretariat note suggested that one way to alleviate the situation could be to spread the sessions of such documentation-intensive bodies more evenly throughout the year so as to avoid overburdening the documentation services. The Committee agreed that this might reduce the burden on the services; but it would not necessarily make it possible for reports to be submitted in a more timely fashion than hitherto, and neither could it be assumed that such rescheduling would result in a calendar of greater convenience for delegations. It was thus evident that other approaches should also be explored.

27. These might include:

(a) A further reduction in the number and length of reports submitted to United Nations organs, but that was a step that had already been taken by the Secretary-General at the beginning of 1982 (see ST/SGB/184/Add.1, ST/AI/189/Add.20/Rev.1 and Add.23);

(b) The adoption of a biennial cycle for sessions of subsidiary bodies, which would reduce the frequency of documents to be submitted to given bodies and the number of reports of the bodies concerned. Where applicable, this would lead also to a reduction in the number of meetings to be provided with meeting records. Eventually, such action could reduce the total workload of the parent bodies to which such bodies report;

(c) The shortening of sessions of subsidiary organs, together with an adoption of more selective agendas;

(d) Consideration of selected items by United Nations bodies every second year instead of annually, thereby reducing the frequency with which certain reports would have to be produced;

(e) A reduction in the number of bodies entitled to meeting records;

(f) The adoption of a policy that each United Nations body scheduled to meet in a session of fixed duration would be entitled to hold only one session each year.

28. At this stage the Committee is not in a position to develop more precise proposals, given the differing mandates of the various organs and the range of subjects dealt with by them. Remedial action can only be achieved in close co-operation with the organs concerned so that measures taken towards a streamlining of activities and documentation will not be detrimental to their work. The Committee suggested that as a first step in such a process its Chairman together with the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services, might launch a systematic information campaign aiming at a better observance by subsidiary organs

of existing rules and procedures, particularly in the field of documentation. The Committee emphasized again, as in past years, the special responsibility of the Secretariat, and in particular committee secretaries, who should actively advise Member States and United Nations bodies about the relevant regulations and guide them in their practical application.

D. Adoption of the draft revised calendar for 1983

29. The Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law asked that its pattern of meetings be changed in future years. The Committee on Conferences confirmed that the Advisory Committee could meet in December 1982 as currently envisaged and agreed, as an exception to General Assembly decision 34/401, that in 1983 it could meet in October. The Committee requested its Chairman to contact the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to enquire whether the Advisory Committee could fulfil its mandate if it were to meet on a biannual basis. In the absence of any reply to this inquiry the Committee recommends to the General Assembly that, in the interim and pending a further clarification of this matter, the Advisory Committee be authorized to hold its future sessions in December in even years and in October in uneven years.

30. Pursuant to a request by the Executive Director of UNITAR the Committee on Conferences agreed to reschedule the session of the Board of Trustees of UNITAR from the period 31 August to 3 September 1982 to the period 14 to 17 September 1982. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Board of Trustees of UNITAR to meet each year during the week preceeding the beginning of the regular session of the General Assembly.

31. The Committee on Conferences discussed the revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1983, on the basis of a draft annual programme submitted by the Secretariat (A/AC.172/80 and Amend.). This programme showed meetings of organs of the United Nations, their subsidiary bodies and expert groups. Conferences and meetings of the main legislative and executive bodies of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency were also listed for information, with their dates and venues. The Committee considered all changes and additions proposed as compared to the biennial calendar of conferences and meetings approved by the General Assembly in resolution 36/117 A. With regard to the spring session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) the Committee noted that CERD wished to meet from 7 to 25 March 1982 at Headquarters despite indications from the Secretariat that these dates would coincide with the session of the Human Rights Committee, a treaty body with heavy documentation requirements, and would also fall in a period when voluminous pre-session documentation had to be processed for the Governing Council of UNDP, the Executive Board of UNICEF, and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. In agreeing to CERD's proposal the Committee noted that consequently it might not be possible to provide documentation services to CERD in a timely manner and decided that the Chairman of CERD should be notified accordingly.

32. The Committee on Conferences then decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it approve the draft revised calendar for 1983 contained in document A/AC.172/80 and Amend. This draft revised calendar has not been annexed to this year's report so as to comply with the Assembly's request that reports of its subsidiary bodies be kept within the desirable limit of 32 pages.

## CHAPTER IV

### SECRETARIAT ORGANIZATION FOR UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL CONFERENCES

33. By paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 C, the General Assembly invited the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to undertake a study on the improvement of the Secretariat organization for special conferences, with a view to recommending procedures for reinforcing the efficiency and effectiveness of preparations for such conferences, and to submit its report, through the Committee on Conferences, to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

34. The Committee's consideration of this item was based on the report by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/112) and the related comments by the Secretary-General (A/37/112/Add.1). The Committee recommends to the General Assembly that it approve a set of guidelines on the Secretariat organization for United Nations special conferences (see chap. XI, para. 85, recommendation 4), which would complement the guidelines already adopted by the Assembly in its resolutions 35/10 C and 36/117 D dealing with other aspects of special conferences.

