



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 110: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (continued)
(A/C.5/37/L.23)

1. Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia), speaking in explanation of vote on draft decision A/C.5/37/L.23, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the decision, since under the circumstances it represented the only possible compromise. By allowing the Committee on Contributions a second opportunity to consider the proposed scale of assessments, the draft decision demonstrated the confidence which the Fifth Committee placed in that body. It was to be hoped that such confidence would be rewarded by the emergence of recommendations which commanded broad support among Member States.
2. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the proposal contained in the draft decision represented only a short-term solution. The question of the scale of assessments was complex, and had both technical and political aspects. The failure of the Committee on Contributions to reach recommendations without dissent demonstrated that the technical problems had not been solved, while the controversy among Member States bore witness to the political problems. The Committee on Contributions should increase its efforts to devise a comprehensive solution, holding an extended session if necessary. His delegation appealed to Member States to make every effort to find a solution.
3. Mr. DITZ (Austria) said that the draft decision adopted by the Committee virtually meant that it was establishing the scale of assessments itself. His delegation would have preferred negotiations to have been conducted by the expert body concerned. Yet compromise was of paramount concern if the United Nations was to function, and for that reason his delegation had not voted against the decision.
4. Mr. HEMMINGS (Australia) said that the proposed scale of assessments was the best possible solution in the circumstances. The procedure recommended by the Fifth Committee reflected on the integrity of the Committee on Contributions. The Fifth Committee should have solved the political problems, without referring the matter back to the Committee on Contributions. An unfortunate precedent had been set, and his delegation had reservations over the course of action adopted.
5. Mrs. LOPEZ ORTEGA (Mexico) said that her delegation had abstained in the vote, since the draft decision had contained no reference to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which the Committee on Contributions was bound to comply with. If the credibility of that Committee was to be maintained, the procedure adopted should not be allowed to establish a precedent.
6. Mrs. ESPINOSA de LOPEZ (Colombia) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision, since it would make it possible for a decision to be adopted before the end of the current session. The draft decision was certainly fairer than the one proposed in document A/C.5/37/L.20/Rev.1, which would have left the current scale of assessments in force.

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7. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported the new scale of assessments recommended by the Committee on Contributions, as representing the best and most equitable solution. Nevertheless, in a spirit of compromise, the Soviet Union had voted in favour of the draft decision. He trusted that the Committee on Contributions would take account of the views expressed in the Fifth Committee in carrying out its task.

8. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) said that his delegation preferred the scale of assessments recommended by the Committee on Contributions, although in a spirit of compromise it had abstained in the vote on the draft decision. It was his understanding that the Committee on Contributions would attempt to mitigate the increases proposed in the new scale of assessments. New Zealand trusted that all countries, developed as well as developing, would be given due consideration. His delegation reserved its position on any new scale of assessments which might emerge.

9. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation had abstained in an effort to maintain the taking of decisions by consensus. The Fifth Committee should leave the setting of the scale of assessments to the Committee on Contributions, and not seek to undermine its position. His delegation's position on the draft decision did not prejudge its attitude to the work of the Committee on Contributions or to any solution which might emerge.

10. Miss CASTILLO (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation had voted against the draft decision. The time allowed was too short for the Committee on Contributions to evaluate the situations obtaining in Member States. If that Committee failed to make satisfactory recommendations by the end of the current session of the General Assembly, a great deal of time and money would have been wasted. It would be better for that Committee to report to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, and for the current scale of assessments to be maintained until that time. In that regard, her delegation had requested a reduction in the size of its contribution.

11. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas) said that in adopting the draft decision the Fifth Committee had rejected the conclusions of the Committee on Contributions in favour of a political decision which called upon the Committee on Contributions to carry out an exercise already performed by it to the best of its abilities. The rejection of that Committee's recommendations was unreasonable. Nevertheless, her delegation had chosen to abstain in the interests of compromise.

12. Mrs. LISBOA (Venezuela) said that her delegation had abstained. The decision adopted provided only a temporary solution, and did not establish a precedent.

