



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and 2, A/37/143, A/37/378 and Add.1., A/37/469 and Add.1, A/37/528 and Add.1, A/37/30, annex I; A/C.5/37/5, A/C.5/37/6 and Corr.1, A/C.5/37/24, A/C.5/37/26 and A/C.5/37/34)

1. Mr. RAKOTOMALALA (Madagascar) said that he was gratified at the efforts being made to apply the reforms specified by the General Assembly with regard to the recruitment of nationals from unrepresented and under-represented Member States, the recruitment of women and the representation of developing countries in senior posts. The formulation of a medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1982-1985, the sending of recruitment missions to unrepresented and under-represented States, the progressive recruitment of P-1 and P-2 staff by competitive examination and the systematic use of interviews were all measures that should provide the Organization with the services of efficient staff in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

2. With regard to efficiency, his delegation believed that the criteria of competence and integrity should be the same regardless of the nature and duration of the duties to be performed by a staff member. As pointed out by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in document A/37/528/Add.1, security of tenure and full-career service were two of the means for ensuring the independence and efficiency of staff, but they were not the only means. Where it was not possible for the staff to be composed mainly of career officials, no effort must be spared to maintain the standards of the service through other means, for example, through objective and rigorous methods of recruitment and enlightened management.

3. Turning to the administrative, financial and personnel structure of the Secretariat, which had been evaluated by a committee of government experts, he said that the Secretary-General, as the most senior official of the United Nations, was responsible for the administrative and technical aspects of the Secretariat's work. Emphasis should, however, be given to the spirit of co-operation that should govern relations between the legislative and the executive branches of the Organization.

4. Mr. PLYUSHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that staff efficiency as a whole could only be improved by the rational application of the principles laid down in the Charter, and especially in Article 101, namely, efficiency, competence, integrity and equitable geographical distribution. With regard to staff efficiency, he did not agree with the analysis made by the staff representative, Mr. Kahnert. As to geographical distribution, it was highly regrettable that 19 Member States were not represented at all and 24 were under-represented, despite the fine resolutions adopted in that matter by the General Assembly, in particular resolution 35/210.

5. His delegation felt that such lack of progress was due to a lack of will on the part of the Secretariat. His country, for example, whose contribution to the regular budget was thirteenth in order of size, currently had only 22 posts in the

(Mr. Plyushko, Ukrainian SSR)

Secretariat, whereas the mid-point of the desirable range was 36. The previous July, a United Nations mission had been sent to Kiev to interview 21 candidates who had broad linguistic competence and were suitable for employment in the Secretariat. The Secretariat currently possessed the names of highly qualified Ukrainian specialists.

6. A recruitment plan would make it possible to apply the provisions of resolution 35/210, which specified that 40 per cent of the posts should be filled by candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries. While his delegation was gratified that 139 nationals of those countries had been recruited between June 1981 and June 1982, it noted from paragraph 9 of document A/37/143, that 48 posts, or 14.9 per cent of the total, had been filled through the appointment of nationals from over-represented countries, a situation that was completely unacceptable.

7. His delegation had already made known that it was in favour of recruitment to the P-1 and P-2 levels by competitive examination. It would appreciate being informed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services what procedure should be followed for submitting the names of candidates. That, however, was only one of the solutions to the problem of the over-representation of Member States that should be resolved by the combination of specific measures.

8. The practice of lowering the level of posts was disquieting. Four Ukrainian staff members, for example, who had been recruited for service in the Secretariat had been assigned to posts of a level lower than the posts of their predecessors. Secretariat staff must be able to obtain promotions on the basis of efficiency and not merely on a basis of seniority. Lowering the level of posts allotted to under-represented countries merely aggravated their problems. It was also to be noted that 75 per cent of the appointments to the P-4, P-5 and D-1 levels on 30 June 1981 had been in the form of future promotions of staff from over-represented countries. That practice did not accord with the General Assembly resolutions on equitable geographic distribution of senior staff.