35. Taking into account paragraph 40 of the comments of the Secretary-General (A/37/112/Add.1) the Committee on Conferences further recommends to the General Assembly that it decide that following acceptance of an invitation to host a special conference, the host government should make an advance payment to the United Nations of part of the estimated total additional cost to be borne by the host government in order to cover early preparatory expenses, including in particular the cost of the planning and review mission.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

#### A. Provision of meeting records to United Nations organs

36. By its resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to undertake, on a priority basis, a comprehensive study of the rationale that currently determines the provision of meeting records to the United Nations organs with a view to identifying criteria for the selection of organs that should receive records in the future and, in this connexion, to take fully into account the potential offered by new technologies and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session appropriate recommendations thereon.

37. The Committee's consideration of this question was based on a Secretariat report (A/AC.172/74) which described the present situation with respect to the provision of summary records to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and provided relevant statistical data. The report noted that there are two kinds of written records of open meetings of intergovernmental bodies (verbatim and summary records) and that records were also kept on audio and video tapes subject to specific requests. The report went on to describe the rationale for the provision of such records. Written meeting records are intended:

(a) To enable delegations to have their positions on particular issues formally and authentically recorded in printed form, in either a verbatim or an abridged version, in the working languages of a body;

(b) To provide an authoritative account of all proceedings and decisions of a meeting;

(c) To facilitate future reference to such records;

(d) To provide a readily available tool for delegations, both present at and absent from a meeting, enabling them to follow all developments at a particular meeting accurately and to have it as a basis for their reports to capitals.

38. Tape recordings on the other hand provide a verbatim account of all proceedings; are available almost instantaneously; are incontestably accurate and reliable at least in the original language; are easily duplicable; are retrievable; and require only limited space for storage.

39. The report also contained estimates of the full cost of preparing verbatim and summary records and the cost of a central sound recording operation for all conference rooms at Headquarters. These showed that the cost of sound recording would amount to only a fraction of the cost of preparing written meeting records.

40. The Secretariat report also reviewed problems encountered in the preparation and timely issuance of written records. While verbatim records are usually available without much delay, the issue of summary records in all official languages is subject to considerable delays, which diminish their value for the purposes described above. These delays result from the increasing workload faced by the central documentation services, which, in order to avoid hampering the work of intergovernmental bodies, had had to assign higher priority to the processing of pre- and in-session documentation than to processing summary records.

41. Another problem to which the attention of the Committee was drawn related to the quality of summaries which by their very nature might not be able to convey the finer points contained in a statement. It was noted too that tape recordings might suffer from inaccuracies or lack of precision in the case of languages into which the original was interpreted and might therefore not constitute the authentic record desired. In addition, tape recordings could not be effectively edited.

42. In conclusion the report examined alternatives to the present system, both with respect to the mode of preparation of records and the selection of bodies entitled to them. As regards changes in the mode of preparation, the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on control and limitation of documentation (A/36/167) had recommended the adoption of one of three possible forms of multilingual verbatim records to replace the present system issuing records in all official languages of an organ. The Committee doubted whether any multilingual system would be acceptable to the States Members of the United Nations since it would substitute the present satisfactory system with a more complicated one, which would also be less convenient for delegations, given its necessary linguistic selectivity. Also, the Committee noted, the adoption of a multilingual system would not bring about financial gains since a verbatim reporting operation in all official languages would still have to be maintained. The Committee saw no advantage in pursuing consideration of a multilingual verbatim record system any further.

43. As regards summary records the Committee noted, however, that a more restrictive policy as to entitlements could both generate savings and improve the delivery of other documents. The Committee observed that the absence of summary records for virtually all subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly in 1980 had not resulted in any discernable loss in the efficiency of the bodies concerned or adversely affected consideration of the relevant issues at the subsequent session of the General Assembly. It also noted that the recent action of the Economic and Social Council to restrict further and substantially the entitlements to summary records to itself and its subsidiary organs reinforced the practicality of this approach. The Committee nevertheless emphasized that future policy limiting the provision of summary records to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be such as not adversely to affect the operations and conduct of business of bodies no longer entitled to such records and that alternative ways would need to be devised to satisfy the needs and concerns of delegations.

44. On the question of which organs should be entitled to summary records the Committee saw no reason to depart from its earlier recommendation that the only organs that should be so entitled were:

(a) The General Assembly, its Main Committees and the General Committee, as at present;

(b) Regular and special sessions of governing bodies of certain United Nations organs and programmes (listed below in chapter XI, paragraph 85, recommendation 6, annex);

(c) Pledging conferences or meetings of ad hoc bodies established for the announcement of voluntary contributions;

(d) Organs engaged in the drafting of international legal instruments;

(e) The United Nations Council for Namibia, given its legislative and executive responsibilities;

but not subsidiary bodies of these organs. The Committee recognized that the General Assembly might wish, on an ad hoc basis, to authorize the provision of summary records to other organs, but was unable to identify criteria which could justify such further exceptions.