13. Mr. HADID (Algeria) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision. The Committee on Contributions should review the proposed scale of assessments to bring it in line with the provisions of paragraph 4 (c) of General Assembly resolution 36/231 A. That Committee should give priority at its next session to the studies requested in that resolution.

14. Mr. DERIA (Somalia) said that, had his delegation been present during the vote, it would have voted in favour of the draft decision.

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15. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision. It provided the Committee on Contributions with a further opportunity to review the scale of assessments in a fairer manner, taking account of all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

16. Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that his delegation had agreed to the compromise in order to promote the smooth functioning of the Organization. He trusted that the Committee on Contributions would be able to meet the expectations of Member States and that it would arrive at recommendations within the time set.

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)
Administrative and financial obligations of the draft resolution submitted in
document A/37/L.14 concerning agenda item 29 (A/C.5/37/35)

17. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that one of the proposals in the draft resolution in document A/37/L.14 was a request to the Secretary-General to make arrangements for the next meeting between representatives of the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity and the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, to be held in April 1983.

18. The Secretary-General had estimated conference servicing requirements at \$76,200, and had provided other estimates relating to travel and subsistence. The grand total appearing in table 1 of document A/C.5/37/35 should read \$99,000, because amount of \$2,700, relating to a visit to OAU Headquarters by a representative of the Secretary-General, had been omitted.

19. The amount of \$8,300, referred to in paragraph 4, for the travel and subsistence of conference-servicing staff from Geneva would be included under section 29 of the budget, and the Advisory Committee recommended that the amount should be absorbed under that section. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee was recommending an additional amount of \$14,500, comprising \$11,800 for the travel and subsistence of Headquarters Secretariat staff from New York and \$2,700 for travel and subsistence for the visit to OAU Headquarters of the Under-Secretary-General concerned.

20. The additional conference-servicing costs of \$76,200 would be reflected in the consolidated statement of total conference servicing requirements to be reviewed by the Fifth Committee later in the session.

21. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that, while the amounts involved were not of concern, his delegation was perturbed by the requests for additional funds since they represented an increase in the budget and a failure to discriminate between programmes on the basis of their importance. The Committee was taking piecemeal decisions without regard to previous decisions. Such an approach undermined the very rationale of the programme budget and was unacceptable to the United States delegation. His delegation did not, however, wish to imply any repudiation of the work of the Advisory Committee.

22. Mr. van HELLENBERG HUBAR (Netherlands) agreed that the piecemeal approach adopted by the Fifth Committee was undermining the programme budget. The fact that the actual conference servicing costs would not be known until the consolidated statement of total conference servicing requirements was issued suggested that the Fifth Committee was being asked to take decisions on the basis of incomplete information.

23. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was not recommending an immediate decision on the amount of \$76,200 for conference services. An appropriation would be recommended when the requirements of conference servicing in 1983 and the absorptive capacity of the Secretariat were known. The information would be submitted to the Fifth Committee in a consolidated statement. It was only at that time that the Advisory Committee would be able to advise the Fifth Committee of the actual additional amount which would have to be appropriated for conference servicing.

24. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation could not accept the constant increase in the programme budget for the current biennium. It believed that, when taking decisions on additional appropriations, the Committee should try to identify resources already allocated which could be released for the financing of new programmes and activities and, in particular, should identify programmes of the lowest priority which could be curtailed or postponed. His delegation believed that the Committee should extend the practice followed in approving appropriations for conference services to all other types of appropriations and, instead of appropriating resources immediately when adopting decisions, should consider all expenditure in a consolidated statement at the end of the session and adopt it as a package. It should also endeavour to finance new activities by releasing resources currently spent on programmes that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective. That practice would help to combat the growth of the budgetary expenditure of the United Nations and make it possible to implement fully all programmes that Member States felt were needed in the current budget period.

25. The Chairman suggested that, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/37/L.14, an additional appropriation of \$14,500 would be required under section 1 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. Conference servicing costs would arise which were estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$76,200. The actual additional appropriations that might be required in that respect would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.

