



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 61st 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 3.35 p.m.

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

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee in document A/C.3/37/L.48 concerning agenda item 12 (A/C.5/37/71)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General estimated that conference-servicing requirements for the open-ended working group to be established by the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee would amount to \$159,700 in 1983. Details concerning that amount were contained in the annex to the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/37/71. Those requirements would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing costs to be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of its current session.
2. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that, as delegations were well aware, the approval of each statement indicating conference-servicing requirements contributed to an appropriation the magnitude of which, to judge by the consolidated statement submitted at the thirty-sixth session, would surely shock Member States. His delegation had calculated that the total estimate of conference-servicing costs submitted for approval at the current session would be in the order of \$30 million. Therefore, its support of the items considered at the current meeting should not be interpreted as approval of estimates relating to conference servicing. Quite the contrary, its support was predicated on the expectation that the Secretary-General would fully absorb such conference-servicing costs when submitting his consolidated statement in that connection.
3. The position he had just outlined applied equally to all the decisions the Committee took at its current meeting on the proposals recommended to the General Assembly under agenda items 12, 48, 62, 118, 121 and 127.
4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/37/L.48, as orally revised, conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$159,700 would arise and that the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983 to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.
5. It was so decided.

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Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee in document A/C.3/37/L.52 and Corr.1 concerning agenda item 12 (A/C.5/37/72)

6. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, according to the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee, the General Assembly would extend the mandate of the Working Group, which would then meet in New York in 1983 immediately after the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council and also during the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In paragraph 6 of the statement of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/37/72), the Secretary-General indicated that a decision to hold the intersessional meeting of the Working Group in New York would constitute an exception to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 31/140. The Secretary-General's statement also indicated that the potential conference-servicing costs for holding those two sessions would total no more than \$516,400 and would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement.

7. Mrs. LOPEZ ORTEGA (Mexico), referring to paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/37/72, said that, as her delegation understood it, the intersessional meeting of the Working Group was to be held in New York because the Group was a body of the General Assembly and, therefore, should meet at Headquarters. Moreover, the Group itself, which had always met in New York, had recommended that both its sessions should be held in New York. Accordingly, she did not understand why the Secretary-General had submitted the information in table A.2. Since the Working Group was open ended and since the estimated cost of conference servicing was higher for New York, she had concluded that a larger number of delegations - particularly those of developing countries, which supported the elaboration of a convention on migrant workers - would be able to participate in sessions held in New York. For all those reasons, her delegation felt that the Working Group should meet in New York.

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) explained that the total conference-servicing requirements contained in document A/C.5/37/72 were based on the assumption that both sessions of the Working Group would be held in New York. However, he drew attention to the fact that, in paragraph 7 of that document, the Secretary-General suggested that 31 May to 10 June 1983 would be the most appropriate dates for the intersessional meeting.

9. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation did not understand why the question of the situation of migrant workers was before the General Assembly at all. The International Labour Organisation had already drafted provisions on that subject and, if another convention was actually needed, ILO should be entrusted with the task of preparing it.

10. It was clearly stated in document A/C.5/37/72 that the decision to hold the intersessional meeting of the Working Group in New York ran counter to General Assembly resolution 31/140. Had time permitted, his delegation would have expected that matter to be referred to the Committee on Conferences, in accordance with resolution 35/10 A. Moreover, the Third Committee should not have decided on the

(Mr. Keller, United States)

venue without the advice of the Committee on Conferences. Lacking the necessary information to take an appropriate decision in that regard, the Fifth Committee should not make a similar mistake. The figures contained in the annex to document A/C.5/37/72 indicated that the total estimated cost of conference servicing would be less in Geneva than in New York; he would welcome further information in that regard.

11. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to the question from the representative of the United States, said that conference-servicing costs depended primarily on the calendar of conferences. Sometimes it was less expensive to hold meetings in New York. The Committee on Conferences was examining that question and would try to arrange the calendar to ensure the lowest possible cost.

12. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/37/L.52 and Corr.1, conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$516,400 would arise and that the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983 to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.

13. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Sixth Committee in document A/C.6/37/L.9 concerning agenda item 121 (A/C.5/37/73 and Add.1)

14. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to paragraphs 3 and 5 of the French version of document A/C.5/37/73, which mistakenly indicated that the next session of the Ad Hoc Committee would be held in Geneva instead of New York and which should therefore be brought into line with the English text of those paragraphs.

15. The Secretary-General had assumed that the Ad Hoc Committee would meet in New York and that conference-servicing costs, based on full costs, would total \$434,300. Those costs would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement.

16. Mr. BATISTI (Italy) requested a comparison of the costs of holding the session of the Ad Hoc Committee in Geneva and in New York.

17. Mr. FADAKA (Nigeria) supported the request made by the representative of Italy and pointed out that previous estimates had indicated that such costs were generally much lower in Geneva than in New York. During the relevant discussion in the Sixth Committee, it had been decided that, if the costs were lower in Geneva, the session should be held in Geneva.

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18. Mr. HADID (Algeria) endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Italy and Nigeria. Paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/37/73 did not accurately reflect the discussion held either in the Committee on Conferences or in the Sixth Committee. Moreover, paragraph 6 of the draft resolution submitted in document A/C.6/37/L.9 had been orally revised to indicate that the Ad Hoc Committee should exercise the necessary flexibility and should hold its next session either in New York or in Geneva, depending on the costs. Therefore, the estimates contained in document A/C.5/37/73 failed to take into account the very likely possibility that the session would be held in Geneva, and he expressed the hope that that option would be kept open.

19. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) explained that conference-servicing costs depended on the timing as well as the venue of meetings. When the schedule of meetings was heavy, it was necessary to engage temporary staff, which was costly. Therefore, the statements of financial implications were based on a wide variety of factors. After due consideration of all those factors the Committee on Conferences, the Advisory Committee and in the Fifth Committee, a decision was taken on theoretical conference-servicing costs, which could be subject to further discussion. While conference-servicing costs were on average higher in New York than in Geneva, the meetings schedule was heavier in Geneva in the summer. Accordingly, the Committee on Conferences had assumed that, if the session of the Ad Hoc Committee was held from 2 to 26 August 1983, as indicated in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/37/73, the costs would actually be lower in New York than in Geneva and that the Ad Hoc Committee would therefore meet in New York.

20. Mr. HADID (Algeria) asked where the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences to which the Director of the Budget Division had referred were to be found.

21. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) said that document A/C.5/37/73/Add.1 contained the observations submitted by the Committee on Conferences in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/10 A. There was an error in the last sentence of paragraph 2 of that document, which stated that the Committee on Conferences had reservations about the feasibility of facilities being available to service the session of the Ad Hoc Committee "either in Geneva or in New York". Obviously, such a statement made no sense. The task of the Committee on Conferences was to advise the General Assembly as to which venue was preferable and not to express the view that the session in question could not be held. Accordingly, the sentence should be corrected to indicate that the Committee had reservations about the feasibility of accommodating the Ad Hoc Committee at Geneva.

22. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, because of the procedure used by the Secretary-General to report on the financial implications of providing conference servicing for United Nations bodies, the Fifth Committee often had to take decisions without any real idea of the actual costs which would arise. Such information was brought to the attention of the Committee only at the end of the session in the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements. However, it was bad management to decide on the dates and venue of a meeting without knowing the costs involved. It would be better for the

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Secretariat to inform the Fifth Committee in each case which dates and venue were optimal from the point of view of maximum economy. Under the existing procedure, meetings were distributed unequally over the calendar year; during peak periods, temporary assistance had to be engaged at considerable cost, while in slack periods the permanent staff was idle, which constituted a waste of the Organization's precious resources. It was to be hoped that a more effective procedure could be devised for identifying the actual conference-servicing costs of proposed meetings.

23. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.6/37/L.9, conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$434,300 would arise and that the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983, to be submitted at a later stage in the session.

24. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Sixth Committee in document A/C.6/37/L.11 concerning agenda item 118 (A/C.5/37/78)

25. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General had prepared his statement of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/37/78) on the assumption that the Special Committee on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Non-Use of Force in International Relations would meet for four weeks in New York, from 31 January to 25 February 1983. The related conference-servicing costs were estimated at \$526,500 and the actual requirements would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement to be submitted at a later stage in the session.

26. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that should it adopt draft resolution A/C.6/37/L.11, conference-servicing requirements estimated on a full-cost basis at \$526,500 would arise and that the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement.

27. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Sixth Committee in document A/C.6/37/L.17/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 116 (A/C.5/37/81)

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that, at the preceding session, the General Assembly had appropriated \$90,000 for a study on the progressive development of the principles and norms of international law relating to the new international economic order,

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which UNITAR had been requested to carry out. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his statement of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/37/81) and the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee, work still remained to be done on the study and UNITAR had been asked to complete it in time for submission to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. The Advisory Committee had inquired about the use of the \$90,000 appropriated at the preceding session and had been informed that that amount would have been committed in toto by the end of 1982. Since it was desirable for work on the study to be completed in 1983, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the \$127,400 requested by the Secretary-General should be approved as a final grant to UNITAR for that purpose. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt the resolution of the Sixth Committee, an additional appropriation of \$127,400 would be required under section 26 of the programme budget.

29. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) emphasized that the General Assembly had already approved an appropriation for the study in question at the preceding session. When the Assembly had adopted resolution 34/150, it had been on the understanding that no resources under the regular budget would be required, and yet the Assembly was being asked to approve an additional appropriation. His delegation expected that UNITAR would comply strictly with the instructions in paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.6/L.17/Rev.1 and did not consider that it was necessary to select consultants on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. Such a requirement could lead to delays in the completion of the project, and his delegation felt strongly that nothing should hinder completion of the study within the time-limit that had been set. In the past, his delegation had voted against the appropriation for UNITAR to carry out the study, and he therefore requested that a vote should be taken on the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

30. Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) said that his delegation attached great importance to the study in question and regretted that it had been issued in English only. He asked whether that had been for budgetary reasons or whether it reflected some official policy.

31. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) said that, while the basic study had been prepared in English, the Secretary-General had submitted a progress report on work on the study in document A/37/409, which had been distributed in all the official languages.

32. Mr. GRODSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as members were aware, UNITAR was financed from voluntary contributions and that its budget was considerable. Since the General Assembly very rarely requested UNITAR to carry out studies for it, the study requested on the new international economic order should be a priority for the Institute and should be financed from its own budget. His delegation therefore could not understand the Secretary-General's request for an additional appropriation for the completion of the study. If UNITAR itself was unable to finance that priority project from its own budget, the United Nations Secretariat should find the necessary means from resources already available. His delegation was therefore unable to support the request for an additional appropriation and would abstain in the voting.

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33. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that the subject-matter of the study was important and, as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had stated, it was the last time that the Secretariat would be requesting funds for it. UNITAR, which was in dire financial straits, would not be able to meet the costs of the study from its own budget.

34. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) said that his delegation was satisfied that the funds appropriated at the preceding session had been properly used and supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the additional appropriation requested to complete the study should be approved.

35. Mr. NTAMBI (Uganda) endorsed the comments made by the preceding two speakers. It was generally recognized that the Administration of UNITAR had made every effort to manage its finances more effectively, and it would be unfortunate if the important study that had been undertaken could not be completed owing to a lack of funds. Accordingly, his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

36. Mr. BANGURA (Sierra Leone) said that, for the reasons advanced by the preceding speakers, his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

37. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.6/37/L.17/Rev.1, an additional appropriation of \$127,400 would be required under section 26 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

38. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 64 votes to 7, with 21 abstentions.

39. Mr. MACARTNEY (Canada) said that his delegation had voted against the proposal because the cost of completing the study had been inflated from \$90,000 to \$217,400. The study in question was concerned with seven principles, work on the last three of which would cost some \$42,000 each. While his delegation had always attached great importance to principles, it considered that the principles which were the subject of the study would be better left to academic research.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Sixth Committee in document A/C.6/37/L.19 concerning agenda item 127 (A/C.5/37/82)

40. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the resolution of the Sixth Committee would request the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization to continue its work. In his statement of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/37/82), the Secretary-General had assumed that the Special Committee would meet twice daily for four weeks in New York, from 11 April to 16 May 1983. The related conference-servicing costs were estimated at \$548,700 and would be reflected in the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983.

41. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.6/37/L.19, conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full cost basis, at \$548,700 would arise and that the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983, to be submitted at a later stage in the session.

42. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Special Political Committee in document A/SPC/37/L.7 concerning agenda item 62 (A/C.5/37/77)

43. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the draft resolution submitted by the Special Political Committee and the Secretary-General's statement indicated that the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would have an impact on the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, whose objectives, were enumerated in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution and in paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's statement. The Secretary-General maintained that those objectives could best be achieved by means of human resources development and various other measures indicated in his statement. To that end, he requested the conversion of consultant funds for the establishment of a permanent D-1 post and also requested the establishment of a P-5 post for a senior technical officer. He further requested temporary funds for the financing of a temporary P-5 post for a technical specialist on space science and technology.

44. In its consideration of the Secretary-General's statement, the Advisory Committee had taken into account that the Secretary-General currently had at his disposal two D-1 posts, two P-4 posts and a complement of posts in the General Service category for that programme. The Advisory Committee had had some difficulty in judging how the requirements of paragraph 7 of the draft resolution would affect the current United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and was of the view that any additional staff resources that the Secretary-General might wish to request should be presented in the context of the programme budget for 1984-1985, where they would be justified in the context of the programme as a whole.

45. Proposals for the conversion of consultant funds had been submitted to the General Assembly on several occasions; while in the past the Advisory Committee had never approved such requests, it might give consideration to a request made in the context of the 1984-1985 budget. The Advisory Committee recommended that the temporary P-5 post indicated in paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's statement should be approved, together with the requisite funds, which amounted to \$34,900, and not \$37,100, as specified in document A/C.5/37/77. Likewise, the relevant staff assessment referred to in paragraph 9 would amount to \$10,000 rather than \$21,000, as specified in the Secretary-General's statement, and would be offset by an equivalent amount in Income section 1.

46. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation had been deeply involved in the negotiations leading to the draft resolution on UNISPACE 82; during the Conference his delegation and several others had taken a clear position with regard to the funding of projects resulting from the Conference, and that position was reflected in the final report of the Conference. His delegation had been concerned to note that several delegations had expressed dissatisfaction, in meetings of the Special Political Committee, with the Secretariat's disregard for those views. Paragraph 9 of the draft resolution clearly stated that no additional funds would be required from the regular budget. However, despite the financial implications which had been presented to the Special Political Committee, the Secretariat had chosen to overstep the proposed limitations. It was the responsibility of the Advisory Committee to correct that situation, and it should be commended for having done so in its report. However, at a time when approximately \$500,000 was being budgeted for temporary assistance in the Outer Space Affairs Division out of an approximate total of \$1 million budgeted for all temporary assistance, his delegation could not support the approval of an additional \$34,900, for temporary assistance, since the Secretary-General had sufficient resources available.

47. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/37/L.7, an additional appropriation of \$34,900 would be required under section 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983. A further appropriation of \$10,000 would be required under section 31 (Staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase of the same amount under Income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

48. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 80 votes to 12, with 3 abstentions.

49. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted against the proposal because it conflicted with the consensus which had been reached at UNISPACE 82.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Special Political Committee in document A/SPC/37/L.30 concerning agenda item 61 (A/C.5/37/87)

50. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the requirements of the draft resolution followed the pattern of similar requirements in the past, with the exception that the present programme of work called for the holding of an additional meeting in New York in November/December 1983. As it had done in the past, the Advisory Committee endorsed the requests of the Secretary-General, with minor modifications.

51. At its thirty-sixth session, the General Assembly had approved \$283,200 for the current year's programme. Representatives of the Secretary-General had informed the Advisory Committee that, as at 1 September 1982, \$134,000 remained uncommitted; if the trend of commitment observed during the first eight months of 1982 continued to the end of the year, it was calculated that roughly \$60,000

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would remain from the previous year's appropriation and would thus be available for the work of the Special Committee during 1983. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended that \$288,300 should be appropriated under section 23 of the budget and the amount for common services under section 28I should be absorbed. Conference services, which had been estimated at \$366,200, would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing requirements for 1983. The amount of staff assessment, \$38,400, would not change and would be offset by income in the same amount under Income section 1.

52. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation had been truly disappointed in the Special Committee's programme of work, which entailed much unjustified expenditure during a time of fiscal restraint. He asked what benefits would be derived from the excess travel, documentation, translation and research which were called for under the programme. His delegation also objected to the substance of the draft resolution and, having voted against it in the Special Political Committee, would vote against any recommendation to appropriate funds for its implementation.

53. Mr. FREILICH (Israel) said that his delegation had already voiced its opposition to the draft resolution in the Special Political Committee; it also rejected the financial implications which the Fifth Committee was discussing at present.

54. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/37/L.30, an additional appropriation of \$288,300 would be required under section 23 (Human rights) of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983, together with an appropriation of \$38,400 under section 31 (Staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase of the same amount in the estimates of income under Income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). Conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$366,200 would arise and the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing requirements for 1983 to be submitted at a later stage during the current session. The delegation of Israel had requested that a vote should be taken.

55. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 72 votes to 2, with 19 abstentions. Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted in document A/37/29 concerning agenda item 48 (A/C.5/37/86)

56. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean had been authorized to hold three two-week sessions in 1983 and a fourth session if necessary. The Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/37/86) had been submitted on the assumption that three sessions would be held in New York on the following dates: 17-28 January 1983, 11-22 April 1983 and 11-22 July 1983. The Secretary-General stated that if the Ad Hoc Committee wished to hold a fourth session, the Committee

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on Conferences would be required to approve that action. Conference-servicing requirements had been estimated at \$1,793,700 and would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement.

57. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the oral report of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee in paragraph 19 of document A/37/29, conference-servicing requirements estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$1,793,700 would arise and the actual additional appropriations that might be required would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of total conference-servicing requirements for 1983, to be submitted during the current session.

58. It was so decided.

59. Mr. PAPENDORP (United States of America) said he wished to reiterate the position which his delegation had taken earlier with regard to the conference-servicing aspects of the draft resolution in question. He also wished to reiterate his delegation's objection to the provision of summary records for the Ad Hoc Committee. During the discussion of agenda items 108 and 109, some delegations had felt it necessary to overturn the useful recommendations of the Committee on Conferences to limit the provision of meeting records. As had been pointed out in document A/C.5/37/86, the cost of providing summary records represented more than one third of all conference-servicing costs, even though they were issued long after the meetings had been held. Similarly, the summary records of the meetings of the Fifth Committee during the present session had been of little use since they also had been issued too late.

60. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that his delegation had expressed elsewhere its reservations to the holding of a fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee. If a fourth session was requested, he hoped that the Committee on Conferences would be given an opportunity to consider the matter.

Organization and methods for official travel (continued) (A/37/7/Add.15, A/37/357 and Corr.1 and A/37/357/Add.1)

61. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had found the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/37/357) to be extremely informative and to contain a number of useful suggestions, proposals and recommendations. Since few of those recommendations could be disputed, the Advisory Committee had not thought it necessary to submit a lengthy statement on the report. It had also welcomed the Secretary-General's comments (A/37/357/Add.1), which conveyed his position on a number of the recommendations. He had rejected few of them, and that was why, in paragraph 11 of its report (A/37/7/Add.15), the Advisory Committee was recommending that in the report which he would be submitting to the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 32/198, the Secretary-General should include a special section on the implementation of the JIU recommendations. Because of the nature and importance of the JIU report, the Advisory Committee thought that it should

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remain on the Fifth Committee's agenda for the next two or more years. It was also recommending that the Secretary-General inform the Advisory Committee at its spring 1983 session of the outcome of the efforts to review the current arrangements for travel services in the light of the JIU recommendations, and had indicated the kind of information it would like to receive.

62. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that the JIU report revealed areas where travel expenses could be controlled and reduced by the Secretary-General. A step in that direction was urgently needed, since the United Nations and its affiliated bodies spent \$60 million a year, or 5 per cent of the total budget, on travel, and it was reported that the entire family of United Nations organizations spent \$150 million annually on travel. Excessive travel should be regulated, since each permanent mission in New York had a permanent representative, and the United Nations system had representatives resident in many of the Member States. It had been suggested that, where possible, matters should be taken up with the permanent representatives or resident representatives.

