



General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
1 February 2001

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 39th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 14 December 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala)
later: Mr. Hae-yun Park (Vice-Chairman) (Republic of Korea)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
 and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Agenda item 153: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and other related reports (continued)

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Capital master plan

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1: United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1: The critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.42: The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 *(continued)*

Agenda item 153: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations *(continued)*

Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and other related reports (A/55/305, A/55/502, A/55/507 and Add.1 and A/55/676; A/C.4/55/6) (continued)

1. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that his delegation supported the statement that had been made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. As a country that had been involved in peacekeeping for more than four decades, Nepal attached great importance to the role of the United Nations as the principal instrument for promoting international peace and security. The experience gained over that period had helped his country to understand the underlying causes and consequences of the successes and failures of peacekeeping operations.

2. The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305) was both timely and useful and many, if not all, of the Panel's recommendations should therefore be implemented. At the same time, it would be imprudent to make unwarranted strides into uncharted waters. His delegation would find it difficult to accept an ad hoc and partial implementation of the recommendations contained in the report without the benefit of a comprehensive implementation plan.

3. A number of issues related to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report needed to be clarified. For example, the Secretariat had not sufficiently established the existence of an emergency that would justify its request for an additional 249 posts. With its current strength, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had been able to handle a much larger number of peacekeepers than the number currently deployed on the ground.

4. The report had been prepared at a time when the developed countries had become increasingly reluctant to commit troops to perceptibly unsafe peacekeeping operations and it raised a number of fundamental questions, such as whether a top-heavy command and control structure would not impinge on the flexibility

of field commanders; whether the piecemeal strengthening of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at a time when other departments were being slashed would affect the balance of the Organization; whether the Panel's recommendations, which drew on national command and control structures, had been tried and found suitable for United Nations peacekeeping operations; and whether, if indeed the increase could be justified and approved, many of the positions, including those at senior levels, would be available for troop-contributing countries.

5. It would take some time to understand those complex issues and early assistance from the Secretariat would be appreciated. While his delegation respected the expertise and experience of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), that Committee appeared to have violated proper procedures by recommending an increase of 95 posts before the General Assembly had concluded its deliberations on the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/C.4/55/6).

6. What was needed was not mutual recrimination but a rational and reasoned approach to the forging of a consensus, as well as a much better understanding of the facts and context so that Member States could act decisively on the Panel's recommendations.

7. **Mr. Dausá Céspedes** (Cuba) noted with concern that the established practices, rules and procedures of the General Assembly had not been observed in the preparation, presentation and consideration of some of the reports that had been prepared on the item under consideration. At a time when most Member States recognized the principle of respect for the different prerogatives and functions of the principal organs of the United Nations, as provided for in the Charter, others were seeking to disregard that principle in pursuit of their own political interests.

8. The preparation of the report on the implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/502) prior to a decision by the competent intergovernmental body on the recommendations of the Panel and the parallel presentation of that report to the Committee were serious departures from existing procedures and practices. The presentation of a report on resource requirements for implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/507 and Add.1) without a prior decision by the General

Assembly on the recommendations was also a violation of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Moreover, the Advisory Committee's consideration of the proposals before the General Assembly had taken a decision on them was a further violation that should be addressed by the General Assembly. His delegation hoped that there would be strict adherence to established practices and procedures as consideration of the Panel's report continued.

9. The Panel's mandate was to undertake a comprehensive review of United Nations activities for the maintenance of peace and security and to make recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness. Its mandate did not include consideration of budgetary questions, which were within the competence of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee. His delegation noted further that the General Assembly had not approved human and financial resources for the establishment of the Panel. It would therefore welcome an explanation of how the expenditures on the Panel had been financed.

10. Many of the Panel's recommendations were based on the premise that a number of difficulties prevented the Organization from fulfilling its mission in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security and that urgent corrective measures were needed. That approach, however, appeared to change the priorities of the Organization by diverting attention from the problems of development.

11. Development and peace were indissociable and his delegation shared the Secretary-General's concern that the increase in resources for peace operations should not come at the expense of the resources needed for development (A/55/502, para. 7 (h)). The reality was quite alarming, however, since the Organization currently spent \$3.50 on peacekeeping operations for every dollar it spent on basic resources for development. It would therefore be unacceptable for the meagre resources currently allocated to development to be affected as a result of the implementation of the Panel's recommendations.