26. The delegation of the United States had requested that a vote should be taken.

27. The suggestion was adopted by 97 votes to 1, with 9 abstentions.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted in document A/37/L.16 concerning agenda item 23 (A/C.5/37/38)

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/37/38 the amount of \$32,400 should be \$31,500 and that in the Annex the amount of \$22,500 for travel and subsistence costs should be \$21,600.

29. The Secretary-General gave an estimate of \$101,200 for conference servicing and also an additional estimate of \$31,500 for the travel of conference service and substantive staff. The Advisory Committee recommended that the \$9,000 required for the travel and subsistence of conference service staff should be absorbed under section 29 of the budget and that the balance or the additional travel and subsistence costs, amounting to \$22,500, should be approved.

30. The Secretary-General noted in paragraph 4 of his statement that the specific wording of paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/37/L.16 would constitute an exception to General Assembly resolution 31/140. In that connection he noted that paragraph 6 (f) of General Assembly resolution 31/140 stated that United Nations bodies should meet at their respective established headquarters, subject to exceptions to that principle approved by the General Assembly. That resolution had been concerned with intergovernmental bodies and subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and it was doubtful whether it applied automatically to Secretariat units or meetings, especially in the case under consideration. However, if larger sums had been involved it would perhaps have had to be determined whether General Assembly resolution 31/140 could be stretched to apply to meetings of the kind under consideration.

31. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/37/L.16, an additional appropriation of \$22,500 would be required under section 1 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. Conference-servicing costs would arise which were estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$101,200. The actual additional appropriations that might be required in that respect would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference servicing requirements to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.

32. The delegation of the United States had requested that a vote should be taken.

33. The suggestion was adopted by 97 votes to 1, with 10 abstentions.

34. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that his delegation fully shared the budgetary concerns expressed by a number of delegations. In supporting the Advisory Committee's recommendations, he wished to emphasize that his delegation expected that the funds in question would be found within existing resources as he had explained in previous explanations of vote.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted in document A/37/L.12/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 24 (A/C.5/37/36)

35. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the additional requirement of \$45,500 indicated in the statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/37/36). The conference servicing costs of \$295,300 would be included in the consolidated statement.

36. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that his delegation noted that the non-governmental consultants referred to in the Secretary-General's statement would work mainly in their home countries and would hold two sessions as a group in Vienna and New York. He wondered how they would be able to deal meaningfully with the political, economic, technical, legal and health aspects of the problem under consideration. He understood that the information to be collected and studied would be derived mainly from the International Atomic Energy Agency, and therefore asked whether, to the extent that the study was useful or necessary, it could be carried out by IAEA without the additional expenditure of hiring consultants.

37. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/37/L.12/Rev.1, an additional appropriation of \$45,500 would be required under section 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. Conference servicing costs would arise which were estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$295,300. The actual additional appropriations that might be required in that respect would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference servicing requirements to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.

38. The delegation of the United States, had requested that a vote should be taken.

39. Mr. LADOR (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that the issue under consideration had already been dealt with by the plenary Assembly and his delegation would not repeat what it had already said. Other speakers had adequately explained the dangers of the continued increase in extrabudgetary expenditure. The draft resolution and the Secretary-General's report were unacceptable to his delegation because they were unbalanced and biased and it would vote against any resulting financial implications.

40. The Chairman's suggestion was adopted by 89 votes to 2, with 20 abstentions.

41. Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that her delegation would have liked a reply to the question raised by the representative of Canada. For the reasons put forward by that representative, her delegation had abstained in the vote.

