



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th 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 3.20 p.m.

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

1. Mr. BERRY (Australia) said that, since the agenda item on the report of the International Civil Service Commission and those concerning the Joint Inspection Unit and personnel questions were closely related, he would address all three in his comments. In fact, it emerged from the statement made to the Committee by the staff representative on 4 November 1982 under agenda item 111 that what permeated all those matters was clearly the high degree of unhappiness at all levels of the United Nations staff. The major cause of that unhappiness was remuneration.

2. With regard to remuneration, the Committee had before it an array of often contradictory documents: the ratio between the level of United Nations salaries and that of the comparator civil service was variously estimated at 106.8:100, 116.4:100, and even 134.6:100 according to the author. Moreover, suggested or demanded increases in salaries ranged from 3 to 10 per cent. Given those circumstances, it was not surprising that ICSC had not been able to reach agreement on any recommendation.

3. It was the view of his delegation that the first question raised by a possible salary increase concerned the financial means of the Organization. Indeed, it seemed difficult to discuss an agenda item entitled "Financial emergency of the United Nations" when considering an increase which, even if it was only 5 per cent, would result in increased expenditures of \$US 45.5 million system-wide for 1983 alone.

4. As to the political aspects of the possible increase, it must be borne in mind that any increase in staff expenditures would be reflected in a reduction of other United Nations activities, and that the developing countries would be the first to feel the impact. It was also important to consider the principle of the collective responsibility of Member States, whatever their level of development or their political orientation. Responsibility was precisely what was needed in the present occasion, since the financial emergency of the United Nations was only a reflection of the recession affecting all countries of the world.

5. His country had not been unaffected by that recession and his Government had had to adopt austerity measures, which had obviously affected the salaries of all workers. In the circumstances, it would be curious and unpopular at the national level to increase the salaries of international civil servants, which already seemed very high.

6. Having said that, there was not much more to add concerning proposals of ICSC which would result in increased expenditure. Some aspects of the report gave rise to the thought that it might be possible to modify calculations and procedures with regard to allowances and thereby arrive at a more efficient distribution of staff-related funds. One example was the expatriate factor in staff salaries. Current practice was to increase the salaries of expatriates working for the United Nations

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(Mr. Berry, Australia)

by 15 to 20 per cent above those of their American counterparts in order to compensate for the intangible inconveniences of their expatriate situation. It might well be time to institutionalize that salary factor and to make it a separate allowance, which would make it possible to rationalize existing procedures and to obtain significant savings without reducing overall remuneration. That solution would modify the pensions of retired civil servants but retirees were not required to live outside their country of origin. ICSC would be able to elaborate means of implementing such an allowance. Moreover, reduced pension payments could only be of assistance to the Joint Staff Pension Fund.

7. His delegation did not have any firm ideas about the retirement age. It seemed that the limit of 60 should not be applied blindly, since it was not necessarily in the best interests of the Organization to forcibly retire capable civil servants, who should be given the choice of retiring at age 60 or age 65. His delegation endorsed the methods proposed by ICSC for adjusting the pensions of former civil servants according to the tax rates of their countries of origin.

8. Turning to other factors related to remuneration, he agreed with the conclusion reached by ICSC in paragraph 197 of its report that the education grant should remain an expatriate benefit. CCAQ had proposed that the grant should be paid for a period of one year to expatriates who were reassigned to their home country, but that would result in anomalies and create more tensions than did the current system.

9. On the question of the children's allowance, for which a possible increase posed the same financial problems as an increase in salaries, it might be asked if the Organization should in a sense encourage a relatively privileged class of civil servants to have children, when many countries were using all possible means to encourage family planning.

10. In concluding his remarks on the remuneration of civil servants, he raised the problem of supplementary payments made to international civil servants. That practice was clearly of some concern when payments were intended to influence civil servants and divert them from their dedication to impartiality. The inverse practice of some countries of taxing the salaries of their nationals working for international organizations was to be deplored even further. The Noblemaire principle was a general rule but Governments, in seeking to present the best candidates for certain senior positions, might find them in their own civil service at grades higher than the grade defined by ICSC or in the private sector. It was neither realistic nor equitable to expect such persons to forgo part of their income. The answer to that problem was not necessarily to be found in the absolute application of a principle or invariable solutions.