45. The Committee on Conferences considered that any new policy governing the provision of summary records should be limited to an experimental period of three years in order to allow a full assessment of the impact on the work of the subsidiary bodies which would no longer receive summary records. The policy would therefore need to be reviewed by the Assembly when it considers the programme budget for 1986-1987. For the duration of this trial period the Committee proposes that the reporting system of the bodies concerned should be adjusted to compensate for the absence of summary records with a view to reflecting fully the essence of substantive and procedural discussions. The Committee emphasized that such an adjustment should not be permitted to result in a situation where Committee reports would de facto replace a written meeting record. In that context the Committee on Conferences also recommends to the General Assembly that it urge all its subsidiary organs not entitled to written meeting records to observe strictly the present guidelines on the format and contents of reports. These guidelines are designed to foster the clear and succinct presentation of the information which the Assembly needs for a meaningful review of the work of subsidiary organs and for taking action on their recommendations.

46. This will make it more difficult for reports to be limited to 32 pages especially where, for example, organs adopt a body of draft resolutions and decisions already well beyond 32 pages. The Committee agreed that instead of trying to meet a rigid page limit organs should undertake a continuous review of the contents of their reports, assisted by the substantive secretariats, in order to reduce their length progressively. The Committee also considered that to meet the needs of delegations increased use should be made of sound recordings - endorsed by the General Assembly in 1975 - to supplement the reports of organs. Expanded coverage and improved access by delegations to tape recordings would be essential in this regard.

47. With regard to the provision of meeting records to bodies meeting away from recognized United Nations conference centres, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly that, in line with its earlier recommendation of 1975, subsidiary bodies otherwise entitled to receive meeting records for all or some of their meetings, with the exception of the International Law Commission, should only receive them when the General Assembly has specifically so decided. This recommendation is based on the recognition that the provision of summary records in the normal manner at venues away from established headquarters results in considerable additional cost owing to the assignment of a large number of special staff. Moreover, the absence of such staff from their headquarters causes administrative disruption and retardation of the usual flow of work.

48. Taking into account all these considerations the Committee on Conferences recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution on the provision of meeting records to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly which would, in a single resolution, incorporate the proposals in the preceding paragraphs and consolidate existing practices and rules. This draft resolution is contained in paragraph 85, recommendation 6 of chapter XI of the present report.



49. In connexion with its consideration of meeting records, the Committee on Conferences also requested and received a Secretariat note (A/AC.172/70) on the status of the issue of all official records in final form up to 1982. It noted that a backlog had accumulated in the years 1973 to 1976, a period during which, as a result, the Secretariat had undertaken several changes to determine the best method of producing such records. The Committee took note of the Secretariat note and of the assurance by the representative of the Secretariat that special efforts would be made to overcome the existing backlog as soon as possible.

B. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on control and limitation of documentation

50. By its resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly decided to refer the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on control and limitation of documentation (A/36/167), together with the comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (A/36/167/Add.1) and the Secretary-General (A/36/167/Add.2), to the Committee on Conferences for further examination.

51. The Committee on Conferences considered the 18 recommendations proposed by the JIU individually and agreed that recommendations 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 conformed to the present practice of the Secretariat and reflected procedures which were already covered by existing mandates. The Committee was unable to support recommendation 2, which called for the issuance of a separate document reviewing adherence to the 32-page rule: it considered that to do so would add to the documentation without necessarily affecting compliance with that rule, which had in any case been superseded by the Secretary-General's call for the maximum page limit for documentation emanating from the Secretariat to be reduced from 32 to 24 pages.

52. On recommendations 5, 6 and 7, which raised questions concerning the preparation of written meeting records, the Committee felt that its comprehensive consideration of this question, reported above, took the concerns of the JIU fully into account.

53. In recommendation 9 the JIU suggested that the title of the Committee on Conferences should be changed to the Committee on Conferences and Documentation. The Committee took the position that it had attained an identity with its present title which would not be enhanced by lengthening it.

54. Recommendation 11 called on United Nations organizations to consider introducing a documents quota system as appropriate. In that context the Committee recalled its consideration of this issue in 1979, when it had reported as follows:

"In view of the basic disagreement among delegations over the merits of a quota system, several delegations considered it doubtful whether such a system should be further pursued. Some delegations were in favour of introducing quotas for meetings of the United Nations. It was concluded that attention should be given to developing and applying a set of measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the conference activities of the Organization, as proposed by the Secretariat, and that it was equally important for the Secretariat to maintain and improve good management of the available resources. The Committee therefore could concentrate in future on ensuring

stricter observance of rules already endorsed by the General Assembly and, in general, on preparing and developing a comprehensive set of measures, of a regulatory rather than a mandatory character" (see A/34/32, para. 47).

The Committee saw no reason to revise those conclusions.