63. The United Nations should consider the establishment of its own travel agency as an extension of the existing Travel Unit, since commissions now paid to a travel agent could then go directly to the United Nations. Other options, such as the conclusion of a new agreement with the current travel agency or the establishment of an in-plant travel office which would eventually become a United Nations travel agency could also be examined. In his next report, the Secretary-General might wish to inform the General Assembly which arrangement he believed would create the least difficulty and ensure expediency and economy. In view of the amount of travel generated by the United Nations, an arrangement could be made with major airlines for special rates, particularly for the busy New York/Geneva route. Due consideration should also be given to government discounts, particularly for service personnel and officials who attended special conferences away from Headquarters. To obtain the lowest fare, the conclusion of such contractual agreements, subject to spot-check audits, would be a welcome development.

64. Regarding the standard of accommodation for the travel of United Nations staff on official business, he said that his delegation supported the arrangement suggested by the Secretary-General in paragraph 28 of document A/37/357/Add.1 and the procedures which he was following for the control of travel. It agreed with the Advisory Committee that in his report to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General should submit a special section on the implementation of the JIU recommendations. That item could be considered jointly with the item on standards of accommodation which the Fifth Committee reviewed every session.

65. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt), referring to document A/37/357/Add.1, paragraph 11, which stated that there were difficulties concerning the establishment of a travel agency wholly owned and operated by the United Nations, asked what the difficulties were, when it would be possible to overcome them and who had agreed that such difficulties existed.

66. Mr. GEBRU (Ethiopia) wanted to know whether any branch of the United Nations travel agency operated in South Africa and, if so how that could be reconciled with the numerous General Assembly resolutions on the isolation of South Africa.

67. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services), referring to the question raised by the representative of Egypt, said that the main difficulty was the regulations governing the payment of commissions by airlines, which did not permit payment to a client like the United Nations. A consultant had analysed that matter in detail and had indicated shown recent interpretations of the regulations had shown that more flexibility, especially in respect of the definition of employees as members of the public, (according to the regulations, 80 per cent of the clientele of an airline must be members of the public). Such a liberalization would probably be strongly opposed by the airlines, because it would work to their disadvantage. While the possibility of owning its own travel agency was attractive to the United Nations from the financial point of view, it was not likely that that would be possible in the near future. The Secretariat had stated that it would keep the situation under review in case of a change in the regulations.

68. With regard to the question raised by the representative of Ethiopia, he said that the current United Nations travel agent was a company based in the United States and associated with an English holding company, which had a subsidiary that operated in South Africa. The agency in question had responded to the concerns expressed by the United Nations about its operations in South Africa, however, and was not encouraging travel to South Africa or entering into further agreements with its subsidiary there.

69. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said it was well known that travel agents took commissions from airline companies and he wondered whether there was an agreement between the United Nations and its travel agency concerning the sharing of those commissions. He also wondered whether the Office of Legal Affairs had studied the problem of a United Nations agency which had an affiliate in South Africa and tried to find a way to dissociate that agency from the operations of its affiliate.

70. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that United States law and the regulations of airline associations had until very recently severely limited the possibilities for a client to share in the commissions of a travel agent. The United Nations had therefore not been able to negotiate with a travel agent to receive part of that agent's commissions. The change in the regulations had made it possible for the United Nations and other organizations to share in commissions through an "in-plant" travel agency. The arrangement was described in paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/357/Add.1), and would permit the agent to pay his client for the costs that that client incurred, including the costs of automation, communications and the salaries and fringe benefits of the client's employees working on travel arrangements. The United Nations was now trying to select the most advantageous arrangement with an agency. It had published an announcement of its interest in changing its travel agency, to which it had received 170 replies. It had then sent out a questionnaire to the agencies which had replied in order to elicit information on their financial and professional status. Twenty five responses had

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been received and were being examined to ascertain which agency was best qualified to handle the complex travel arrangements of the United Nations. Those agencies would then be requested to make a competitive proposal indicating what services they could provide and what sort of cost-sharing arrangements they could offer. The entire process of choosing a new agency was obviously time-consuming and complex.

71. He would reply to the questions on the travel agency's affiliate in South Africa at a subsequent meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.