9. One obstacle to applying the principle of geographical distribution was the practice of granting permanent contracts, the number of which had increased still further. His delegation fully agreed with the opinion expressed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that there was no reason for assuming that the level of competency and efficiency of staff would be higher if they all had permanent contracts. In WHO, for example, 78 per cent of the contracts were temporary, and in UNESCO the percentage was 81; not only did that apparently not impair efficiency, but the contrary was true. It appeared from the documents before the Committee that unrepresented and under-represented countries had to wait four years before reaching the lower limit of the desirable range and nine years to reach its mid-point. The Secretariat should see to it that that waiting period was only two years, at least in the first-mentioned instance.

10. In conclusion, his delegation hoped that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/210, recommendation 3 in paragraph 37 of the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/34) and the other steps taken by the Secretariat would be applied in the proper manner.

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11. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that the problem was how to ensure the very highest standards of efficiency while creating a satisfying climate of work with both job security and reasonable and fair opportunities for advancement. He was therefore particularly pleased with the positive results in recruitment and the encouraging moves into career development which had been outlined by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services. The Secretariat already had sufficient legislation on which to proceed, and it would be pointless to conduct a lengthy debate on the measures to be applied. The introduction of a medium-term recruitment plan would certainly improve the representation of unrepresented and under-represented States, and would make it possible to increase the number of women employed by the Secretariat, fill vacant posts more rapidly, systematize the use of competitive methods of selection for posts at the P-1 and P-2 levels and explore the application of various types of competitive methods for selecting candidates at the P-3 to P-5 levels.

12. Commenting on the proportion between permanent and fixed-term appointments, he said that his delegation could not agree with the recommendation in paragraph 36 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/34) that there should be an increase in the number of fixed-term contracts. It was his delegation's view that highly technical posts might often be best filled by fixed-term contracts, whereas others of a political, social, legal or economic nature would be better filled by permanent contracts. The existence of permanent contracts was a guarantee of the independence of the Secretariat staff.

13. His delegation was also firmly opposed to the recommendation that geographical distribution quotas should be applied to all organizational units of the United Nations. That would make the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution a veritable administrative nightmare that would tend to undermine the efficiency of the Secretariat. It was also unable to agree to targets for policy-making posts for each region because of the lack of flexibility that would be involved and the non-existence of any real problem in that area.

14. With regard to career development, fixed-term staff who had served satisfactorily and continuously for a number of years should be given proper consideration for a career appointment. Preference should normally be given in filling vacancies to staff already employed by the Organization, regardless of whether the staff in question were on permanent or fixed-term contract. The needs for career development of non-professional staff had not been given enough attention. Commenting on the statement made before the Committee by the staff representative, he said that to believe, as Mr. Kahnert had said, that employee happiness was purely a product of conditions of service was an illusion. If some staff, as the staff representative implied, were inefficient, it was because they chose to be inefficient.

15. In the matter of privileges and immunities of international civil servants, he said that to incarcerate the very people who were serving the Charter was hypocrisy indeed. His delegation would welcome with interest any concrete proposals from the Secretary-General that would ensure the safety and protection of staff.

16. Mr. MIYAKAWA (Japan) said that he appreciated the measures taken by the Office of Personnel Services to improve the geographical distribution of the staff and was pleased to note that the target of 40 per cent of vacant Professional posts subject to geographical distribution which had been set for the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries had been reached during the period under consideration.

17. Despite that progress, the number of unrepresented and under-represented States, Japan being among the latter, had scarcely been reduced. According to the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143), the number of Japanese staff members in posts subject to geographical distribution had been 101 at the end of June 1982, or only 62 per cent of the lower limit and 50 per cent below the midpoint of the desirable range. Taking the Asia and Pacific region as a whole, the total figure was 494 as compared to the lower limit of 519 and the midpoint of 610. However, regional data were of little significance, since there were a number of over-represented countries within the region. In its report on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution (A/37/378), the Joint Inspection Unit suggested a target of 60 per cent.