11. After the question of remuneration, his delegation attached particular importance to the matter of career development, to which ICSC and JIU had devoted considerable time at the thirty-sixth session. Their reports, however, were not always compatible. His delegation, also, had reservations concerning the widespread use of competitive examinations, since it seemed difficult to develop

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(Mr. Berry, Australia)

fair tests for all candidates, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. It endorsed the cautious approach taken by ICSC and was attracted to the performance evaluation system that ICSC had developed.

12. JIU had suggested that there should be an increase in the number of fixed-term contracts for United Nations employees, which seemed difficult to reconcile with the principle of a single, independent and career-oriented international civil service. It was also difficult to respect the standards concerning the quality of candidates if the rule of equitable geographical distribution was strictly applied, in particular for higher grades in the Secretariat. In that connection, he agreed with the views expressed by JIU.

13. His delegation applauded the efforts undertaken so far to increase the number of women employees in the Secretariat and took note of the steady increase in the number of job opportunities for women. More could be done in that field, especially in the higher grades.

14. Lastly, with regard to conditions of employment in the field, he agreed in general with the comments of ICSC. The long-awaited report of the Secretary-General on the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials (A/C.5/37/34) had finally been issued. It was an eloquent report, to which Australia could only add its condemnation of Member States which participated in the drafting of international human rights instruments, while blatantly violating those same principles, not only with regard to their own populations but also with regard to the civil servants of the very organizations they claimed to uphold.

AGENDA ITEM 106: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY  
(continued) (A/37/547 and A/C.5/37/23)

15. Mr. YAKOVENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the information provided by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report on co-ordination among the various United Nations agencies (A/37/547) was very valuable. He felt, however, that such a report should be based on the most recent events, should deal with the most immediate questions and should thus make for closer co-ordination in the United Nations system. From that standpoint, he found that the report under review simply described the current situation and was somewhat short on analysis; one might have expected more general observations on the practices of the various agencies, more intensive use of the figures provided and conclusions conducive to making economies.

16. A close look at the question of co-ordination revealed that by no means all the possibilities available had been exhausted. Many areas had not been touched by efforts at harmonization, such as the reduction of the growth rate of budgets, the impact of inflation and exchange-rate variations on budgets, the financing of new activities by eliminating duplication of effort and activities that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, the improvement of staff productivity, the reduction of the growth in staffing levels, and the like. In so far as the budget was concerned, however, he was gratified by the discipline observed in preparing the proposed programme budget of the United Nations for the period 1982-1983,

(Mr. Yakovenko, USSR)

while hoping that that discipline would be even greater in the next programme budget. The Advisory Committee had noted the same trend in other agencies, including WMO, UPU, ITU and IMO.

17. The concern caused by the late payment of the contributions of some countries clearly showed that the rate of budgetary growth of several agencies inflicted an excessive burden on Member States. Given that difficult situation, economy measures were all the more important. The Advisory Committee had mentioned some such measures which had been successful: ILO had managed to economize its resources, the General Assembly of WHO had decided to shorten its sessions, and IAEA had also taken effective measures. The other agencies could learn from those initiatives. Another major way of economizing was to use staff, whose cost accounted for 80 per cent of the regular budget, more efficiently. In that connection, he mentioned the efforts undertaken by some agencies, such as FAO and ICAO, to reduce their staffing levels. On the other hand, there was a marked growth in staffing levels at ITU and WIPO. The USSR would favour a freeze on staffing levels in United Nations agencies, thus making it possible to make better use of existing resources by increasing productivity through the introduction of administrative improvements and output requirements.

