



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

later: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 112: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)
(A/37/30; A/C.5/37/L.38/Rev.1 and L.43)

1. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that, while draft resolution A/C.5/37/38/Rev.1 contained a number of important provisions, his delegation was unable to endorse certain paragraphs either because they were inappropriate or because they would lead to unwarranted growth in United Nations expenditure and it would therefore vote against the draft. In the past, such resolutions had been adopted by consensus, but in the case of the draft resolution before the Committee there had been a lack of co-operation on the part of the sponsors.

2. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that his delegation had been pleased with the consultations on draft resolution A/C.5/37/L.38/Rev.1 and had hoped that it would be possible to reach a consensus on that text. It would have been able to accept section III, paragraph 3 if the additional costs resulting from the increase in the children's allowance could have been absorbed by the Secretary-General from within the resources available to him in the current biennium. Regrettably, its efforts to have that concept included in the draft resolution had failed. Since the draft resolution would give rise to increased costs to be borne by Member States, it had been obliged to request a vote and would itself vote against the draft. It calculated that, as of 11 December, the General Assembly had had before it additional requirements or revised estimates totalling almost \$26 million and conference-servicing costs totalling almost \$25 million, the latter being calculated on a full-cost basis.

3. With regard to the level of staff remuneration, he noted that according to ST/IC/82/39/Add.3 only 20 per cent, 28 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, of the staff members selected at random to complete the three questionnaires needed for the cost-of-living survey at Headquarters being conducted by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had taken the trouble to respond.

4. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that draft resolution A/C.5/37/L.38/Rev.1 was an acceptable compromise and his delegation would therefore vote in favour of it.

5. Mr. HEMMINGS (Australia) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Committee, even though it had reservations with respect to section II, paragraph 2.

6. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) said that his delegation would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.5/37/L.38/Rev.1 because it represented a delicate balance between the economic concerns of Member States and the technical arguments put forward by ICSC in favour of selective improvements in the conditions of service of international civil servants.

7. Draft resolution A/C.5/37/L.38/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted by 79 votes to 10, with 6 abstentions.

8. Mr. LÖSCHNER (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution since it endorsed most of its operative paragraphs. However, it considered section II, paragraph 2, redundant, and in section IV, paragraph 5, it would have preferred the word "Recommends" instead of the word "Decides", since the interests of under-represented States, such as his own country, should be regarded as overriding concerns.

9. Mr. OKEYO (Japan) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because it had reservations with respect to section II, paragraph 2, section III, paragraph 3, and section IV, paragraph 5.

10. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded consideration of agenda item 112.

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/37/9 and Corr.1 and Corr.2; A/C.5/37/16, 90 and Add.1; A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1 and L.41)

(a) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (continued)

11. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados), speaking in his capacity as Vice-Chairman, said that in the light of the recommendation made by ACABQ in its report (A/37/674) and on the basis of the additional consultations that had taken place following the introduction of the draft amendments in document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1, it had been agreed that it was desirable for the Committee to adopt the second draft amendment.

12. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) suggested that the word "uniform" should be deleted from the first draft amendment in order to take the interests of developing countries into account. His delegation also had reservations with respect to the second draft amendment but was willing to wait until the matter was considered once again the following year.

13. Mr. Maycock (Barbados) took the Chair

14. The CHAIRMAN said that concerns similar to those voiced by the Kenyan representative had been raised during the consultations on the first amendment, but it had been thought that the inclusion of the words "bearing in mind all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly" would satisfy them.

15. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) said that, while he appreciated the inclusion of a reference to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, he still strongly supported the Kenyan amendment. He also proposed the inclusion, immediately following the words "General Assembly", of the phrase "and the views expressed by delegations in the Fifth Committee during the debate at the thirty-seventh session".

16. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the first amendment should be altered to call simply for "a study on the age of separation"; he took it that members had no

(The Chairman)

objection to the Ghanaian representative's suggestion, and suggested that that, too, should be accepted.

17. It was so decided.

18. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that he strongly disagreed with the growing tendency to postpone decisions on important matters to later sessions. He saw no need for the amendment proposed in paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1, despite the Advisory Committee's reservations: the issue concerned was clear, and the Pension Board had made a firm recommendation. Special consideration might have to be given to the case of the Inspectors, but the Assembly should decide at its current session whether to extend the opportunity to join the Fund to the Chairman of ACABQ and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ICSC.

19. Accordingly, he proposed the addition of the words "if they so desire" at the end of supplementary article B recommended by the Board, for adoption and the deletion of the second amendment proposed in document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1.