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

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

42. Mr. MORENO-SALCEDO (Philippines) said that his delegation welcomed the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to recruit professional staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and the progress made in enabling Member States, particularly the unrepresented and under-represented States, to reach their desirable ranges. It was his delegation's understanding that the system of desirable ranges established by the General Assembly in resolution 1559 (XV) was a guideline, and it felt that criteria that were administratively workable, rather than a rigid mathematical formula, should be established so that the Secretary-General had more flexibility in the administering of desirable ranges. For example, the decisions taken by the General Assembly to permit the recruitment of 75 per cent of the staff of the regional economic commissions from countries of those regions should be complied with in order to fill up existing vacancies in important sectoral programmes. His delegation also believed that the requirement of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity was compatible with the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with primary emphasis being placed on efficiency and productivity.

43. It was gratifying to note that the Joint Inspection Unit had recognized the concept of career service and the need for adequate retirement pensions in defining a career development system. The Secretary-General must initiate, as incentives for career development, short-term and long-term measures to strengthen the foundations of the system and at the same time ensure the continuity and stability of service called for by the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit. The promotion policy was the corner-stone of career development and must be based on a fair evaluation of the employee's performance and skills, his attitude towards his work, his relationship with management and an assessment of the prospects of the new position to which he was promoted in terms of further advancement. Existing staff members should be given preference in filling higher posts if they met the necessary requirements. The Secretariat must intensify its training and development programme so that existing skills might be improved and productivity increased within the context of the career-planning system.

44. His delegation recognized the role of job classification in career development as long as it formed a sound basis for the management of manpower resources. It could also be borne in mind in determining rates of remuneration in accordance with the Noblemaire principle. The concept of a five-year period to qualify staff for a career appointment appeared reasonable as long as the service was continuous and

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(Mr. Moreno-Salcedo, Philippines)

the staff member had achieved a high performance rating. His delegation would like to know the ratio of permanent to fixed-term staff in the Secretariat and whether that ratio suited the objective of career development.

45. The competitive examination for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category should be open to all qualified candidates on a universal basis. When the number of successful candidates outnumbered existing vacancies, a roster of those who had qualified should be used by the Secretary-General for priority reference in filling future vacancies. His delegation hoped to receive a report from the Secretary-General on the possibility of using various types of competitive methods for the selection of candidates other than at entry level. It also felt that there should be some kind of formula to give an employee credit for acquired experience, particularly when he had developed special skills. His delegation would follow with interest the modalities of the new seven-grade structure for the General Service category in New York and particularly its long-term viability for the promotion policy of General Service staff.

46. His delegation shared the hope of the Secretary-General that more women would be employed in the Secretariat to reach the target set under General Assembly resolution 33/143. That objective should be borne in mind by recruitment missions and since the proportion of women employed at Headquarters had attained the desired level, missions should concentrate on duty stations outside Headquarters.

47. The United Nations was staffed with employees from widely differing backgrounds who merged their efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Charter. Inevitably there would be demands on their part for personnel reforms, as had been witnessed over the past few days. The Committee should hear them with an open mind, without prejudicing its own sense of judgement, since the common and greater interests of the international community must prevail over particular views and objectives.

48. Ms. ERIKSSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and her own country, said that Member States must remember that international civil servants were independent of their respective Governments and countries and, accordingly, they should in no way try to influence the decisions of their nationals in the Secretariat, nor should they seek to influence the Secretary-General's decisions with respect to appointments and promotions. Those were matters that must be the sole responsibility of the Secretary-General once the General Assembly laid down the guidelines. A fundamental prerequisite to the strengthening of the United Nations was that Member States must feel confident about the professionalism and integrity of the Secretariat when they turned to the Organization for help.

49. The delegations of the Nordic countries had reservations with regard to some of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit on the principle of equitable geographical distribution, specifically the proposal that that principle should be applied in each section of the Secretariat. Such an across-the-board approach would make the Organization more rigid and substantially curtail the Secretary-General's flexibility in carrying out his functions under the Charter.