55. Recommendation 14 of the JIU called upon each United Nations organization in its in-service training programme to provide courses in drafting skills and editing. The Committee on Conferences took note of this recommendation and, recalling its own recommendations of previous years on the subject, reiterated the important place of such programmes in improving drafting skills of staff members and, accordingly, the quality of United Nations documents. The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the JIU on control and limitation of documentation and of the comments of the ACC and the Secretary-General thereon, taking into account the above observations.

#### C. Documentation for treaty bodies

56. By its resolution 36/117 C, the General Assembly invited the officers of treaty bodies to consult with the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences on possible measures to control and limit documentation and requested all bodies to inform the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, through the Committee on Conferences, about the practical measures they have taken.

57. The Acting Chairman of the Committee on Conferences on 20 April 1982 addressed letters to the Chairmen of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in which he drew their attention to the Assembly's action and offered consultations in that regard. At the time of the adoption of this report neither of the two bodies had replied to this initiative by the Committee on Conferences.

#### D. Reproduction and documents distribution services

58. By its resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to examine the practices and policies followed by the reproduction and documents distribution services of the Secretariat with a view to identifying areas for achieving economies and improving efficiency.

59. The Committee received a note by the Secretariat (A/AC.172/73) describing the present policies followed in the distribution of official documentation and providing statistics on the actual workload of the Distribution Section of the Secretariat in recent years. This note contained information about the total roll figures for documents and the number of copies made available in conference rooms. It also reviewed the stock policy of the documentation services and reviewed the activities and performance of the Reproduction Section at Headquarters.

60. The Committee on Conferences took note of this document. It has no recommendation to make on the subject at this stage.

## CHAPTER VI

### SPECIAL REVIEW OF THE ONGOING WORK PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS

61. By paragraph 3 of its resolution 36/239, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to examine those recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the special review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations (A/36/658) which relate to conference services and to the control and limitation of documentation and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

62. Annex II of document A/36/658 listed for section 29, conference and library services, possible modifications in the following activities which might be considered of low priority:

(a) Elimination of written records for all subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

(b) Elimination of summary records for the sessional committees of the Economic and Social Council and the main committees of the General Assembly;

(c) Establishment of a fixed maximum limit of 32 pages for reports of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

(d) Lowering of the maximum number of pages for any document emanating from the Secretariat from 32 pages to 24 pages.

63. As regards proposals (a) and (b), the Committee on Conferences noted the recent action of the Economic and Social Council in dispensing for an experimental period of two years with the provision of summary records to almost all of its subsidiary bodies and its sessional committees. Regarding the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, the Committee after careful examination of all issues involved (see chap. V above) concluded that it could not endorse a complete elimination of all written meeting records. It recommends instead the modified policy contained in the draft resolution submitted in this report to the General Assembly (see recommendation 5).

64. As regards proposal (c) the Committee recalled that the General Assembly, by paragraph 5, section II of its resolution 36/117 A, had already requested subsidiary bodies to ensure that their reports should be as brief as possible and should generally not exceed 32 pages. Based on an analysis of the length of reports of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council in 1980 and 1981 (A/AC.172/78), the Committee on Conferences concluded that there was a need for flexibility in the application of the rule. Some of the reports were compact and could not easily be shortened. Others were no more than summary records in another guise. Secretariats had a clear responsibility to see that reports in the latter category took a more useful form. To assist in that endeavour and to facilitate the drafting of reports of subsidiary organs the Committee in its comprehensive draft resolution on the provision of meeting records submitted in this report (see recommendation 5) defines a number of elements and information which should be contained in such reports.

65. As regards proposal (d), the Committee noted that it had already been implemented by the action taken by the Secretary-General on 24 February 1982 (see ST/AI/189/Add.20/Rev.1).

66. Accordingly, the Committee wishes to inform the General Assembly that appropriate action has been taken on the proposals contained in the report by the Secretary-General on the special review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations (A/36/658). It emphasises that this does not mean that they have been implemented: as always the gap between policy and practice is wide. As regards the provision of meeting records, the Committee refers the Assembly to its comprehensive proposal set out in chapter V above.

## CHAPTER VII

### FUTURE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR CONFERENCE SERVICES, FACILITIES AND DOCUMENTATION

67. By section I, paragraph 9, of resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, through the Committee on Conferences, a programme of systematic and progressive replacement and upgrading of the electronic equipment in the conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters.

68. The Committee's consideration was based on a report by the Secretariat (A/C.5/37/2) which outlined proposals covering a modernization programme over a period of approximately eight years. For the remainder of the present biennium the Secretary-General proposed:

(a) To install a multiplex conference system in conference room 7, including a modification of the audio facilities to provide an Arabic language facility, to install new equipment at the delegates tables, in the interpreters booths and in the control booths and at listening stations for other participants;

(b) To install a system in the Economic and Social Council Chamber with the same features as that in conference room 7;

(c) The installation of new equipment in the interpreters booths and of the facilities available at the rostrum of the General Assembly hall.