12. His delegation questioned the need for additional resource requirements of \$22,202,900 during the current phase. A total of \$76,094,700 had already been allocated for peacekeeping operations in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 and 67 additional posts had been allocated to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and a further two posts had

been allocated to its training service. Moreover, in its resolution 54/243 B, the General Assembly had approved 469 posts to be financed from the support account. It should be borne in mind that, while United Nations peacekeeping operations had grown in size and complexity, during the boom years of peacekeeping in the early 1990s there had been up to 73,200 personnel in the field at a time when the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had only 407 posts.

13. It had been claimed that peacekeeping was a basic function of the Organization and that many of its activities should be funded from the regular budget. His delegation's recollection, however, was that the General Assembly had been unable to reach a consensus on what constituted the Organization's basic functions. The concept of peacekeeping as a basic function of the Organization should therefore not be imposed in a budget document, particularly in view of the delicate balance of positions that had been achieved within the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on the question of peacekeeping priorities.

14. In its report on the comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/C.4/55/6), the Special Committee had reiterated its request for an expeditious and comprehensive review of the management, structure, recruitment processes and interrelationships of all relevant elements within the Secretariat that played a role in peacekeeping operations (para. 34). Pending that review, the Special Committee believed that some additional resources should be made available on an emergency basis for the staffing of certain units of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Fifth Committee's decisions should be consistent with the recommendations of the Special Committee.

15. His delegation questioned the efforts that were being made to convert the Department of Peacekeeping Operations into a mini-secretariat with divisions of various kinds, that would merely duplicate the functions of existing bodies. It therefore opposed any allocation of resources for that purpose. On the other hand, it did not support any recommendation that was aimed at reducing the role and capabilities of the Department of Public Information.

16. His delegation was not persuaded of the need to establish an Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat, since information and analysis needs could be fully met from existing structures. Moreover, none

of the failures of the United Nations peacekeeping operations had been due to a lack of information or analytical capacity. What had been lacking, and was still lacking, was political will. His delegation therefore noted with satisfaction that the Panel's recommendation that such a secretariat should be established had not been endorsed by the Special Committee.

17. His delegation believed further that the creation of a new post of Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations was unnecessary and that the support role which it was proposed to grant to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the human rights components of peacekeeping operations was unjustified. Lastly, his delegation did not share the view that an increase in posts for the Electoral Assistance Division was necessary.

18. **Mr. Jagne** (Gambia) said that the maintenance of international peace and security was one of the core areas of United Nations responsibility and the Organization's performance in peacekeeping was the main yardstick by which its success was measured. The Panel's report sought to find quick and practical solutions to that problem and undue delay in implementing its recommendations might complicate the problem even further.

19. The Panel had stressed the need for increased resources for the beleaguered Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which was seriously understaffed and grossly underfunded. His delegation therefore fully shared the Panel's view that Member States should give the Secretary-General some flexibility, as well as the financial resources to recruit the staff needed to ensure that the credibility of the Organization was not tarnished by its failure to respond adequately to emergencies. It also concurred with the Panel's recommendations that peacekeeping should cease to be treated as a temporary requirement and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as a temporary organizational structure. Headquarters support for peacekeeping should be treated as a core activity of the United Nations and the majority of its resource requirements should be funded through the mechanism of the regular biennial programme budget of the Organization.

20. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Advisory Committee had approved an impressive number of posts and hoped that the Secretariat would

move quickly to fill them, taking into consideration the sacrosanct principle of equitable geographical distribution. While he understood the concerns of some delegations that resources might be diverted from the development agenda, it must be borne in mind that there could be no meaningful development without peace and stability.

21. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that the Panel's report made it clear that effective and predictable financial support was crucial to the success of any peacekeeping mission. His delegation fully agreed with the observations contained in the report and in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1, para. 35), including the importance of joint efforts by Member States and the Secretariat to strengthen the instrument of peacekeeping; the need to understand clearly whether peacekeeping was needed in a specific situation; the importance of providing adequate resources to meet mission needs and having a credible deterrent capacity; the importance of preparedness for worst-case scenarios; the requirement to improve information flows, both between Member States and within the Secretariat; and the need for more effective and timely analysis of information from the field.

22. Concerning the need for consensus, his Government shared the Secretary-General's view that no operation could be established without a broad consensus within the international community. It was, moreover, the Security Council's responsibility to ensure that the operation was given a mandate that was clear, accepted by the parties concerned and practicable in the situation existing on the ground.

23. His delegation therefore agreed on the need to strengthen and broaden the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and strongly supported further detailed discussion on the subject within the framework of the negotiations on both the current budget and the forthcoming budget.