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(Ms. Eriksson, Sweden)

50. The aim of the JIU recommendation on reducing the number of permanent appointments and making greater use of fixed-term appointments was clearly to improve the geographical distribution of the Secretariat. The Nordic countries believed that acceptance of the proposal to increase the proportion of fixed-term contracts to at least 50 per cent would be an unfortunate development. In order to attract the most able candidates to the Secretariat, reasonable opportunities for career service must be provided. The possibility of career service was also an incentive to staff members to do their best once inside the system. The Nordic delegations agreed with the Secretary-General's comments on that subject, particularly his view that the final decision as to whether a permanent appointment should be granted should be based solely on the merits and suitability of the individual in relation to the Organization's needs.

51. She noted that the proportion of Member States that had reached their desirable ranges had improved substantially. It would seem therefore that the existing mechanisms were succeeding in improving the geographical distribution of the Secretariat. The initiative taken by the Office of Personnel Services in preparing a medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1983-1985 was a welcome complement to those mechanisms. Such a plan would be an important tool in implementing the recruitment policies laid down in previous Assembly resolutions concerning equitable geographical distribution.

52. Mr. HADID (Algeria) observed that the broad lines of a sound personnel policy had already been laid down but that that was only a point of departure. The systematic efforts undertaken in recent years needed to be pursued. The institution of a rational system, which took into account both the legitimate concerns of the staff and the necessity of making optimum use of the Organization's human and financial resources, was not an easy task. His delegation shared the view expressed by the Chairman of JIU to the effect that the General Assembly must continue to provide impetus and guidance in the formulation of personnel policy and to monitor its application. The participation of other organizations of the United Nations system in such an endeavour was also important because the reforms considered would be beneficial to them individually and to the system as a whole, and because they could make a valuable contribution in determining what reforms were desirable.

53. He noted with satisfaction the emergence of agreement between the JIU and ICSC on a growing number of issues. Such agreement was proof that the interaction between the two bodies was beginning to bear fruit.

54. The highest priority must be given to the implementation of the many decisions of the General Assembly with regard to the equitable geographical representation of Member States in the Secretariat. The circulation of information on vacancies at the earliest possible moment was an essential factor in improving equitable geographical distribution. His delegation appreciated the positive steps that had been taken towards that end, including the preparation of a three-year recruitment plan aimed, in particular, at redressing the situation of under-represented and unrepresented countries. However, improvement in terms of numbers alone was not

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(Mr. Hadid, Algeria)

enough; a parallel effort must be made to achieve equitable geographical representation in qualitative terms, i.e. in all departments and organizations and at the senior and policy-making levels. The principle of equitable geographical distribution must form the corner-stone of the Organization's personnel policy, and it was not incompatible either with the concern to secure the highest standards of competence and integrity or with the need to safeguard the independence of international civil servants.

55. His delegation supported the previous decisions of the Assembly concerning external recruitment by competitive examination to P-1 and P-2 posts, the competitive examination for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category and the objective of increasing the proportion of women employed in the Secretariat. However, the necessary precautions must be taken to ensure that the application of those decisions should not increase the under-representation of developing countries in the Secretariat in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In that connection, he noted the encouraging commitment given by the Secretary-General that the distribution of staff in all the major departments and offices of the Secretariat to ensure an appropriate balance would be closely monitored.

56. Turning to career development and related issues, he said that the studies before the Committee required further elaboration since they were based on an incomplete analysis and an inadequate understanding of the situation. Nevertheless, the broad lines of the main options had been identified and deserved careful consideration. His delegation recognized the importance of such questions and believed that the identification of clear-cut career patterns would help to boost staff morale. That process should not in any way delay a comprehensive review of the situation of General Service staff.

57. His delegation favoured maintaining the age of retirement at 60. With regard to the use of consultants, he emphasized the importance of streamlining the relevant procedures and, where the need to resort to consultants was duly established, of recruiting consultants on the broadest possible geographical basis.

58. Mr. GUBCSI (Hungary) said that there should be an organic interrelationship between budgeting, programme planning and implementation, and the composition of the Secretariat. That was why his delegation consistently emphasized the necessity of increasing the effectiveness of the staff in programme implementation and the need for improvements in the areas of recruitment, the composition of the Secretariat and staff management.