18. His delegation noted with interest that the Office of Personnel Services was developing and would implement a medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1983-1985, the target being to bring the number of staff within desirable ranges by 1985 at the latest. The medium-term recruitment plan would provide a framework for annual work plans covering the actions to be taken and also the specific recruitment methods to be used for each of the unrepresented or under-represented Member States. It was to be hoped that the plan would soon be ready and that its details would be made known, particularly with respect to Japan. However, the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had warned about the possible difficulties in reaching the recruitment goals, in view of the fact that the plan was predicated on several assumptions which were subject to change, the key factor being the number of posts that would be available for recruitment in the next three years, and that the plan's success would depend upon concerted efforts on the part of all departments and offices in the Secretariat and upon the co-operation and support of all Member States. The Assistant Secretary-General could count on Japan's support.

19. An important feature of the medium-term recruitment plan was the competitive method of selection for posts at the P-1 and P-2 levels. His Government favoured competitive examinations and recruitment missions because they provided a large number of young Japanese resident in Japan with an opportunity to apply for posts. For the immediate future, the Office of Personnel Services might consider the direct recruitment of young Japanese nationals, particularly from among those who had participated or were participating in the Associate Expert Scheme and the Junior Professional Officers' Programme operated by several United Nations organizations. It would be desirable for direct recruitment procedures to be applied flexibly to unrepresented or under-represented Member States which had suitable candidates whenever competitive examinations were not scheduled to be held in those countries.

(Mr. Miyakawa, Japan)

20. His delegation supported the basic thrust of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution (A/37/378), but it could not subscribe to the recommendation to apply the principle of equitable geographical distribution to the staff of each entity in the Organization, since the Secretary-General must not be unduly restricted. Furthermore, if recruitment was carried out strictly on the basis of geography or of the three major socio-economic groups, there was no guarantee that unrepresented or under-represented Member States would receive their fair share of the posts reserved for the category to which they belonged.

21. His delegation believed that balanced geographical distribution must be ensured in qualitative as well as quantitative terms. It therefore supported the recommendation of JIU that the weighted ranges should be used to measure the representation of Member States for recruitment purposes. However, his delegation was opposed to the setting of notional targets on a regional basis for senior and policy-formulating posts. Regions were not culturally homogeneous and there was no guarantee that such a method would make it possible to achieve a qualitative balance in geographical distribution.

22. With respect to the proportion of women in the Secretariat, it was regrettable that the target of 25 per cent had not yet been reached, even though at Headquarters the proportion was now over 31 per cent. The situation in the field offices might be due to living and working conditions there, unless it was due to lack of effort on the part of recruitment officers. His delegation was pleased to note that the number of Japanese women in the Secretariat had increased from 11 to 18 during the reporting period. It believed that efforts to recruit women candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries must be doubled.

23. With regard to movement from the General Service and related categories to the Professional category by means of competitive examinations, the figures contained in the Secretary-General's report gave the impression that the 30 per cent limitation on the number of P-1/P-2 posts that could be filled by internal promotion might have been exceeded. The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services could perhaps provide the Committee with information on the second examination in addition to that contained in information circular ST/IC/82/46, particularly on the nationalities of candidates promoted and the proportion of vacancies at the P-1/P-2 level filled in that way. At the 29th meeting of the Committee, the Secretary-General had requested that the proportion of vacancies to be filled by General Service staff through competitive methods should be increased from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. That was disturbing, since only two examinations had been held and it was too soon to appraise their results and the implications for personnel management in the Professional category, and especially for geographical distribution. While his delegation was appreciative of the services of other staff members - and had supported the holding of competitive examinations - it felt that coherent policies must be developed for the respective categories before there could be any thought of changing the rules laid down by the General Assembly.