24. **Ms. Sun** Minqin (China) said that her delegation supported the statement that had been made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping operations was an urgent task which required not only the political will and common efforts of all parties but also the allocation of adequate resources to the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations to enable that Department to play its proper role and reach its full potential.

25. Her delegation would welcome written information from the Secretariat on the current structure of peacekeeping forces, personnel structures and the breakdown of forces, including by nationality, so that it could participate more constructively in the discussion on the item.

26. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement that had been made earlier by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Pakistan's commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations was rooted in its belief that the maintenance of international peace and security was a collective responsibility. While his delegation welcomed the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, it nevertheless had serious misgivings about the manner in which the Secretariat had since pursued the implementation of the report and its failure to comply with established rules of procedure. His delegation believed further that the number of posts recommended by the Advisory Committee was excessive and warranted closer scrutiny.

27. While the Secretary-General had described his estimates as an emergency request, the proposals in the related resource documents could not be classified as emergencies. The Secretariat should therefore justify the request for such a large number of posts if there was no emergency. The cause of United Nations peacekeeping would be better served if time was allowed for the reviews and studies referred to in the reports of the Secretary-General to be carried out and considered by Member States.

28. One possible reason why the Organization had been unable to respond effectively to the challenges posed by complex peace operations was that United Nations peacekeepers had been deployed in the past without adequate advance planning and the requisite political groundwork. Senior management officials in the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had also failed to do their homework and thus bore responsibility for the current situation. The review requested by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should therefore include an assessment of the reasons why the senior management of the two Departments,

particularly the Department of Political Affairs, had failed to provide political guidance and timely advice.

29. The problems of United Nations peacekeeping did not stem only from a lack of logistics support or sufficient staff. Correct and timely political advice from senior management was also imperative for success. His delegation was therefore surprised that the Advisory Committee had not recommended the additional post of Assistant Secretary-General for Military and Civilian Police Affairs, which was needed to strengthen policy making. The question of additional posts for logistics or operational support should, however, await the comprehensive review which the Special Committee had long requested.

30. His delegation agreed that there was a need to attach equal importance to the Organization's development agenda; peace and development were complementary and not mutually exclusive. It also strongly supported the Special Committee's call for troop-contributing countries to be properly represented in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in order to reflect adequately their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping.

31. The growing amounts owed to troop-contributing countries was becoming a perennial problem which, regrettably, had not been addressed in the Panel's report. The proposed comprehensive review should look into that issue with a view to identifying corrective measures.

32. **Mr. Paredes** (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

33. The Rio Group attached importance to making peacekeeping operations more efficient and dynamic. Clearly, strengthening peacekeeping mechanisms would require the allocation of additional human and financial resources, and the Group would work to achieve a consensus on the matter in the Committee.

34. Welcoming the report of the Advisory Committee (A/55/676), he said it was crucial to abide by its recommendations as well as those in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/C.4/55/6), which was the competent political body on the issue. The Group supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations, and in particular the acceptance of 95 additional posts. As for the 150 posts

recommended for reconsideration in the light of the comprehensive study to be presented by the Secretariat in the first half of 2001, the Group considered that such an “emergency package” was only the first stage in what would be a long process of in-depth reform. Given the complexity of the proposed reforms, a more detailed study of posts might be needed at later stages, and he hoped that the political will that had been demonstrated during the current stage would be maintained.

35. The Group reiterated its readiness to participate constructively in the process of consensus-building in order to achieve the allocation of the necessary resources, which would revitalize the peacekeeping system and thus enhance the credibility of the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping on which so many people throughout the world depended.

36. **Mr. Hamidullah** (Bangladesh) said that, in view of the importance of peacekeeping operations, which had evolved in nature and breadth over the years, his delegation had welcomed the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) during the Millennium Summit. When it came to implementing its proposals, however, a number of questions needed to be addressed, including those underlined by the representative of Nigeria speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was important to look at all the proposals comprehensively, objectively, and in a broad perspective.

37. In the absence of a comprehensive picture of how the Panel’s recommendations would be implemented, his delegation had some specific questions about the Secretary-General’s proposals, for example, concerning the resources requested for electoral assistance and the duties to be carried out by staff members redeployed from the Department of Public Information. He would take those up during informal consultations.

38. His delegation had several broad concerns. First, he urged stricter compliance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure. Second, while it was clear that additional resources would be required to implement the key recommendations of the Panel, a commitment to implementation could not be made if a cap was maintained on the budget; zero nominal growth was counterproductive. Third, as a troop-contributing country, Bangladesh wondered why the Panel had not addressed the issue of rates for troop costs. Lastly, his

delegation considered that resources for peacekeeping should not be increased at the expense of the long-term effort to achieve sustainable development; the biggest deterrent to violent conflict was to address its root causes.

39. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) said that he supported the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

40. His delegation was satisfied with most of the comments and recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report. It supported the proposals of the Secretary-General for the first phase of implementation and found them amply justified.

41. The troop-contributing countries had expressed understandable concerns that had to be taken into consideration. One recent observation was of particular concern to his delegation. Peacekeeping staff, and particularly troops, were increasingly being provided by developing countries. Developed countries, citing the great dangers involved, were increasingly reluctant to contribute troops, thus depriving the international community of their considerable military resources. It was important to make a special appeal to the permanent members of the Security Council, whose role in peacekeeping was crucial.

42. Finally, he said that insistence on a knowledge of English was effectively turning away potential contributors to peacekeeping operations; it was, moreover, contrary to the Organization’s multilingual policy. While the Organization had six official languages, its working languages were French and English; knowledge of either of those languages should suffice.

43. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that he would respond to two issues that had been raised: the procedure for submitting resource requirements and the emergency proposal.

44. With regard to the first, he explained that the Secretary-General, acting on his own authority as Chief Executive Officer, had established the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and had secured its funding from voluntary contributions. Once the Panel had reported its recommendations (A/55/507-S/2000/809), the Secretary-General had passed them along to the Security Council and the General Assembly. At the same time he had submitted his own report and proposals (A/55/502) and had quantified the resources

that would be needed for implementing them (A/55/507), the aim being to facilitate concrete discussion and action. The Secretary-General had followed a similar procedure in 1997, when he had put forward his proposals for reform together with a document on the resources that would be required. No rules of procedure had been violated.

45. With regard to the second issue raised, he referred to the summary of document A/55/507, which made it clear that the resources being requested on an emergency basis related solely to the support account. The request was based on the Panel's recommendation for an emergency supplemental increase under the support account to allow immediate recruitment of additional personnel, particularly in the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809, para. 197 (c)). Other resources were also being sought, not on an emergency basis, but, as stated in the summary of document A/55/507, for immediate implementation of those recommendations that were ready for implementation as of January 2001.

46. In the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the Heads of State and Government had resolved to give the Organization the tools it needed for greater effectiveness in peace and security operations, had taken note of the report of the Panel, and had asked the General Assembly to consider the Panel's recommendations expeditiously. In the Secretary-General's view, it was incumbent upon him to provide the General Assembly as quickly as possible with a plan for implementing the proposals, an indication of which ones could be implemented as of January 2001, and the resources that would be required.

47. Clarifying the timing of the forthcoming comprehensive review of the management of peacekeeping operations, he said that the next report on the support account (covering the period from July 2001 to June 2002) would have to be ready by February 2001, and the proposed programme budget by April 2001, in order for them to be reviewed in timely fashion. The outcome of the comprehensive review would not be ready by then. The Secretary-General would therefore issue it later as a separate report, in time for the General Assembly's review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, and as a supplementary budget for the support account.

48. **Ms. Sun Minqin** (China) recalled her request for structure and staffing details relating to peacekeeping operations, including the adjustments proposed by the Advisory Committee.

49. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the current structure of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was set out in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. A future structure had been proposed in document A/55/57, but it would, of course, be reviewed in the light of the General Assembly's subsequent decisions with regard to posts. He would be happy to provide the representative of China informally with information about the structure of peacekeeping operations and a breakdown of current staff by grade and nationality.

50. **Mr. Dausá Céspedes** (Cuba), referring to the issue of procedure, said that his delegation had never doubted the Secretary-General's authority to convene the high-level Panel. The question was rather one of maintaining the credibility of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which was the body with recognized competence in the matter and which had been in session at the time the Panel had been set up.

51. He would be grateful for a list of the voluntary contributions used for funding the Panel.

52. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) replied that the Secretary-General had drawn on a trust fund created from personal and real property willed to the United Nations intended for the Organization's use in maintaining peace and security.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Capital master plan (A/55/7/Add.4 and A/55/117 and Add.1)

53. **Mr. Connor** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the capital master plan (A/55/117), said that the Secretary-General's proposal for a long-term capital master plan for United Nations Headquarters had been one of the three main themes planned for introduction in 2000. Also before the Committee were the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/55/7/Add.4), the affirmative nature of which was appreciated by the Secretariat, and a summary of information that the Advisory Committee had requested on the participation of host Governments and

local authorities in maintaining United Nations assets in their countries (A/55/117/Add.1).