59. The General Assembly had adopted numerous resolutions and decisions on personnel questions among which special mention should be made of resolution 35/210 and decision 36/455. Significant steps had been taken by the Office of Personnel Services to implement the provisions of those resolutions and decisions, and progress had been made in achieving equitable geographical representation, increasing the ratio of fixed-term to permanent contracts and improving the proportion of women employed in the Secretariat, including in policy-making posts. However, much more remained to be done.

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(Mr. Gubcsi, Hungary)

60. Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter embodied the basic guidelines with regard to the equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly had further specified the objectives to be achieved in that regard. Despite the positive attitude of the senior officials of the Secretariat towards the under-representation of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, of the 11 countries concerned, one was still unrepresented, four were under-represented and six were within their desirable ranges. None was over-represented. As to the quality of posts occupied by nationals of Eastern European States, he pointed out that the mid-point of their weighted desirable range was 17,318 points and the actual staff position was 12,396 points. Further action was needed to remedy that situation. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the stated intention of the Secretary-General to head a Secretariat which was authentically international. His delegation favoured further efforts to bring unrepresented or under-represented countries within their desirable ranges and supported the conclusions and recommendations of JIU on that subject, as outlined in paragraphs 34 to 37 of document A/37/34. It also supported the justified demands of the developing countries and welcomed the steps taken by the Office of Personnel Services to improve their representation in the Secretariat.

61. As to the question of fixed-term versus permanent contracts, his Government's position was based on the requirements of the Charter and on the need to increase the effectiveness of the Organization. He strongly supported the conclusions and recommendations of JIU on that subject and rejected the view that an increase in the proportion of fixed-term contracts was inimical to an independent and impartial career service. On the contrary, an increase in the proportion of fixed-term contracts would facilitate the achievement of equitable geographical distribution, while a high proportion of permanent contracts hindered efforts in favour of unrepresented and under-represented countries, many of which were developing countries. In most cases, pressure for promotion, reclassification, salary increases and improved benefits was exerted by staff members with permanent contracts. The situation in other organizations, such as WHO, UNESCO and IAEA, proved that a high proportion of fixed-term contracts did not detract from the staff's ability to carry out their work. His delegation was convinced that the degree of dedication to the aims of the Organization was not determined by the type of contract held by the staff member. Where special knowledge or expertise was required for carrying out a specific task, a fixed-term contract was preferable since it could be allowed to expire once the work had been completed. His delegation endorsed the conclusion reached by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that there was no evidence that standards of integrity, impartiality and efficiency were any different in those organizations which had low proportions of career staff and that there was no ground for believing that standards would be higher if all staff were granted permanent contracts. It was confident that the senior officials of the Secretariat would seek to solve the problem in accordance with the spirit of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and not under the emotional influence of staff demands. His delegation would strongly oppose any attempt to limit the proportion of fixed-term contracts.

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(Mr. Gubcsi, Hungary)

62. There was a constant increase in the number of staff as a result of the establishment of new posts or the transfer of extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget. His delegation opposed that trend since a better distribution of work and greater efficiency on the part of staff should make it possible for existing staff members to perform new tasks as they arose.

63. His delegation regretted the late issuance of vacancy announcements and the length of the recruitment process. Vacancies should be announced simultaneously for internal and external candidates and the criteria used in selecting staff should be those laid down in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

64. An extension of the mandatory age of retirement from 60 to 65 was not acceptable to his delegation. Training facilities should be provided by the Organization only where absolutely necessary. The United Nations should not be transformed into an institution providing training free of charge.

65. The privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies were governed by the Charter. The issue should not be used for political purposes. The relevant Articles of the Charter applied equally to Member States and staff members and placed particular responsibility on States in which United Nations offices were situated.

66. His delegation could not support either a general 10-per-cent salary increase or a 5-per-cent increase for the Professional and higher categories. Lastly, referring to the statement made by the representative of the staff associations and unions of the United Nations Secretariat at the 26th meeting, he said that above and beyond the long list of demands and criticisms voiced by that representative, the Fifth Committee was entitled to expect some positive suggestions from the staff as to how staff performance might be improved and their effectiveness increased.