69. The Committee welcomed the information by the Secretariat that sufficient resources existed in the present budgetary appropriations to finance these improvements. Accordingly, it endorsed the programme of modernization set out in the note by the Secretariat.

70. The Committee also recommends to the General Assembly that it should request the Secretary-General to submit to it further proposals for a phased programme of equipment replacement and upgrading during the next biennia.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CO-ORDINATION OF CONFERENCES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

71. During its 1981 session the Committee on Conferences had decided to defer consideration of a Secretariat report on experience gained by other organizations of the United Nations system in the efficient and effective utilization of conference resources (A/AC.172/60). It requested then that the Secretariat submit an analytical summary of the various measures taken by the organizations of the system, including those which could be of relevance for the operations of the United Nations Secretariat, which were already applied and which appeared, in its judgement, not to be feasible (A/36/32, paras. 75-78).

72. The Committee on Conferences was provided with the requested analytical summary (Conference room paper 1982/3) focusing on two main areas, namely the management of the meetings programme and on control and limitation of documentation. The document further indicated whether the courses of action taken by other organizations of the United Nations system had been adopted and applied by their respective secretariats or their intergovernmental bodies. Finally, the document commented on the applicability of the various measures to the United Nations and its secretariat.

73. The Committee on Conferences took note of document A/AC.172/60 and the related analytical summary and decided to keep the question under review in future.

## CHAPTER IX

### UTILIZATION OF CONFERENCE RESOURCES

#### A. Calculation and presentation of conference-servicing costs

74. By section III of resolution 36/117 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee on Conferences and to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions a comprehensive analysis of the existing budgetary techniques used in the calculation and presentation of conference-servicing costs in statements of administrative and financial implications prepared pursuant to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, in the consolidated statement of conference-servicing costs and in the programme budget and invited both organs to submit appropriate recommendations relevant to their respective areas of competence to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

75. The Committee's consideration was based on a report by the Secretary-General (A/AC.172/75) which contained the requested analysis for the current procedure, whose main features were described as follows:

(a) At the level of the substantive organ concerned, a statement is made indicating the full costs of the meeting;

(b) At the level of the Fifth Committee, a statement is made showing:

(i) The net additional appropriations required, if any, in respect of non-conference-servicing activities, e.g. travel of representatives or of substantive staff, equipment, communications;

(ii) The full costs of conference services in respect of the proposal being considered, without however a request for additional appropriations for those services at that stage;

(c) Towards the close of the session of the General Assembly, a consolidated statement is prepared recapitulating the estimated conference costs of all of the substantive decisions taken during the year, item by item. This statement shows how much of the cost can be absorbed within the existing resources and the net additional appropriation required to service the revised level of meetings for which the organizational units providing conference services at Headquarters, Geneva or Vienna are responsible in the forthcoming financial period in accordance with the calendar of conferences and meetings adopted by the General Assembly.

76. During the discussion the members of the Committee expressed the view that the report, while useful and lucidly presented, did not address itself to the question whether and how an improved or alternative system of presenting estimates of conference-servicing costs could be devised which would allow more rational judgements than does the present full-costing approach on the actual conference-servicing costs at the time a decision was taken by an intergovernmental body to convene a particular conference or meeting. The Committee recognized however that the request by the General Assembly had not specifically sought such information, but it believed that it would be desirable that the ACABQ and the Secretariat explore such possibilities.

77. When analysing the present system, the members of the Committee on Conferences were particularly struck by the ratio of 5 to 1 between the accumulated total estimate of conference-servicing costs of all financial implications statements issued during a session of the General Assembly and the actual appropriations requested by the Secretariat for the servicing of the calendar of conferences for any given year towards the end of a session of the Assembly. The Committee also noted that there was a third possibility to identify conference-servicing costs, namely on a pro forma basis applying the system of distributed costs for conference services used on an ex post facto basis in the context of the presentation of the various sections of the programme budget.

78. It was felt by the Committee that one of the deficiencies of the present procedure was that it did not always allow judgement on the marginal costs involved in convening a session or conference during alternative periods of time or as between specific venues.

79. In general, the Committee agreed that it was beyond its mandate and capacity to pursue such matters and to assess the relative merits and utility of the present approaches or even to recommend specific adjustments. It therefore conveyed its conclusions as an input for the consideration of the Secretary-General's report by the Advisory Committee.

#### B. Use of United Nations meeting facilities

80. At its organizational meeting for 1982, the Committee on Conferences requested the Secretariat to provide information about conditions under which meeting facilities are made available to organizations which are not part of the United Nations system.

81. The Committee took note of the information that the allocation of meeting facilities, i.e. premises and conference services, to organizations which are not part of the United Nations system was governed by Administrative Instruction ST/AI/282 of 10 December 1981. The basic policy laid down in that document was that United Nations facilities could only be assigned to outside organizations if the purpose of a particular event was consistent with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and was of a non-commercial nature. A necessary requirement on each occasion was either an application from a responsible Secretariat official, as in the case of conferences of non-governmental organizations called or sponsored by the United Nations, or sponsorship by a permanent or observer mission to the United Nations. Such requests, however, were met only if appropriate facilities were available and not required for other official meetings and functions of the United Nations, which at all times were accorded priority.