54. A team of engineers and architects had examined the current state of the Headquarters complex during 1998 and 1999. Not surprisingly, they had found that, despite the original excellent construction, the buildings — particularly the building systems — had deteriorated to the point where maintenance could no longer keep pace. Equally important, they had found that the Organization was no longer in compliance with fire safety codes, accessibility standards or modern security requirements, which were now much stricter than they had originally been. Moreover, the buildings were very energy inefficient.

55. Given the inevitability of a major refurbishment and repair programme, the question was how to go about it. At present, repairs were made piecemeal through a series of biennial budgets, remedying the most urgent problems as they occurred. Projecting the costs of pursuing such a reactive approach over a 25-year period, the experts had concluded that it would entail spending almost \$1.2 billion and would not remedy some of the most significant problems. Capital costs plus energy costs, which now totalled about \$20 million a year, would grow to almost \$100 million annually by 2015, and over the 25-year period almost half a billion dollars would be spent on energy, much of it wasted.

56. Instead, the Secretariat was proposing a more far-sighted and sensible course of action. By means of a concentrated, planned and managed refurbishment programme — the capital master plan — each building would be raised to modern standards of fire safety, energy efficiency and accessibility, and hazardous materials such as asbestos would be completely removed. The upgrades, which could be completed in six years at an estimated cost of \$964 million, would cut energy consumption over 25 years to \$326 million instead of the projected \$490 million that would be incurred with the reactive approach.

57. During the construction period, to minimize disruption to work, meeting schedules and the phasing of construction would need to be carefully matched. Temporary office space would also be needed to accommodate approximately 1,000 staff members. The capital master plan estimates included the cost of renting new space created by the United Nations Development Corporation (UNDC), which was a major

partner in constructing the Headquarters complex. That was, however, only one option.

58. The capital master plan also offered a unique opportunity to make improvements, including the creation of conference rooms and the consolidation of scattered technology service spaces, that would relieve pressures for meeting space, permit more efficient use of technology, and make Headquarters more visitor-friendly. The Secretariat took note of the Advisory Committee's comments and would ensure that such plans would be realistic and not overly ambitious.

59. As for payment, one approach would be to have a special assessment throughout the duration of the programme — six years, or eight years including the design phase. Another was to borrow the money and repay it over the 25-year life of the improvements. Member States might wish to offer interest-free loans. Such a loan had been provided by the host country to cover the cost of initial construction and had been repaid from the regular budget over 30 years. The Secretariat believed that that was the best approach, but had investigated others as well. One possibility was to issue quasi-sovereign bonds, similar to those issued by the World Bank; that would involve making use of the good name and creditworthiness of individual Member States in order to obtain reasonable interest rates.

60. If the Member States provided interest-free loans for at least half the cost of the capital master plan, the Organization could borrow the remainder through a commercial bond offering. Construction, energy and interest costs would total \$1.61 billion, as compared with \$1.64 billion for the "reactive approach", but that approach would result in code-compliant, energy-efficient and technologically up-to-date buildings. Operationally and fiscally, the advantages of the master capital plan were clear, but the decision was up to the Member States.

61. The cost estimates presented were considered realistic. To avoid cost overruns, a very conservative, industry-standard costing method had been adopted, and financial contingencies had been built in for the many aspects of the project that could not yet be defined.

62. The next phase would be to draw up a detailed implementation plan, which would require an initial provision of \$8 million. The schematic design phase would cover design and analysis of the building systems, the swing space options, utility strategies,

energy-saving technologies, and products and systems. There would be close coordination with local authorities since, as observed by the Advisory Committee, the buildings would need to meet local health and safety codes. During that phase, an Advisory Group would be set to further develop the financing possibilities for implementation. The Secretariat took note of the Advisory Committee's observations about the role of the host country and the city and state authorities, which it agreed was pivotal to the resolution of the total funding picture. On completion of that phase, a comprehensive plan and detailed financing proposal would be submitted to the Member States for consideration and final decision.

63. As noted by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General would submit a separate proposal for a privately funded expansion of the Headquarters visitors' area at the resumed session in March 2001.

64. The capital master plan would prevent wasteful expenditures, preserve the unique buildings while giving them a current face, and provide a safe and dignified environment for the Organization's work.

65. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report (A/55/7/Add.4), said that detailed recommendations would be made after the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. The Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendations, meanwhile, were that the Secretary-General should be authorized to proceed with the preparation of the design plan and cost analysis and that an additional \$8 million should be appropriated under section 31 of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. By taking note of the Advisory Committee's report and endorsing it, the Fifth Committee would affirm the Secretary-General's statement that there was a need to address the problem; enable the appropriation of \$8 million; and authorize the Secretary-General to report to it on the result of the process at the fifty-sixth session.

66. **Ms. Sánchez Lorenzo** (Cuba) requested the Under-Secretary-General to provide written information on the relationship between other host countries and the offices of United Nations entities based in those countries.

67. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he had not fully understood the concept put forward by the

Under-Secretary-General as a solution to the funding for refurbishment. He requested further information on that and on the statement, in paragraph 5 of the Advisory Committee's report, that the Committee had been unable to ascertain that the assumptions contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/117) were a fair basis on which to assure that the Organization was protected against cost overruns. Lastly, he asked why the Advisory Committee had felt the need, in paragraph 7 of its report, to caution against presenting plans that might be unrealistic or over ambitious.

68. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) requested clarification as to what the Committee was being asked to do and how far it would be committed to a specific type of project. There was a risk that if only refurbishment was considered, less attention would be given to alternative options. If, however, \$8 million was to be spent without suitable financing arrangements put in place, the initial outlay might be wasted and a need for further expenditure might arise.

69. **Mr. Connor** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) stressed that the capital plan did indeed represent a major undertaking and no perfect solution could claim to have been found. So far, the Secretariat had merely provided an overview of how matters might develop. In answer to the question put by the representative of Cuba, he said that the relevant information had been provided in document A/55/117/Add.1. Host countries adopted different approaches, but collectively they had shown enormous support for the United Nations. As for the point raised by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, he said that there were numerous financing options, but the watchword must be caution. The possibilities included making lump sum assessments for specific purposes; making a series of assessments early in the years of the building programme which would carry the project through to completion; repeating the arrangement adopted at the time that the Headquarters building had been erected, whereby one member had paid the full cost and been repaid on a no-interest basis; or selling bonds to the public. Security would obviously be required for the latter option, but he had confidence in the suggested "lockbox" approach and the Organization would enjoy a quasi-sovereign interest rate for its debt.

70. He acknowledged that, although there was no intention to close the door on alternatives, the focus of the capital master plan was refurbishment. Some

modest expansion was also under consideration, however, with the provision of one large new conference room, several smaller ones and a consolidation of the space given to information technology.

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/55/7/Add.5 and A/55/645 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

71. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report (A/55/645 and Corr.1 and Add.1), said that the report's primary purpose was to identify adjustments required owing to variations in the rates of inflation and exchange and in standards assumed in the calculation of the initial appropriations. It also took into account additional mandates approved by the General Assembly and the Security Council and unforeseen and extraordinary items. He drew the Committee's attention to the adjustments presented in paragraph 3. There were four elements in those adjustments, the first of which — unforeseen and extraordinary expenses — was detailed in paragraphs 8 to 10 and related to peace and security, the International Court of Justice and interorganizational security measures. The second element — decisions of policy-making organs — related to the Millennium Summit, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), strengthening the capacity of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section and the global environmental forum. The third element dealt with variations in budgetary assumptions, the major one being changes in exchange rates set out in schedule 3 in document A/55/645/Add.1. He also drew attention to the revised inflation rates contained in schedules 1, 2 and 4, which were most notably due to high inflationary costs associated with utilities, in particular higher oil prices. As for adjustments to standard costs, those were due to lower salary average costs than had been projected and a higher level of vacancies in 2000, 8 per cent for staff in the Professional and higher categories and 2.6 per cent for staff in the General Service category, compared to the budgeted rate of 6.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively.

72. The fourth element — in response to resolutions of the General Assembly — dealt with issues such as the International Trade Centre, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, public information, including the radio pilot project for the

development of a United Nations international radio broadcasting capacity, the International Systems Coordinations Committee and various special political missions.

73. *Mr. Hae-yun Park (Republic of Korea) (Vice-Chairman) took the Chair.*

74. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report (A/55/7/Add.5) drew attention to a revision of footnote (a) in annex IV: the existing text should be replaced by the words "See A/C.5/55/24". The Advisory Committee's recommendations (para. 19) included approval of the net revised requirements of the Secretary-General, of \$2,120,651,100, an amount which was some \$53.7 million less than the initial appropriation. Those estimates would, however, have to be adjusted to take into account the decisions of the General Assembly on the additional requirements referred to in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report, the details of which were set out in annex I. He drew particular attention to the additional amount of \$22,111,900 required for special political missions over and above the \$90 million appropriated in the budget for the biennium 2000-2001. The details of those special political missions were set out in annex IV to the report. In that context, he noted that the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala would require nearly \$9 million, but that took account of the \$7 million remaining from the initial appropriation by the General Assembly.