18. An examination of the expenditures of various agencies showed that a good deal of the growth in the budget was caused by inflation in those countries where most of the expenditures were incurred. According to the Advisory Committee, of the \$1.9 million increase in the ICAO budget for 1982-1983, a total of \$1.3 million was attributable to inflation. UPU expected an increase of 4.7 per cent in staff costs for the period 1982-1983, an increase caused almost entirely by inflation. The Secretary-General's report on the question, which dealt only with the effects of inflation, was superficial, and had suggested no remedies, not even partial ones. It should be borne in mind that not all Member States were equally responsible for inflation. Many wanted the expenditures caused by inflation to be covered by economies, budgetary arrangements and voluntary contributions from the developed market-economy countries in which the various United Nations agencies were situated.

19. Generally speaking, his delegation believed that there were already good co-ordination tools available and that all that needed to be done was to apply them. The best measure of success must be how much they made it possible to save.

20. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) felt that the report of the Advisory Committee was useful for its concise presentation of a wealth of information on co-ordination questions. Perhaps the Advisory Committee could be asked to expand the information published, particularly with reference to voluntary assistance programmes.

21. His delegation was seriously concerned about the continuing increase in regular budget expenditures on the part of United Nations agencies. As indicated in table A.2, the total net assessed contributions of Member States had almost tripled since 1974. On the other hand, table D indicated that voluntary contributions had declined by some \$75 million in 1982. It appeared that the excessive growth in assessed contributions was beginning to have an adverse affect on the ability to provide voluntary contributions at previous levels.

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

22. The observations on management improvement and economy measures at ILO in paragraph 22 were extremely welcome, and the Advisory Committee should broaden its examination to cover other agencies. At a time of budgetary stringency, all organizations of the United Nations system should step up the exchange of information on measures to reduce their operational costs.

23. The Advisory Committee might also include in its annual report supplementary information on such questions as the ratio of posts between Headquarters and the field, or between General Service and Professional staff, and the percentages of regular budgets accounted for by personnel costs and by administrative costs.

24. Reducing of conference-services costs by shortening meetings would be a good way of lowering regular budget expenditures. The experiment undertaken by WHO in that area, mentioned in paragraph 52 of the report, was extremely valuable. All agencies should attempt to reduce the number of their meetings and thus enable Governments to make substantial savings. A few weeks earlier, during the consideration of agenda items 108 and 109, some delegations had expressed their opposition to such reductions. It was therefore all the more interesting to hear that an intergovernmental body had reduced the duration of its meetings and had found that experiment to be a success.

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and 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 and A/C.5/37/34)

25. Mr. SRITHIRATH (Lao People's Democratic Republic), referring to the comments of the Secretary-General on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat (A/37/378/Add.1), commended the efforts made by the Secretary-General in that field. However, he noted with regret that there was an imbalance both at the national level and at the regional level. Thus, the Asian continent, which was the most populous, had been under-represented in the Secretariat throughout the 36 years that the Organization had been functioning. His country, a Member of the United Nations since 1955, had proposed a candidate for several vacant posts which he could have filled by reason of his qualifications; each time, the post had been given to a candidate from a country already well represented.

26. The use of a double standard, making the United Nations a monopoly of the privileged States, would lose the Organization the trust of small Member States which viewed it as a high forum in which they could assert and defend their rights. It was essential to take into account the legitimate interests of all Member States, as stipulated in the Charter and the Staff Rules, and for that reason, absolute priority should be granted first to qualified candidates from unrepresented countries, and next, to those from under-represented countries.

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27. Mr. KRISTIANSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the 10 States members of the European Economic Community, commended the Secretary-General and the Office of Personnel Services for improving the geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143). The Ten welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to develop a medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1983-1985 in order that unrepresented and under-represented States might reach at least the lower limit of their desirable range by the end of 1985. They hoped that specific recruitment methods would be prepared for each country considered, without losing sight of the criteria of efficiency and integrity set forth in Article 101 of the Charter.