## CHAPTER X

### OTHER BUSINESS

82. At its first series of substantive meetings the Committee agreed to inscribe in its agenda an additional item entitled "Procedures for inscription on the speaker's list for the general debate of the General Assembly".

83. In that connexion it was pointed out that not all delegations had been informed of the procedures that would be followed in relation to the inscription for the general debate of the thirty-seventh session and that of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It was also suggested that the list itself, as in the past, should be open for perusal by all delegations. Some delegations felt that consideration of this matter was not within the mandate of the Committee since it was the Secretary-General who determined each year the relevant procedures; others considered that as inscription was a conference service it was well within the Committee's mandate.

84. At a later meeting the Committee was informed that the entire procedure was under review by the Office of the Secretary-General and that in due course delegations would be consulted with a view to adopting an improved procedure in the future. No such consultations had taken place by the time this report was completed.

## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

85. The recommendations of the Committee on Conferences are set forth below:

#### Recommendation 1

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should authorize the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law to hold its future sessions in December in even years and in October in uneven years (see para. 29).

#### Recommendation 2

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should authorize the Board of Trustees of United Nations Institute for Training and Research to meet each year during the week preceding the beginning of the regular session of the General Assembly (see para. 30).

#### Recommendation 3

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should approve the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1983 as contained in document A/AC.172/80 and Amend. (see para. 32).

#### Recommendation 4

The Committee on Conferences recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution (see para. 34):

"The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 35/10 C of 3 November 1980 and 36/117 D of 10 December 1981,

Approves the guidelines on Secretariat organization for United Nations special conferences contained in the annex to the present resolution.

#### ANNEX

#### Guidelines on Secretariat organization for United Nations special conferences

1. Once an intergovernmental organ has decided to convene a special conference, the Secretary-General should establish at the Secretariat level a Conference Management Committee. The Committee should guide and co-ordinate all Secretariat activities during the preparatory phase of the conference and after the conclusion of the conference, prepare a comprehensive and critical evaluation of the conference's successes and problems.

2. The Committee should be composed of representatives of all Secretariat departments and offices involved in the preparation and organization of the conference, including its logistical arrangements, and should meet regularly throughout the preparatory period under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General or, where appointed, the Secretary-General or Executive Secretary of the conference.
3. In its planning for the preparatory process, the Committee should institute disciplined management techniques for the detailed planning, scheduling, monitoring and co-ordination of both departmental activities and the conference preparations as a whole.
4. Early provision should be made for inter-agency consultations to ensure that interested and concerned organizations of the United Nations system have the opportunity to contribute to the substantive preparations for the special conference.\*
5. The Committee should be responsible for the preparation and submission of progress reports to intergovernmental organs on the status of preparations for the conference, including all financial, administrative and organizational arrangements and substantive and programme matters.
6. The Committee should, where appropriate, formulate proposals for the involvement of non-Secretariat participants in order to increase international support for the objectives of the conference and the likelihood of effective follow-up action outside the United Nations framework.
7. The Committee should, at an early date, also formulate proposals in line with General Assembly resolution 36/117 D for harmonizing documentation needs with the design of the conference, taking into account all existing rules and instructions on the limitation and control of documentation. The Committee should further monitor, on a regular basis, the implementation of all documentation plans, particularly with regard to the timely submission of documents.
8. After completion of the conference, the Committee should submit a report to the Committee on Conferences, assessing its experience in the preparation and holding of the conference and, where appropriate, submitting recommendations for future improvement.
9. If it is proposed that the special conference should take place at a venue away from established United Nations headquarters, at the invitation of a host country in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140, the Committee should ensure that a planning and review mission, whose composition would be determined in consultation with the host country, is dispatched to that country at the earliest possible time. Based on the findings of that mission, detailed cost and servicing estimates should be prepared and discussed with the Government concerned, preferably prior to the date when an offer to host is formally made and accepted.

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\* See also para. 15 of the guidelines.

10. The Committee should, where applicable, ensure that early arrangements are made for the conclusion of an agreement between the United Nations and the host country.

11. All servicing requirements for the conference should be as economical as possible and determined on a realistic and detailed basis, preferably by the Committee, as soon as it is established.

12. In line with General Assembly resolution 35/10 C, the secretariats for special conferences should, to the extent possible, be provided by existing Secretariat machinery, with such temporary strengthening as may be required for their effective functioning, allowing for the necessary mix of technical, substantive, administrative and conference-servicing skills.

13. In consultation with the competent intergovernmental organs, standards of staffing requirements should be developed for all Secretariat units involved in the preparation and servicing of special conferences and should be kept under constant review.