67. Mr. ESSY (Ivory Coast) said that his delegation attached great importance to personnel questions, especially the representation of unrepresented and under-represented States in the Secretariat. His country had previously been unrepresented but six Ivory Coast nationals had recently been recruited at the P-1 and P-2 levels following a competitive examination. It was, nevertheless, still under-represented. He paid a tribute to the Office of Personnel Services for the way in which it had administered the competitive examination and expressed the hope that the medium-term recruitment plan for 1983-1985 would result in an increase in the number of staff members from under-represented countries and further improvements in the geographical distribution of staff. Although the target of appointing nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries to fill 40 per cent of all the vacancies arising in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution had been attained, much remained to be done to bring such countries within their desirable ranges.

68. His delegation recognized that the recruitment process was not easy and that the placement of young staff members in posts where they could acquire useful qualifications was even less so. A national of his country who had been awarded

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(Mr. Essy, Ivory Coast)

high marks in the competitive examination had been offered an assignment in ESCAP. His Government was therefore surprised to learn of the systematic opposition of the Administration of ESCAP to the assignment and wished to receive an explanation in that regard. While priority was given in the regional economic commissions to nationals of the region concerned, a percentage of their staff came from outside the region. Referring to table 5 of document A/37/143 concerning the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution by office and region, he observed that, of all the regional commissions, only ECA had staff members from all the geographical regions and that there was not a single African working in ESCAP. His delegation deplored the attitude of ESCAP and wished to receive clarification with regard to that situation, which was at variance with the Charter and the personnel principles and practices of the Organization, including the mobility of staff.

69. Mr. FRASER (Guyana) expressed his delegation's pleasure at the appointment of Miss Doss, a distinguished representative of the women of the Organization, as Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services. His delegation had found the introductory statement by the Assistant Secretary-General to be very encouraging, in particular, the announcement of a medium-term recruitment plan aimed at promoting the representation of unrepresented and under-represented States and increasing the proportion of women in the Secretariat. The increase in the percentage of women in the Secretariat during the reporting period was not satisfactory and genuine progress had to be made in the next few years if the modest target of 25 per cent was to be attained. The proportion of women at the D-1 level and above remained unacceptably low and efforts must be redoubled to improve that situation. His delegation was prepared to support an increased target of 30 per cent by the year 1985, which marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. In the interim, a system of accelerated promotions should be instituted. His delegation was convinced that there were enough qualified and talented women in the Organization to make such a measure feasible. The establishment of child-care facilities at various duty stations would also help to achieve the goals set with regard to the employment of women.

70. While the arguments adduced for changing the mandatory age of retirement might have merit for individual countries, they were by no means valid for the majority of Member States. At a time when efforts were being made to redress the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the Secretariat, his delegation viewed the proposals for an increase in the mandatory age of retirement as counter-productive. Previous rulings of the General Assembly must be scrupulously adhered to. The overall retirement policy should certainly be streamlined but there was also a need to be sensitive to staff welfare and career development needs and to give priority to the task of redressing the existing geographical imbalance in the Secretariat.

71. The oral and written views of the staff as presented to the Fifth Committee needed careful appraisal. The shortcomings of the United Nations system which had previously been highlighted by sources outside the Organization were now being

(Mr. Fraser, Guyana)

frankly highlighted from within. The general problems to which attention had been drawn were not unfamiliar to the Committee, and the underlying causes were also known to it. Urgent remedial action should therefore be taken.

72. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said he believed that the Chairman had received a telegram from a staff organization at the United Nations Office at Geneva relating to the statement that had been made by a so-called staff representative at an earlier meeting of the Committee. In view of the offending nature of that statement, he requested that the telegram should be circulated to members in the hope that it might clarify the position of the staff representative in question.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that he had, in fact, received several communications relating to the matter raised by the representative of Panama. He wished to consult with him as to the proper procedure to be followed.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.