20. Mr. KUTTNER (United States of America) said that his delegation would require 24 hours' notice, in accordance with the rules of procedure, before taking any decision on the Panamanian proposal. He needed instructions from his Government on the possibility of treating the members of JIU differently from the Chairman of ACABQ and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ICSC.

21. After a procedural discussion, the CHAIRMAN suggested that the best way to accommodate the Panamanian proposal would be to take a separate vote on the second amendment proposed in document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1.

22. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) and Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that they understood the procedure suggested by the Chairman to mean that, if the second amendment was rejected by the Committee, the Panamanian proposal would automatically be adopted.

23. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon), explaining his vote before the vote, said that the reservations expressed by ACABQ were not sufficient reason to prevent the Chairman of ACABQ, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ICSC and the members of JIU from joining the Fund if they so wished. On the understanding that those officials had been chosen by the Board for illustrative purposes, and that the opportunity to join the Fund would not be restricted to them alone, he would support the position advocated by the Panamanian representative.

24. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the second amendment proposed in document A/C.5/37/L.40.Rev.1.

25. There were 31 votes in favour, 31 against and 24 abstentions.

26. The amendment was rejected.

27. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that the split in the vote showed that delegations had not understood what they had been voting on. He therefore proposed that a second vote should be taken.
28. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the provisions of rule 133 of the rules of procedure clearly showed that a new vote was unnecessary. He therefore requested the representative of Panama not to press for a second vote.
29. After a procedural discussion in which Mrs. DORSET (Trinidad and Tobago), Mr. LANDAU (Austria), Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) and the CHAIRMAN participated, Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that he would withdraw his proposal.
30. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the remaining draft amendments in document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1, as orally revised.
31. It was so decided.
32. THE CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in annex XI to the report of the Board, as amended by document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1.
33. Mr. KUTTNER (United States) said that on 10 December his delegation had proposed that article 26 of the regulations of the Fund should be retained. Since it would be deleted if the draft resolution before the Committee was adopted, he requested a vote on the draft resolution.
34. The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 85 votes to 1, with 15 abstentions.
35. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that his delegation had abstained during the vote because he would have preferred paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/37/L.40/Rev.1 to have been deleted. The officials referred to in the report of the Fund had every right to receive a pension. By adopting paragraph 1 the Committee had upset the sensitive balance on which the report had been based. His delegation objected in particular to the provision by which the rate of accumulation for staff members joining the United Nations after 1 January 1983 would be 1.5 per cent during each of the first five years of contributory service to a retirement, and 1.75 per cent during each of the next five years. That provision would reduce the pension of a staff member joining the United Nations after 1 January 1983 as compared to that of a staff member joining before that date which was an unjust situation and his delegation hoped that it would not lead to problems later.
36. Mr. KUTTNER (United States) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because of the financial implications of the deletion of article 26 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The United Nations would lose about \$1 million and member organizations about \$8 million as a result of that measure, and that was totally unacceptable.

37. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the Committee had taken a decision which clearly provided that supplementary article B would apply as from 1 January 1983 to the Chairman of ACABQ, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of ICSC and to the members of JIU. In his note (A/C.5/37/90), the Secretary-General had specified the financial implications of extending pension coverage to the first three individuals, based on the assumption that pensionable remuneration for them would be set at \$120,000 per annum. The financial implications had accordingly been established at about \$50,400 for 1983, and the cost of making the past service of the officials in question count for pension purposes would require an actuarial costing. Paragraph 9 of the note indicated that for the Chairman of ACABQ and the Chairman of ICSC coverage might be considered as from 1 January 1978, and for the Vice-Chairman, as from 1 January 1980. He wondered whether the Committee wished to approve those provisions specifically or whether the decision it had just taken embodied approval. Paragraph 5 of the note explained that there would be no financial implications should the members of JIU become members of the Fund. The Secretary-General had been considering certain transitional measures, which were set out in document A/C.5/37/90/Add.1, para.3, and the Committee had to take a decision on them.

38. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that the addition of the words "if they so desire" in supplementary article B made it clear that the members of JIU could decide not to participate in the Fund and that they could not be compelled to do so.

39. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation would like to receive additional information concerning the financial implications of the decision to extend pension coverage to certain officials. Any additional financial requirements should be covered within the appropriations for the biennium 1982-1983, and the Fifth Committee must have the advice of the Advisory Committee before adopting a final decision on the matter.

40. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the Committee should adhere to its usual practice of seeking the views of the Advisory Committee on the financial implications of any proposal. However, there was a need to take a decision on the transitional measures proposed by the Inspectors in paragraph 3 of document A/C.37/90/Add.1, which would be applicable to serving Inspectors who might opt to participate in the Fund. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposal of JIU.

41. It was so decided.

42. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of members to the draft decision recommended by the Vice-Chairman following informal consultations in document A/C.5/37/L.41 and said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

43. It was so decided.

44. The CHAIRMAN paid a tribute to Mr. Arthur Liveran, Secretary of the Joint Staff Pension Committee and Board, for his years of service to the Secretariat and, on behalf of the Fifth Committee, expressed its best wishes on the occasion of his well-deserved retirement.

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

(c) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

Special review of the ongoing work programme of the United Nations and updating of the special review (continued) (A/36/658, A/37/7/Add.1 and Add.14; A/C.5/37/51)

45. Ms. ERIKSSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, observed that the Secretary-General's report on the special review of the ongoing work programme of the Organization (A/36/658) had been submitted late in the session, with the result that there was not sufficient time for a thorough discussion. In paragraph 4 of its report (A/37/7/Add.14), the Advisory Committee had identified two major weaknesses in the Secretary-General's report: first, the largest group of low-priority activities comprised activities that the Secretary-General could terminate on his own authority but which he proposed to continue in their entirety, and second, the next largest group comprised low-priority activities which the Secretary-General proposed to curtail rather than terminate. Moreover, the Secretary-General had refrained from making proposals for the termination or curtailment of activities required by a legislative mandate, and had still not submitted a comprehensive report on activities that had been completed, or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, as required by resolution 35/209. The Nordic delegations were fully aware of the difficulty of identifying such activities and taking appropriate action and recognized that a great deal of responsibility for the current state of affairs rested with Member States. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General had an important role to play in identifying and terminating or curtailing such activities. There seemed to be two main reasons for the Secretariat's inertia in that regard. The first was the obvious reluctance of programme managers to propose the termination or curtailment of activities within their spheres of competence, and the second was the continuing separation of the programming and budgeting functions. The establishment of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board and a part-time central monitoring unit would be clearly insufficient to remedy the situation.

46. With regard to the practical steps which the Committee might take, the Nordic delegations favoured the first course of action suggested by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 7 (a) of document A/37/7/Add.14. They endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 8 and the conclusions set out in paragraph 10 of that document.

47. Mr. KRISTIENSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the ten States Members of the European Economic Community, said that the Ten were disappointed at the very late issue of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/37/51) because the delay had precluded effective use being made of the report by the Fifth Committee for the biennium 1982-1983.

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(Mr. Kristiansen, Denmark)

48. The Ten concurred with the Advisory Committee that a more critical approach should have been taken by the Secretary-General in identifying low-priority activities, which would have resulted in the release of substantial resources for high-priority activities. It was disappointing that most of the low-priority activities identified in the report submitted the preceding year were now considered sufficiently useful to be continued in their entirety, and that the Secretary-General had refrained from making any proposals to terminate or curtail activities required by legislative mandates.

49. The scope of the updated special review was much too limited and the report was certainly not what had been envisaged by the General Assembly. With regard to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/37/7/Add.14), the Ten favoured the suggestion in paragraph 7 (a) that the Secretary-General should not include any resources for activities in category D in his programme budget proposals for 1984-1985. They strongly supported the recommendation in paragraph 8 and agreed with the views set out in paragraph 10 of that report. However, they urged that the Secretary-General's report on activities that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective should be presented as a separate annex to the budget proposals for the biennium 1984-1985.

50. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said that he regretted that the Secretary-General's report had been issued at a time when most delegations were, for lack of time, unable to reflect adequately on its substance. He understood the weariness which the Secretariat must feel towards the task of identifying activities which had been completed, or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective but could not agree that the report adequately addressed the process or absolved the Secretariat from making further efforts towards that end. Recalling that the Joint Inspection Unit had recommended that the ad hoc group of high-level officials which had been established to review the work programme of the Organization should become a permanent feature of the budget preparation process, he observed that the Secretary-General, in his note to the Committee of Governmental Experts to Evaluate the Present Structure of the Secretariat in the Administrative, Finance and Personnel Areas, had certainly implied the implementation of that recommendation in his comments on the establishment of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board.