(Mr. Miyakawa, Japan)

24. Where personnel policy was concerned, it seemed necessary to develop forthwith a coherent management mechanism based on a set of integrated principles. ICSC and JIU had carried out important studies on the various aspects of the international career concept which had highlighted a number of fundamental principles. They agreed, for example, on the need to develop a system of integrated personnel management. The application of those fundamental principles must not be allowed to have an adverse effect on equitable geographical distribution. In that context, the concept of career service recommended by ICSC should be approached with caution. Care should be taken to see that it did not in practice lead to an increase in the number of staff members from over-represented Member States. The problem was compounded by the fact that it was difficult to determine a priori the appropriate proportion of permanent staff to fixed-term staff. In addition, once that proportion had been determined, it might tend to increase as the concept of career development was implemented.

25. A number of delegations had recommended extension of the retirement age, on the ground that that would enable the Organization to make full use of the skills of experienced staff members and would be in accordance with the recommendations of the recent World Assembly on Aging. The implications of such a step for recruitment policy and for the pension system should not be underestimated, and an appropriate expert body should look into the matter in all its aspects before the General Assembly took a decision on it.

26. His delegation wished to express its great concern over the plight of the staff members of many international organizations who had been arrested or imprisoned. The safety and protection of its staff was essential to the functioning of the Organization. The problem must therefore continue to receive close attention, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 36/232, until such time as the privileges and immunities of those officials were restored. His delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on the subject.

27. Mr. MANSOURI (Syrian Arab Republic) noted with satisfaction that the picture with regard to representation of Member States in the Secretariat had improved somewhat and that the Secretariat was trying to increase the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution. His delegation did not favour extending the contracts of staff members over 60, except where they were essential to the functioning of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 35 of his report (A/C.5/37/5) the number of staff members retained in service beyond the age of 60, but it would have been helpful to know the average length of the extensions.

28. He was pleased to note that the number of developing countries represented in senior and policy-making posts had increased; he hoped that the Secretary-General would continue to take all necessary steps to implement the provisions of resolution 35/210 in their entirety, while maintaining the principles of equitable geographic distribution, efficiency, competence and integrity.

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(Mr. Mansouri, Syrian Arab Republic)

29. The results of the second competitive examination for movement from the General Service and related categories to the Professional category showed a surprisingly high failure rate, only 30 candidates out of 700 having been promoted. In making such promotions, account should also be taken of the experience acquired by some General Service staff members.

30. His delegation was opposed to increasing the number of permanent appointments. It considered it desirable to recruit more competent specialists on a fixed-term basis, which would make it easier to achieve the objective of equitable geographical distribution.

31. Finally, he wished to stress that his country scrupulously respected the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, but in return it expected that they would respect the laws and regulations of the host country and would not infringe the national sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic.

32. Mr. HAKIM (Afghanistan) welcomed the progress achieved in the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which seemed entirely compatible with the requirements of efficiency, competence and integrity. An equitable geographical distribution of the Secretariat as a whole must be maintained, and specific targets applied for each department. He therefore supported the JIU's recommendation that the number of permanent appointments should be reduced and the number of of fixed-term appointments increased.

33. With regard to the situation of women in the Professional category and above, some organizations had made a significant improvement since 1976. However, the target of 25 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had not yet been met. His delegation supported the JIU's recommendation in that respect and considered that Member States should assume their share of responsibility in achieving the goal of more equitable representation of women.

34. Efforts must be exerted to establish training programmes and career development plans for all staff, and procedures which would give women an opportunity for further advancement. In that connection, systematic career development for the Professional category was essential in order to make full use of the human potential available. It would be desirable if JIU, ICSC and the Secretary-General could reach a common position on the subject.

35. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which fully respected the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly had recently arranged for a representative of the Secretary-General to meet the locally-recruited staff who were under arrest and had informed him of the charges against them. The representative of the Secretary-General had been satisfied that the detainees were receiving proper treatment and that due legal process was being observed.

36. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that the efficiency of the United Nations naturally depended on the political will of its Members, but above all it was determined by its structure, administrative and technical procedures, and the quality and working conditions of its staff. He therefore supported the steps taken by the Secretary-General to modernize the Organization's administrative machinery but pointed out that they should conform to the guidelines established by Member States in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter. The competent, independent and respected international civil service desired by the Secretary-General should reflect the diversity of Member States. It was from them that the Organization drew its first inspiration, which the Secretary-General then translated into facts, the staff constituting the fertilizing element which should help constantly to improve the structure of the Secretariat and make it more dynamic.

37. Since the key question was the equitable composition of the Secretariat, the recommendations made by the JIU in that connection in document A/37/378 should be studied in greater detail. It would be interesting to follow up that question every year when the document containing the list of staff (A/C.5/37/L.2) was considered. Without jeopardizing the necessary flexibility, the too obvious imbalances in certain units must be reduced, along the lines indicated by the Chairman of the JIU at the Committee's 26th meeting. In fact, despite the efforts made, much remained to be done before the principle of equitable geographical distribution became a reality for many countries, subregions and regions, especially with respect to decision-making posts.

38. Referring to tables C, 6 and 9 of document A/37/143 to illustrate his comments, he noted that the 90 developing countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East (Group A) held 144 senior posts (D-1 and above) whereas the 67 countries belonging to the three other groups held a total of 240 posts. The same inequalities could be found within Group A - where Africa, with some 50 States, held only 53 posts - and at the subregional level. The imbalance recorded on 30 June 1982 became even more pronounced if the criteria applicable to the desirable ranges established by General Assembly resolution 35/210 were applied; candidates must be sought in the most seriously under-represented regions without awaiting the review scheduled for the forty-first session of the General Assembly.

39. He supported the medium-term recruitment plan announced by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services but wished to know how the Secretary-General intended to reconcile a number of constraints, such as zero growth, and raising the quota of posts reserved for candidates who had passed the competitive examination for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category.

40. Although his delegation had received the vacancy bulletins referred to in General Assembly resolution 33/143 regularly, some bulletins stated that the job description was not available, which deprived them of any interest and gave rise to speculation as to how the Office of Personnel Services could seek candidates for posts the qualifications for which had not been determined. Care must also be taken not to delay the announcement of vacant posts, as was frequently the case, and, when that was impossible, to describe in a note the various consultations conducted in order to fill them.

(Mr. Tommo Monthe, United Republic of Cameroon)

41. The competitive examinations organized in several developing countries were cause for satisfaction, but he was astonished at the time it took before the successful candidates actually took up employment - a matter about which various delegations had complained - and asked for details about the time taken for recruitment. Before the competitive examination procedure was extended to levels other than that of junior Professionals as recommended by the JIU in paragraph 46 of its report (A/37/528) and as desired by the Secretary-General, lessons must be drawn from the present experiment, especially with respect to the examinations themselves and the examination boards.

42. With regard to career development, his delegation endorsed the analysis made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services at the Committee's 23rd meeting of the similar views expressed by ICSC, JIU and ACC concerning, in particular, the need to counterbalance temporary contracts by fixed-term contracts, opportunities for staff members who had served for a long time on fixed-term contracts to be considered for a career appointment and the necessity of taking the special requirements of each organization into account. However, before agreeing on a career development system such as that described by JIU and ICSC, it should be remembered, first, that it was necessary to avoid setting up costly machinery and, secondly, that respect for the sovereign will of States must be a constant concern. That being said, it would be interesting to know how JIU envisaged career development above the P-4 level, in the light of the small number of posts above that level and the need to reconcile the career prospects of junior Professionals and the requirements imposed on recruitment by the objectives of the medium-term recruitment plan.

43. He also wondered how ICSC intended to develop career prospects for a large number of officials - which implied mobility and advancement - while continuing to apply the Master Standard it had established, which was better suited to the recruitment of a specific candidate for a specific post than to a series of posts in an occupational group.

44. His country had on various occasions supported the efforts of the Secretary-General with respect to the privileges and immunities of international civil servants. It intended to observe all the existing instruments and practices, but in return it expected of the staff exemplary conduct, characterized by self-restraint and integrity; the obligations attached to the status of international civil servant were indissociable from the rights inherent in their status, as was stated by the General Assembly in resolution 36/232.