28. With respect to the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on equitable geographical distribution, known as the "Bryntsev reports" (A/36/407 and A/36/347), he noted that the arguments put forward by the Inspectors for reducing the number of permanent contracts (Recommendation 3) were not supported by the data provided by the Secretary-General in his report (A/37/378/Add.1). Paragraph 11 of that document stated that among posts subject to geographical distribution, the ratio of fixed-term contracts to the total number of contracts was higher than ever (39.5 per cent in 1982).

29. One of the arguments put forward by the Inspectors in favour of fixed-term contracts was that other organizations of the United Nations system used them extensively. However, each of those organizations had its own mandate and its own method of operation, and therefore each had different staff needs. The Ten therefore agreed with the International Civil Service Commission that the ratio between the two types of appointments should be established on an organization-by-organization basis. The Commission also pointed out in its report (A/37/30) that in the organization which traditionally employed the highest percentage of fixed-term staff, about half of those staff members had over five years of service. One should not overlook the fact that the principle of the independence of the international civil service would be better served by permanent contracts, nor the demoralizing effect of fixed-term contracts as pointed out by the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations in document A/C.5/37/29.

30. With respect to the possibility of introducing a new type of interruptible (rotation) fixed-term contract to improve career prospects (Recommendation 4), it seemed reasonable to request the International Civil Service Commission to study the questions of principle which arose in connection with the use of special contracts for seconded staff. In the matter of career development, the Ten welcomed the changes in the Staff Rules which permitted recognition of the seniority in grade of seconded officials and were in favour of competitive methods for the recruitment of Professional staff.

31. Turning to the subject of the employment of women in the Professional category and above, he observed that there was still much to be done. He therefore suggested that the target of 25 per cent established in General Assembly resolution 35/210 should be increased to 30 per cent before the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. He supported the designation, in accordance with the provisions of section V, paragraph 5 of resolution 35/210, of a senior official to co-ordinate functions with respect to the appointment and promotion of women. He supported

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(Mr. Kristiansen, Denmark)

the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that Member States should propose women candidates but believed that the final responsibility for their recruitment rested with the Secretary-General, who should take additional measures.

32. Mr. MURARGY (Mozambique), referring to paragraph 10 of document A/C.5/37/24, listing the staff members arrested, detained or missing and indicating that the Mozambican staff member Gregorio Homero Altamirano had been arrested on 10 September 1982, recalled that the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Mozambique had published, as an official document, a note verbale providing detailed information on the circumstances of that arrest. Mr. Altamirano, recruited by FAO to carry out duties at a very high level in the Mozambican timber industry, had, in performing of his duties, engaged in various malfeasances and had been convicted of theft and destruction of incriminating documents. He had been expelled from the territory on 13 September 1982, escorted by the special representative of the Director-General of FAO.

33. Mrs. IDER (Mongolia), recalling that under the terms of General Assembly resolution 35/210, the Secretariat had to recruit during a two-year period experts from unrepresented and under-represented countries, said that during the past year, nationals from only two unrepresented countries had been recruited to the Secretariat, while the number of staff members from over-represented countries had increased. Mongolia, which was among the 17 unrepresented countries, would like the Secretariat to implement the resolution more vigorously. It also believed that the age of retirement should remain at 60, since any change in that age limit would impede the implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/210 regarding the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

34. Her delegation believed that there should be a review of the practice of recruiting new staff members at lower levels and that it was absolutely necessary, to that end, to reduce the number of permanent contracts and grant more fixed-term contracts.

35. She welcomed the success achieved thus far in increasing the number of women in the Professional category and above. She was also gratified at the number of nationals of developing countries occupying senior posts.

36. Mr. GUDMUNDSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the latter were deeply committed to equal treatment of men and women and, with a view to guaranteeing such treatment, had adopted a number of legislative measures. They therefore noted with concern that the proportion of women in posts in the Professional category and above had increased by only 0.6 per cent by comparison with the preceding year. Greater efforts were therefore necessary in order to reach within a year or two the target of 25 per cent, which should not, moreover, be considered a final figure.