51. The updated special review did not meet the request for a full and comprehensive report on the implementation of all the General Assembly resolutions relating to activities which had been completed, or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective. Those resolutions called for the identification of such activities but the Secretary-General had referred in his report only to "low-priority" activities. It was a fact, however, that even high-priority activities could be ineffective or obsolete when assessed objectively and realistically. Under those resolutions, the Secretary-General was also required to give indications of steps taken to reorganize, merge or eliminate Secretariat units established specifically to carry out programmes, projects or activities which had been identified as completed, obsolete, ineffective or of marginal usefulness, to draw the attention of the competent intergovernmental bodies to such activities, and to describe in reports to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination the criteria used to identify such activities.

(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

52. The Secretary-General had provided justification in his report for the activities he wished to strengthen but not for those which he proposed to curtail. As a result, Member States did not know whether the activities in question had been ineffective, were too expensive for the anticipated benefits, produced outputs that were not used, were clearly obsolete or, perhaps, were just boring to the staff involved. His delegation was not suggesting that the proposed curtailments and terminations should not be effected. However, the Secretary-General was bound by the intent of the relevant resolutions to explain his decisions.

53. A number of terminations or curtailments originally proposed were no longer being considered because intergovernmental bodies had renewed the mandates for the activities in question or stressed the importance of a given output. It was not clear, however, whether in those cases the Secretary-General had made his views known to the intergovernmental bodies concerned or explained to them why he considered the activities affected to be of low priority. Because the programme budget included no specific information on the number of staff involved in activities at even the subprogramme level, let alone the programme element level, Member States had no basis on which to evaluate the list of programme elements. There was one commendable exception, namely the activities financed under budget section 22 (UNDRO), specifically the proposed redeployment of resources from travel to communications. That step had been proposed in response to by the General Assembly's directive, laid down at the thirty-sixth session, to strengthen information collection and dissemination in the disaster area. For the most part, however, the Secretary-General's updated report called for only minor shifts in the work programme of the Secretariat.

54. The documents referred to by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 16 and 17 of document A/C.5/37/57 did not provide a basis for institutionalizing the process of identifying activities that had been completed or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, since they did not provide comparable information. The programme performance report gave only numbers of completed programme elements but no descriptions, the medium-term plan contained no information on resources at the programme element or subprogramme levels, and the programme budget gave no staffing information below the programme level. Delegations, including his own, had not wished to impose burdensome reporting requirements on the Secretary-General but were concerned to ensure that activities that had been completed or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective were terminated on a continuing basis and that the General Assembly should be informed of the changes. So far, such information had not been forthcoming.

55. The exercise of identifying such activities was of prime importance and his delegation could not accept the notion that the report before the Committee absolved the Secretary-General from further special reviews of that type. The identification of low-priority activities and their elimination or curtailment was an integral part of the planning, programming and budgeting process, and his delegation therefore welcomed the statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that action to be taken with respect to activities which had been completed or were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective should be

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(Mr. Papendorp, United States)

reported in both the proposed programme budget and performance reports, particularly in off-budget years. His delegation reserved its judgement as to efficacy of such a procedure until it had an opportunity to see what the Secretary-General would produce.

56. His delegation had a number of suggestions which it hoped would be endorsed by the Committee in an appropriate resolution or decision in order to assist the Secretary-General in submitting his next proposed budget document. It would be most useful to include in the budget proposals an annex listing work-months and resources in dollar amounts which would result from proposed terminations, together with the Secretary-General's reasons for termination. The annex should also contain information on proposed redeployments at the programme, as opposed to programme element, level and might also provide information on how the Secretary-General had revised priorities in the new budget as compared with the previous one.

57. As to the Secretary-General's proposed redeployment of resources from low-priority to high-priority activities under his own authority (categories A and B), his delegation believed that the \$3.6 million involved should be used to fund activities that had been approved or would be approved at the current session. It was preferable to redeploy those resources to newly authorized activities than to programmes which had already been substantially funded under the current programme budget. His delegation did not support the arbitrary redeployment of resources by the Secretary-General to existing activities considered to be of high priority while he requested additional resources for new activities. In no case had the Secretary-General taken the opportunity to transfer resources between budget sections, which could have easily been done with the concurrence of the Advisory Committee.

58. His delegation appreciated the very cogent analysis of the Secretary-General's report in document A/37/7/Add.14. The Advisory Committee's proposal in paragraph 7 (a) promised to be the most effective course of action. His delegation also agreed with the observations in paragraph 8 and stood ready to co-operate with the Bureau and any interested delegations in preparing the text of a draft decision reflecting the views expressed by the Advisory Committee in that paragraph.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.