14. The career development of staff to serve as secretaries for intergovernmental meetings, including special conferences, should be undertaken systematically and pertinent training should be offered. Such staff could then be subsequently assigned to conferences that may be scheduled on subjects related to their chosen area of activity or specialization.

15. In case of United Nations conferences dealing with economic and social matters, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation may also set up a steering committee, under his chairmanship and with the participation of the heads of all United Nations entities most directly concerned, to provide guidance on major policy issues affecting the substantial direction of conference preparations and, in particular, to ensure conformity of the preparatory work with the general strategies and priorities established by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the substantive co-ordination of such work with related activities undertaken within the United Nations system."

#### Recommendation 5

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should decide that, following acceptance of the invitation to act as host to a special conference, the Government of the host country should make an advance payment to the United Nations of part of the estimated total additional cost to be borne by the Government in order to cover early preparatory expenses, including in particular the cost of the planning and review mission (see para. 35).

## Recommendation 6

The Committee on Conferences recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution (see para. 48):

### "The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2292 (XXII) of 8 December 1967, 2538 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, 3415 (XXX) of 8 December 1975, 33/419 of 15 December 1978, 34/50 of 23 November 1979, 35/10 B of 3 November 1980 and 36/117 A and D of 10 December 1981,

Mindful of the action taken by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1979/69 of 2 August 1979 and its decision 1982/105 of 4 February 1982,

1. Reaffirms that no United Nations body or organ shall have both verbatim and summary records for the same meeting;
2. Confirms the present arrangements in regard to the provision of meeting records for the General Assembly, its Main Committees and the General Committee;
3. Decides that, for an experimental period of three years, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly shall be entitled to summary records with the exception of the following:
  - (a) International Law Commission;
  - (b) United Nations Commission on International Trade Law;
  - (c) Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;
  - (d) United Nations Council for Namibia;
4. Decides that summary records shall continue to be provided to regular and special sessions of governing bodies of United Nations organs and programmes listed in paragraph 1 of the annex to the present resolution and to pledging conferences or meetings of ad hoc bodies established for the announcement of voluntary contributions by States and determines that this entitlement shall not extend to any of their subsidiary bodies;
5. Further decides that the exceptions granted to the subsidiary organs listed in paragraphs 3 and 4 above shall not apply to any of their subsidiary bodies;
6. Reaffirms that any further exception shall require the explicit approval of the General Assembly in a pertinent resolution or decision;
7. Requests all its subsidiary organs entitled to written meeting records to keep their requirements for such records to a reasonable minimum, to dispense with them, whenever possible, and to make wider use of sound recordings;

8. Confirms that summary records shall not be provided to special conferences and their preparatory organs, with the exception of legal codification conferences for which the needs will be determined in each case;

9. Decides that those subsidiary bodies which are entitled to receive written meeting records for all or some of their meetings shall receive them when meeting away from recognized United Nations conference centres only if there is a specific decision by the General Assembly for each case;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to arrange for sound recordings, in the appropriate working languages, of all proceedings of those organs no longer entitled to written meeting records in accordance with the present resolution, so that such tapes may be made available with easy access to interested delegations in accordance with the established practice of the Secretariat;

11. Confirms the present entitlements for verbatim records of its subsidiary organs as set out in paragraph 2 of the annex to the present resolution and reiterates that no subsidiary organ shall be entitled to receive verbatim records unless the General Assembly has explicitly so approved in a relevant resolution;

12. Urges all its subsidiary organs not entitled to written meeting records to observe more widely the present guidelines on the format and contents of their reports, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/50, which are aimed at fostering the clear and succinct presentation of such information which the Assembly needs for a meaningful review of the work of its subsidiary organs and for taking action on their recommendations, by confining the contents of such reports to the following elements:

(a) Draft resolutions and draft decisions recommended for adoption by the General Assembly with, as necessary, concise statements supporting or opposing the recommendations;

(b) Matters meriting the Assembly's special attention;

(c) Details of voting, where appropriate;

(d) Decisions relevant to the subsidiary organ's own activities and procedures, which do not require action by the Assembly;

(e) Organization of work and, where applicable, brief mention of opening statements;

13. Requests those subsidiary organs that receive written meeting records to avoid including summaries of the discussions in their reports, unless such summaries are indispensable as a part of the statements referred to in paragraph 12 (a), (b) and (d) above, by referring instead to the relevant meeting records;

14. Reiterates that in preparing their reports subsidiary organs, particularly those receiving written meeting records, should strive to keep such reports within the desirable limit of 32 pages.

ANNEX

Organs entitled to summary or verbatim records

1. The following governing bodies of United Nations organs and programmes are entitled to receive summary records:

- (a) Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (in English only);
- (b) Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund;
- (c) Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- (d) Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme;
- (e) Industrial Development Board;
- (f) Trade and Development Board.

2. The following subsidiary organs of the General Assembly are entitled to receive verbatim records:

- (a) Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements;
- (b) Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;
- (c) Disarmament Commission;
- (d) Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;
- (e) Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (when hearing witnesses);
- (f) United Nations Administrative Tribunal (when holding hearings, only in the language of the speaker).