37. The Nordic countries welcomed the appointment of three women at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels. The proportion of women in senior posts remained, however, extremely small, since 71 per cent of women in

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(Mr. Gudmundsson, Iceland)

posts subject to geographical distribution were at the P-3 level. That demonstrated that very little progress towards equal employment of women had been made. It was true that the United Nations reflected the policies pursued in Member States, where there were still too few responsible positions available to women. Nevertheless, it was incumbent on the United Nations to set an example in that important area.

38. The Nordic countries were aware that, in order to achieve the goal set by the General Assembly in resolution 33/143 and confirmed in the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1980, Member States must assist the international organizations in every possible way in their search for suitable women candidates. They shared the opinion of ICSC that problems relating to career development and training for women should form an integral part of the general training and career development programmes of the organizations. It would nevertheless be appropriate to institute special programmes in order to enable underprivileged groups, such as women, to improve their career prospects.

39. The organizations should designate soon a senior official to co-ordinate measures for women, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/210. It was not enough to adopt general policies; even more important was the monitoring of policy directives concerning the appointment, promotion and assignment of women so as to ensure that they were applied effectively, and to assist individual women in the Professional category to solve any problems they encountered in that respect.

40. The Nordic countries supported the request that the Secretary-General should include in his annual report on the composition of the Secretariat, statistical information on the percentage of women on promotion and appointment lists for every level with a view to ensuring that women had equal opportunity for advancement and appointment, particularly at the higher levels.

41. It was important to strengthen the administrative support for the Panel to Investigate Allegations of Discriminatory Treatment in the United Nations Secretariat established by administrative instruction ST/AI/246. The Panel played an important role, as was borne out by the number of cases brought before it, in particular by female staff members. Such strengthening should be feasible within existing resources.

42. The Nordic countries fully supported the recommendation of JIU that the Secretary-General and the executive heads should examine additional measures that would advance the attainment of the policy directives concerning the appointment, promotion and definition of women in the Secretariat.

43. Mr. PAVLOVSKY (Czechoslovakia) expressed his conviction that a Secretariat based on equitable geographical representation would be better able to accomplish its tasks. His delegation commended the Secretary-General on his determination to assure that all Member States achieved their desirable ranges by the end of 1985, and welcomed the medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1983-1985 conceived for that purpose. The progress made so far, however, had been very slow; as JIU noted in its report (A/37/378), at the present rate of change it would take at

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(Mr. Pavlovsky, Czechoslovakia)

least nine years for the unrepresented and under-represented countries to reach the mid-point of their desirable ranges. His delegation appreciated certain positive steps taken by the Office of Personnel Services in recent months, including the organization of competitive examinations in under-represented countries in order to recruit candidates for P-1/P-2 posts.

44. Czechoslovakia, a founder member of the Organization, was among the under-represented countries, and the position of other countries in the same regional group had barely changed. Recommendation 2 of JIU, whereby at least 60 per cent of vacant posts should be filled by the nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries, therefore seemed entirely reasonable.

45. A similar situation existed with respect to senior and policy-making posts. The developing countries and the countries of Eastern Europe were clearly under-represented in 11 departments and major offices of the Secretariat, while 25 Western countries were over-represented in each of them. Like JIU, his delegation believed that the action taken to attain the objectives set by the General Assembly in that area had been inadequate. In many cases, candidates presented by Czechoslovakia had not been accepted despite their qualifications. Such a situation, which was often the result of practices in individual departments and offices, weakened in the end every positive effort to carry out necessary changes in the overall composition of the Secretariat. It was indeed important that the Secretary-General should have flexibility in applying, in the interest of the Organization, the principle of equitable geographical distribution with respect to recruitment, but such flexibility should not be boundless and the exceptions should be temporary and limited. That was why it was vital to apply the principle to every entity of the Organization.

46. Progress had undoubtedly been made where the representation of women in the United Nations Secretariat was concerned. However, in that area too the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be observed.