45. The concerns expressed by the Secretary-General with respect to the salaries of staff members were not new to Member States, which however found the problem very difficult. Only at the end of the discussion could the Committee come to a decision on that matter.

AGENDA ITEM 112: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)
(A/37/30; A/C.5/37/29; A/C.5/37/L.24)

46. Mr. CAPPAGLI (Argentina) stated his delegation's views on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/37/30) chapter by chapter.

47. With regard to chapter IV, and in particular the determination of the remuneration of the Professional and higher categories, he said that he recognized the validity of the Noblemaire principle but did not exclude the possibility of finding a more suitable principle in due course. The ICSC's technical discussion on the level of remuneration had been noteworthy. Since ICSC had not yet found a suitable technical basis for establishing the level of remuneration, however, the Fifth Committee could consider favourably the request of the ACC for an interim increase in salaries of 5 per cent. In that regard, his delegation had noted with interest the request made by the Secretary-General at the thirty-sixth session.

48. Part B of chapter IV, which dealt with matters relating to post adjustment, presented the activities which the Commission intended to pursue in that field. His delegation found them extremely positive, notably those indicated in subparagraphs (d) and (e) of paragraph 137. In that connection, the decision of the ICSC to resume publication of the bulletin Common system and the completion of the review referred to in paragraph 138 were to be welcomed. At the same time, it was to be hoped that the Fifth Committee would be duly informed about the working of the post adjustment system since, as was said in the report, it was "continually evolving".

49. As for chapter V, concerning conditions of service in the General Service category, the detailed work carried out by ICSC in order to draw up the general methodology set out in annex II of the report deserved to be underlined. That methodology would undoubtedly serve to improve technically the studies effected and in that way improve administrative efficiency. It would be of interest to know when the ICSC thought it would be able to complete the study of the general methodology for non-headquarters duty stations mentioned in paragraph 153. As to staff assessment for the General Service category, the difficulties relating to "the complexity of the issue and ... the divergence in views of both organizations and staff" were understandable, but it was to be hoped that, as the Chairman of the ICSC had announced, the Commission would be able to submit its conclusions in 1983.

50. Chapter VII concerned conditions of service in the field. With reference to part C, which dealt with the general review of those conditions, he recalled the particular importance of the activities of officials working in the field for developing countries. He endorsed the measures recommended in subparagraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph 242 and underlined the importance of the programme of studies announced in subparagraph (c).

51. Chapters VIII and IX showed that the ICSC continued to make progress in accomplishing the tasks entrusted to it by articles 13 and 14 of its statute. The issues involved, which related to personnel policy, were highly sensitive and were difficult to co-ordinate between the institutions which were applying the common system and had approved the Commission's statute. In that connection, the

(Mr. Cappagli, Argentina)

institutions deserved congratulations for the way in which they were applying the Master Standard and for the progress they had made in developing Tier-II standards. As for the classification of General Service posts in New York, the United Nations/UNDP/UNICEF Co-ordination Committee was to be congratulated, as ICSC noted in paragraph 272, on the work it had done, as were the three organizations for the level of their participation and consensus. His delegation approved the ICSC decision set out in subparagraph (d) of paragraph 274, but wondered if common classification standards would be formulated for other headquarter cities where several institutions were located.

52. With reference to part B of chapter IX, on concepts of career, types of appointment, career development and related questions, he stated that the study which constituted annex I of the report was for him ample evidence of the effectiveness of ICSC in that field; the information in appendix III showed that it had already completed seven steps of its work programme on that question, that it was in the process of implementing six steps, and that four steps were near completion.