Verbatim records are further provided to the Committee on Disarmament (on the understanding that the Committee receives verbatim records from full statements as delivered and checked by the delegations concerned but without the use of verbatim reporters) and to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly holding meetings in the observance of international days of solidarity proclaimed by the General Assembly."

### Recommendation 7

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should take note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on control and limitation of documentation 2/ and of the comments of the ACC 3/ and the Secretary-General 4/ thereon, taking into account the observations of the Committee on Conferences in paragraphs 47 to 52 of the present report (see para. 55).

### Recommendation 8

The Committee on Conferences recommends that the General Assembly should endorse the programme of systematic and progressive replacement and upgrading of the electronic equipment in the conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General, 5/ and should request the Secretary-General to submit further proposals for the next biennia (see paras. 69 and 70).

### Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/36/32 and Corr.).

2/ A/36/167.

3/ A/36/167/Add.1.

4/ A/36/167/Add.2.

5/ A/C.5/37/2.



ANNEX I

Message by the Secretary-General to the organizational meeting  
of the Committee on Conferences

1. One of my earliest concerns in my new position has been the need for new and more determined efforts to control the factors that are making it increasingly difficult for the Secretariat to service meetings and conferences of the Organization in an efficient and effective manner. Our efforts in this regard continue to be impeded by a variety of problems, most notably the growing volume and uneven flow of documentation. What is badly needed, apart from fewer and less frequent meetings, are documents which are concise, to the point and produced on time so as to allow more productive meetings. I consider this Committee to be the natural partner and ally in these matters. The Secretariat alone is unable to remedy the situation. The various mandates of this Committee, notably its authority to establish a workable calendar of conferences and meetings and to devise and monitor measures to control and limit documentation, equip it in a unique manner for this role.

2. I should like not only to enlist your continued co-operation, but to announce to you as I have already done to the Economic and Social Council, that I am about to take a number of fresh initiatives as far as the documentation problem is concerned. One of the directives I intend to issue is that, with immediate effect, the maximum page limit for all action-oriented documentation emanating from the Secretariat should be lowered from 32 to 24 pages. While this measure might not directly translate into a one-fourth reduction of the total United Nations documentation, it should nevertheless have a significant effect and may furthermore be regarded as a signal and an inducement for the other parties involved to follow suit. Another step will be the introduction of a new and more disciplined system for the planning and timely submission of documents for processing by the Department of Conference Services. To these general ends, I personally also intend to request the support of heads of delegations and the heads of all organizations which use the facilities of the Secretariat.

## ANNEX II

List of documents issued in 1982

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/AC.172/66	20 January 1982	Calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1982
A/AC.172/67	4 February 1982	Membership of the Committee on Conferences
A/AC.172/68	11 February 1982	Provisional agenda
A/AC.172/69	26 February 1982	Annotated provisional agenda
A/AC.172/70	27 April 1982	Control and limitation of documentation; Issuance of official records
A/AC.172/71	23 March 1982	Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982-1983; Interrelationship between the capacity of the documentation services and the programme of meetings
A/AC.172/72	24 March 1982	Matters related to the calendar of conferences for 1982: <u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee on the Indian Ocean
A/AC.172/73	2 April 1982	Control and limitation of documentation; Reproduction and documents distribution services
A/AC.172/74	4 May 1982	Summary records for meetings of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly
A/AC.172/75	30 April 1982	Calculation and presentation of conference-servicing costs; Analysis of budgetary techniques
A/AC.172/76	4 May 1982	Matters related to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982 - <u>Ad Hoc</u> Intergovernmental Group on the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development - Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/AC.172/77	12 May 1982	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982
A/AC.172/78	6 May 1982	Special Review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations - Control and limitation of documentation
A/AC.172/79	14 June 1982	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982
A/AC.172/80	30 July 1982	Draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1983
A/AC.172/INF/1982/1	27 April 1982	Membership of the Committee on Conferences in 1982
A/37/112	23 March 1982	Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on secretariat organization and procedures for preparation of United Nations special conferences
A/37/112/Add.1	18 August 1982	Ibid., Comments of the Secretary-General
A/C.5/37/2	4 August 1982	Electronic equipment in conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters
Conference room paper 1982/1	4 March 1982	Matters related to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982
Conference room paper 1982/2	2 April 1982	Utilization of conference resources: Use of United Nations meeting facilities
Conference room paper 1982/3	12 April 1982	Co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system
Conference room paper 1982/4	13 April 1982	Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982: Adjustment of the calendar to the servicing capacities within the Secretariat
Conference room paper 1982/5	14 April 1982	Control and limitation of documentation
Conference room paper 1982/6	13 April 1982	Calendar of conferences and meetings

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
Conference room paper 1982/7	14 April 1982	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
Conference room paper 1982/8	30 July 1982	Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982-1983 - Secretariat organization for United Nations special conferences
Conference room paper 1982/9	30 July 1982	Draft report of the Committee on Conferences