47. His delegation shared the view of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that there was no evidence of a different degree of effectiveness in organizations with a low proportion of staff on permanent contracts. A reduction in the number of permanent contracts, which was in the interests of Member States, was opposed mainly by the Secretariat staff. But the interests of the staff must yield to those of Member States. That was true also of attempts to limit outside recruitment. His delegation would therefore welcome the introduction of the new type of interruptible fixed-term contract recommended by JIU.

48. It was necessary to limit in absolute terms the cost of the consultants and experts used by the Organization by reducing their total number and to achieve, at the same time, their equitable geographical distribution. Greater use should be made of national institutions, and the recruitment of consultants and experts and the results of their work should be more closely monitored.

(Mr. Pavlovsky, Czechoslovakia)

49. His delegation had reservations concerning the report submitted by the staff unions and associations of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/37/24) and the unprecedented way in which it had been introduced in the Committee by a staff representative. His delegation had the impression that the staff unions and associations of the Secretariat were assuming the position of an arbiter and judging the action taken by the totality of Member States and the positions adopted by General Assembly organs. In its view, the Secretary-General, who was, under the Charter, the only representative of the Secretariat in relation to Member States, was already devoting more than sufficient attention to the problems of the Secretariat staff.

50. Czechoslovakia respected the privileges and immunities of the officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations. It expected in return that international civil servants would fulfil the obligations they assumed.

51. Mr. PAPENIAH (Central African Republic) welcomed the progress which had been made on the composition of the Secretariat and the representation of women therein. One of the obstacles which stood in the way of full achievement of the targets set by the General Assembly in those areas was that certain departments continued to be the private reserves of one country or a group of countries in violation of resolution 35/210 which had stipulated that no post should be regarded as heritable. There was accordingly a need to apply the principle of equitable geographical distribution to all entities of the Organization.

52. While it was difficult to apply that principle generally because of resistance within the Secretariat, it was nevertheless possible. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the formulation of a three-year recruitment plan for the all-round application of the principle. In her statement, the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had stressed that the difficulties should not be minimized and there was no doubt that they would in fact increase if entire sectors of the Secretariat continued to avoid compliance with the principle for no valid reason; the inevitable result would be a reduction in the number of posts available for implementing the recruitment plan.

53. Concerning the General Service, the Secretary-General's proposal to reserve for them 50 per cent of the posts at the Assistant Officer level instead of 30 per cent was likely to make equitable geographical distribution more difficult as the majority of such staff members were from a very small number of privileged States; their promotion, however well-merited, should not be at the expense of other Member States. His delegation could not support that proposal.

54. Only one national of the Central African Republic occupied a post in the Secretariat and his country continued to be under-represented although the lower limit of the desirable range was only two posts and the mid-point eight posts. He hoped that the steps taken by the Secretary-General would lead to more encouraging results in 1983.

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55. Mr. M'TESA (Zambia) considered that the Organization would not be able to attain its lofty goals and to contribute to the enhancement of the general well-being of the world as a whole unless its programmes were implemented by capable and dedicated personnel. It was therefore to be hoped that the Committee would look into staff grievances in an impartial and constructive manner.

56. Concerning the difficulties mentioned by the Secretary-General in giving priority to candidates from unrepresented and under-represented States when a specific post had to be filled urgently, he believed that there would always be a target State or States which would have a candidate available if a candidate from the group originally selected was not available immediately. Moreover, the requirement that candidates must have 10 to 15 years' experience in a supervisory capacity was often an insurmountable obstacle for young candidates from recently created States who otherwise had the necessary qualifications and ability. The reduction in the number of unrepresented countries from 19 on 31 June 1981 to 17 on 30 June 1982 and the number of under-represented States from 26 on 23 June 1981 to 24 on 30 June 1982 must be accelerated.

57. Thanks to the vigorous steps taken by the Secretary-General, the proportion of women employed in the Secretariat had increased; the proportion of women in posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels had risen from 4.3 per cent to 7.8 per cent in one year. The target of 25 per cent had not, however, been reached, apparently owing largely to lack of information.