53. Mr. SHAHANKARI (Jordan), introducing the amendment to General Assembly resolution 35/213 contained in document A/C.5/37/L.24, said it was essential in the interests of Member States and the Secretariat that the staff should have access to the Fifth Committee. The Committee was known for its spirit of understanding and co-operation, and especially for its tolerance and respect for democratic values, and it was the only platform available to the staff for making known their opinions and, in case of need, their grievances. The reticence of some delegations was quite understandable and the legal arguments of the Canadian delegation were not without merit. However, procedural obstacles should not prevent nearly 20,000 people from appealing directly to the Committee. He asked the Committee to decide as soon as possible on the amendment under consideration, which he hoped it would approve by consensus.

54. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that the Jordanian delegation's proposal was an amendment to General Assembly resolution 35/213. From a technical standpoint, it was hard to see how one could expect to amend a resolution which had been adopted two years previously and had been officially published and given world-wide distribution. For the sake of good order, the Fifth Committee should take a separate decision in which it could, for instance, recall the resolution in question and, in the operative part, invite a representative of the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System to address the Committee, in accordance with the arrangements provided for in resolution 35/213. Any other procedure would be technically awkward.

55. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) and Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) agreed with the preceding speaker and thought, like him, that the Committee should find a different procedure.

56. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) also endorsed the objection stated by the Chairman of the ACABQ and added that the staff had already made known their list of claims. The problems cited related, for the most part, to management, for which the Secretary-General had the necessary authority. It was for him, therefore, to make proposals, to which the Fifth Committee would reply. It was not the latter's job to involve itself in internal staff affairs, at the risk of finding itself caught between two antagonistic positions.

57. Mr. KRISTIANSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the 10 States Members of EEC, said that the delegations concerned shared the views of the representative of Canada and pointed out that resolution 35/213 stated specifically that the Committee could invite one, and only one, representative of the staff. If several associations claimed to represent the staff, it was up to them to reach agreement on designating a single spokesman. The Fifth Committee did not have to suffer the effects of the lack of staff unity.

58. However, in view of the fact that the body in question, the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System, represented a very large number of staff members, the EEC countries would be prepared to grant access to one of its representatives. To avoid a recurrence of the present unfortunate situation, the Fifth Committee must make it unambiguously clear, in any decision which it might take, that in future it would hear only one representative of the staff.

59. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) recalled that his delegation had voted in favour of resolution 35/213 with considerable reluctance. He believed that the statement by the staff representative who had spoken on item 111 had gone beyond the intentions of the resolution. The Committee ought not to involve itself in the internal struggles of the staff associations, which should determine among themselves which of their representatives would address the Committee. It was to be hoped that that would be the case at the thirty-eighth session, at which the Assembly would perhaps take a decision replacing resolution 35/213. Neither the practice of ICSC nor that of the Secretary-General on access by petitioners should necessarily be adopted by the Committee.

60. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) recalled that in 1980 his delegation had abstained from participating in the discussion of General Assembly resolution 35/213. The draft resolution has seemed ill-founded, since the Secretary-General alone was empowered to settle the question of relations between Administration and staff. The grievances of the latter should be submitted to bodies other than the Fifth Committee. Not wishing to encourage rivalry between the various staff associations, his delegation would once again take no part in deciding the point.

61. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) thought that since the Fifth Committee had already heard a representative of the staff communicate their complaints, it should be in no hurry to take a decision which would set a precedent.

62. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) recalled that at the 29th meeting the Secretary-General had indicated his wish that a representative of the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System should be able to state its point of view to the Fifth Committee. Out of respect for the Secretary-General, his delegation would agree to receive a representative of the Co-ordinating Committee, on condition that that did not set a precedent. To protect itself against any abuse, the Fifth Committee could establish the conditions which the staff representative authorized to address it would have to fulfil. A small number of staff could conceivably establish a dissident association and demand that it too should have access to the Fifth Committee.

63. As for the procedural point raised by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, he believed it to be insurmountable and asked the Jordanian delegation to withdraw its amendment.

64. Mr. SHAHANKARI (Jordan) announced that his delegation was withdrawing the amendment contained in document A/C.5/37/L.24, on the understanding that it reserved its right to present a new draft decision at a suitable time.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.