75. **Ms. Samayoa** (Guatemala) said that the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala had been a success both for her country and for the United Nations and its continuation was most desirable. She hoped that the Committee would endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendation in that regard.

76. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) requested clarification on a number of issues arising from the Secretary-General's first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/55/645). Reference was made in paragraph 29 to a worldwide recruitment campaign to fill posts at the Economic Commission for Africa and he wondered what action was being taken in addition to the advertisements in international and regional publications. According to paragraph 31, many posts had still to be filled. In that context, he asked what the

nationalities of the candidates were. He also requested further details of the reclassification of three posts at the International Trade Centre, mentioned in paragraph 34, and asked why the amount of \$1.7 million required for the radio pilot project was being redeployed within the Department of Public Information (para. 40), since it was an important project. Lastly, he requested further details of the recruitment procedures for the United Nations Office at Nairobi, with a view to its functioning as an autonomous conference centre. All posts for translators and interpreters were to have been filled by 2001, yet the report made no mention of any progress made.

77. **Mr. Orr** (Canada), referring to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/55/7/Add.5), requested an update of the figures included in annex I: it would be helpful for the Committee to have a clearer understanding of what budget levels it was to approve.

78. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Budget Division) said, with regard to recruitment for the Economic Commission for Africa, that the Office of Human Resources Management was making a special effort to fill the vacant posts, but a minimum period was nonetheless required. A task force had been established by the Office and the Commission and vacancy notices had been prepared with a view to launching an advertising campaign, the fruits of which would be seen in 2001. He could give no immediate information on the nationalities of candidates. As for the question of translators and interpreters for the United Nations Office at Nairobi, arrangements were moving forward, coordination between the departments concerned was good and there were sufficient resources to provide for a full team, but the challenge was to find individuals who were prepared to relocate to the duty station. With regard to the redeployment of resources within the Department of Public Information, he said that such redeployment had been foreseen at the time that General Assembly resolution 54/249 had been adopted; no extra funds were to have been made available. Lastly, he would provide further information later on the situation concerning the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

79. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed concern that the planned recruitment for interpreter and other posts at the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Office at Nairobi had not yet taken place and indicated that he would raise that matter during informal consultations.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1: United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (A/55/680; A/C.5/55/24)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1: The critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/55/677; A/C.5/55/26)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.42: The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development (A/55/674; A/C.5/55/27)

80. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the statements submitted by the Secretary-General on programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1 concerning the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) (A/C.5/55/24), draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1 regarding the critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (A/C.5/55/26) and draft resolution A/55/L.42 concerning the situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development (A/C.5/55/27).

81. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the reports of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolutions in question. Referring to the report concerning MINUGUA (A/55/680) he said that the adoption of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1 would involve additional requirements of \$16,235,400, of which \$7,243,200 would be charged against the existing provision for special political missions and an additional appropriation of \$8,992,200 under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (para. 15). With regard to the report on draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1 on the critical situation of INSTRAW (A/55/677), he drew attention to the Advisory Committee's statement in paragraph 8 that it was not in a position, from a technical point of view, to confirm the estimate of the Secretary-General because of the wording of the draft

resolution. The General Assembly would first have to decide what form of assistance should be provided to INSTRAW and then what amount should be allocated. Turning to the report on draft resolution A/55/L.42 on the situation in Central America (A/55/674), he drew attention to the Advisory Committee's recommendation that since the adoption of the draft resolution would involve a continuation of the activities authorized the previous year, an additional appropriation of \$191,800 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

82. **Mr. Lenefors** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed support for the recommendations of the Advisory Committee with regard to the draft resolutions on MINUGUA (A/55/L.33/Rev.1) and the situation in Central America (A/55/L.42). However, while he fully supported the important work done by INSTRAW, he felt that some aspects of the statement by the Secretary-General and the report of the Advisory Committee with regard to the funding and needs of INSTRAW were unclear and he therefore requested that brief informal consultations should be held in order to seek clarification.

83. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) expressed support for the recommendations regarding MINUGUA and Central America and stressed the importance of INSTRAW. However, his delegation had some concerns about the difficulties which INSTRAW seemed to be facing as a result of a lack of financial and other support from donor countries. That situation must be resolved, but the language of the draft resolution was unclear, the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications was ambiguous and the response from the Advisory Committee was likewise vague. It would therefore be difficult for the Committee to act. He would seek further clarification during informal consultations on the current status of pledges to INSTRAW made and received in 2000, what any exceptional amounts approved would be used for, whether INSTRAW had performance standards and appropriate accounting mechanisms to ensure that funds were used wisely, and the "technical" problem mentioned by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 8 of its report (A/55/677).

84. Recalling that in resolution 54/140 the General Assembly had urged that the use of all six official languages on the Institute's web site should be ensured (para. 10), requested the Secretary-General to correct the administrative anomalies noted in the report of the

Joint Inspection Unit (para. 11) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide support in setting up the new structure and working method for the Institute (para. 12), he asked whether those provisions had been complied with. With reference to paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of INSTRAW (A/55/385) regarding the feasibility of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS), he said he wondered whether, in the light of the statement on programme budget implications, the GAINS project would still receive the required support.

85. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to the three draft decisions the text of which had been circulated to members of the Committee, expressed support for all three and regretted the request for informal consultations on INSTRAW. With regard to that important institution, he noted that the pledges received for 2001 were less than one quarter the amount pledged for 1999 and said that the United Nations must decide whether it wished INSTRAW to continue operations or not. Given the importance of gender issues and the advancement of women, failure to support INSTRAW would threaten the credibility of the United Nations and the Fifth Committee. Even the addition of some \$800,000, which he hoped would not be opposed, would leave the Institute with a much smaller budget than in 1999.

86. Recalling the 24-hour rule and the policy on the provision of translations of draft resolutions and decisions in all official languages, he insisted that translations of the three draft decisions should be provided before action was taken.

87. **Mr. Hassan** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed concern at the uncertain future facing INSTRAW. The Institute had a long history of problems which had discouraged some donors, but the situation had now reached a critical stage and the Institute's very existence was threatened unless the United Nations took immediate action to revitalize it. He had hoped that no further informal consultations would be necessary, and appealed to delegations to be flexible and take action as soon as possible.

88. **Mr. Paredes** (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria and stressed the urgency of an effective response to the financial crisis facing

INSTRAW, the only United Nations body of its kind. Although he regretted the call for further informal consultations, his delegation would work to resolve any outstanding issues and hoped that consultations would lead to an appropriate solution.

89. **Mr. Fox** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, supported the call for further informal consultations to clarify some concerns remaining with regard to INSTRAW, but proposed that the Committee should nevertheless take action on the draft decisions on MINUGUA and Central America.

90. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria. He noted INSTRAW's greatly reduced budget, the threat of its imminent closure and the consequences that that would have on gender issues, and urged the Committee to provide the Institute with the necessary funding for 2001.

91. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) supported the proposal made by the representative of Australia. Since no objections had been raised to the draft decisions on MINUGUA and Central America, action could be taken on those two items.

92. **Mr. Lenefors** (Sweden) said that he had only called for informal consultations with regard to the draft decision on INSTRAW in order to ensure that the Institute was provided with a truly sound financial basis so that it could continue its important work. He agreed with the representatives of Argentina and Australia that action could be taken on the draft decisions regarding MINUGUA and Central America.

93. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation did not object to the adoption of any of the three draft decisions, but he reiterated his insistence that, in accordance with the policies and rules of the Committee, translations of the three draft decisions must be provided in all six official languages.

94. **Mr. Acakpo-Satchivi** (Secretary of the Committee) said that there had been no violation of the rules of the Committee since the text circulated to Committee members had been taken word for word from the relevant reports of the Advisory Committee (A/55/674, para. 4, A/55/677, paras. 8-9 and A/55/680, para. 15) which had been translated into all six official languages and which were available to delegations. No further delay for retranslation should therefore be necessary.

95. **Ms. Alvarez** (Dominican Republic) recalled that on 4 December the General Assembly had delayed action on six Third Committee resolutions, including one on INSTRAW until the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee had had an opportunity to report on the programme budget implications of those resolutions. She stressed the need to move quickly before the General Assembly recessed on 22 December and said that all three draft decisions should be dealt with at the same time.

96. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic), in response to the Secretary's statement, said that whether or not the draft decisions in question had been taken word for word from reports which existed in all six official languages was not relevant. He again insisted that the three draft decisions should be translated into all six official languages; given their brevity, that should not require a great deal of time. He also objected to the tone used by the Secretary in his statement and wished to register an official complaint about the lack of courtesy shown which was totally inappropriate for a secretariat official addressing the representative of a sovereign State.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.