58. Zambia accepted the need for constant review and evaluation of the structure of the Secretariat and would support all efforts to ensure its efficiency, in particular, by raising the morale of the staff who had an extremely important role to play whether they belonged to the Professional or General Service category. There must be a career development programme to provide an opportunity for staff members already within the system to move up the ladder on the basis of merit; that did not, of course, preclude candidates being recruited from outside the United Nations system at a higher level.

59. Posts should not be reserved for specific regions or countries and account should be taken of the fact that priority in recruitment should be given to unrepresented and under-represented countries. In that connection, the situation of the African countries which had very few nationals at decision-making levels must be improved as soon as possible. His delegation had strong reservations about the desirable range given to South Africa.

60. Mr. BOUSHEV (Bulgaria) referring to the view expressed at a previous meeting to the effect that the Committee was not sufficiently informed and did not seek to be informed on staff matters, considered that the Committee could not and should not go into the details of such issues; those issues were the responsibility of the United Nations bodies and officials concerned. The role of the Committee was to make its views known through a more general approach; the duty of the Secretary-General and the Office of Personnel Services was to translate such views into action as had been done on a number of occasions by the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services.

(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

61. The problems which arose fell into two categories: one was specific to the United Nations system while the other was universal. The first included problems engendered by the international character of the United Nations whose staff members were nationals of Member States but at the same time had pledged themselves to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interest of the United Nations in view in accordance with regulation 1.1 of the Staff Regulations.

62. A second specific aspect of the international civil service was the need to respect the principle of equitable geographical distribution as set forth in the Charter. The General Assembly had established a system of desirable ranges for Member States. Application of that principle should leave no room for problems. It was clear, however, from table B in document A/37/143 that, on 30 June 1982, there had been 17 unrepresented and 24 under-represented Member States totalling 26 per cent of Member States. Nothing could justify such an unjust and discriminatory distribution. If resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 remained dead letters, the efficiency of those responsible for their implementation could be strongly questioned. In that connection, recommendation 2 in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/378) was a timely way out of the deadlock.

63. The legal problems ensuing from the arrest and detention of international civil servants were also specific in their essence. The recent report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/37/34) drew attention to an increasingly alarming situation. Thus, in mockery of General Assembly resolution 36/232, the armed forces of one Member State had recently arrested almost 10 times more international civil servants than were included in all the other cases of arrest and detention taken together. That fact had distorted the perspective of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination which had devoted to one, already solved, case of detention as many pages as to all the 158 cases reported in annex II, thus detracting from the spirit of objectivity and justice so badly needed in the approach to the problem.

64. Among the problems of a universal character confronted by the international civil service, were such problems as the inadequate participation of women in the Secretariat, which was by itself a reflection of the general situation of women in the world. The United Nations should serve as a model in that regard and should strive to achieve the target set by General Assembly resolution 33/143 as quickly as possible.

65. Difficulties deriving from the need to work in foreign countries, in a socio-cultural environment sometimes very different from that of the home country, were the common lot of international civil servants and members of delegations, the difference being that the latter must show understanding for the former while at the same time ensuring that the well-being of their own people was not prejudiced. His delegation understood that the salary increase requested by the Secretary-General for United Nations civil servants had to be granted but would appreciate information on what a 1 per cent increase in salaries would mean in absolute terms.

(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

66. A third problem which affected both international civil servants and all who were highly qualified in a specific field of activity was that of overqualification which made reclassification difficult and led those affected to seek permanent contracts. His delegation considered that the experience gained by international civil servants within the Organization could subsequently be placed at the service of their own countries. The duration of contracts should not interfere with the requirement for equitable geographical representation.

67. The problem of the retirement age, which was linked to the general increase in average life expectancy throughout the world, was not specific to the United Nations Secretariat alone; the question should be resolved on the basis of the national demographic, social and legal experience of Member States.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.