



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th 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 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/36/407 and Add.1, A/36/432 and Add.1 and 2, A/37/30, annex I, A/37/143, A/37/378 and Add.1, A/37/469 and Add.1, A/37/528 and Add.1; A/C.5/37/5, A/C.5/37/6 and Corr.1, A/C.5/37/24, A/C.5/37/26, A/C.5/37/34, A/C.5/37/45)

1. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that, where recruitment was concerned, his delegation had always called for strict application by the United Nations Secretariat of Article 101 of the Charter, the basic principles of which were the necessity of securing "the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity" and the recruitment of staff "on as wide a geographical basis as possible", those principles being closely interrelated.
2. The Secretariat could not properly carry out all the functions assigned to it under the Charter unless staff were recruited on the basis of the desirable range established for each Member State, without discrimination at any level and without preference being given to one State or group of States. The imbalance which had grown up over the years had no doubt been reduced, as could be seen from the various reports before the Committee. Credit for that was due mainly to the Secretary-General and to those in charge of the Office of Personnel Services and of some departments, but the progress achieved was still minimal. It was not enough that more than a quarter of the Member States were unrepresented or under-represented, but it was outrageous that they should include founding Members of the Organization.
3. The fact that a number of countries had not reached the lower limit of their desirable range meant that full implementation of the Charter principle was even more remote than it appeared to be. While some countries had been overrepresented for years, Eastern Europe had not yet reached the lower limit of its range. That was mainly due to the continued illicit recruitment of nationals of countries which had already reached their upper limit.
4. One of the main obstacles to genuine and fair representation of all Member States was the practice of granting permanent contracts, apparently on the ground that there was a need to retain high-quality staff. That argument was not very convincing, for in many cases the true purpose was quite different; such practices as internal promotion and the movement of staff from the General Service category to the Professional category, and the fact that there were so many staff training programmes, clearly showed that staff members holding permanent contracts were after a time no longer capable of performing their duties with the necessary competence and that the administration tried to find ways of using them in other posts. His delegation was convinced that the predominance of permanent contracts over fixed-term contracts impaired the efficiency of the Organization by preventing the replacement of staff members who were no longer capable of carrying out new or more complex programmes. By defending the system of permanent contracts, the overrepresented countries blocked the way for the under-represented or unrepresented countries and thus impeded any improvement in the performance of the Secretariat. His delegation called for the abolition of permanent contracts and

(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

for priority recruiting of nationals of unrepresented or under-represented countries. Action must also be taken to ensure that all departments and offices, without exception strictly applied the principle of equitable geographical distribution on a regional basis; any obstruction would be a violation of the rules and principles governing the activities of the Organization.

5. The promotion of staff from the General Service category to the Professional category was actually a way of recruiting staff who were often poorly qualified and many of whom were from overrepresented countries. It was therefore an impediment to equitable geographical distribution and should be used only in exceptional cases.

6. The situation of women in the Professional category had been the subject of extensive studies relating to the recruitment of women, improvement of their working conditions and their opportunities for training and promotion. However, the appointment of women to posts subject to geographical distribution must be kept within the limits of the desirable range established for each Member State; otherwise, the existing imbalance would be increased.

7. The Byelorussian SSR was gratified that it was no longer among the under-represented States, but wished to point out that it had not yet reached the midpoint of its range and that all the posts it held were under fixed-term contracts. Moreover, despite the fact that it was a founding State, none of its nationals had ever, over a period of more than 30 years, held a senior post. It called for efforts to improve its situation, including its level of representation, thus enabling it to participate as it would wish to do in the current affairs of the Organization.

8. None of those problems were new. The solutions were known but were implemented only very slowly because there were too many errors and too many violations of and departures from the rules. The desired results could be achieved only through radical measures, implemented with the necessary political will, especially in connection with medium-term recruitment. In that respect, the conclusions of the JIU studies (A/36/407 and A/37/378) and the recommendations of the Inspectors merited particular attention.

9. Mr. HERRERA (Venezuela), referring to General Assembly resolution 33/143, which provided that the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution should be increased to 25 per cent of the total over a four-year period, pointed out that, under the terms of the Charter, no restriction should be placed on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality, provided that they met the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and were recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

10. Posts subject to geographical distribution should not, therefore, be the monopoly of any State or group of States. It was a cause for concern that the developing countries, including Venezuela, were still under-represented in the United Nations system. He noted, however, that the number of unrepresented Member States had been reduced from 23 to 17.

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(Mr. Herrera, Venezuela)

11. With regard to the issues studied by the International Civil Service Commission, he said that the Commission should continue its efforts to unify the international civil service and to formulate a policy adapted to international realities. For instance, the remuneration of staff members should take into account, inter alia, their duty station. Venezuela was not in favour of a 5 per cent increase in staff salaries; the United Nations could not escape the impact of the international economic crisis and of the recession in all countries.
12. Professional staff recruitment policies must be thoroughly reviewed. For instance, locally-recruited staff should be nationals of the country where the United Nations had its offices. He pointed out in that connection that Venezuela was under-represented in the Professional staff of the UNDP Office at Caracas. ICSC should also draw up guidelines for limiting the time a staff member could spend in one country, in order, inter alia, to prevent the accumulation of personal interests incompatible with the interests of the Organization.
13. In the view of his delegation, the statutory retirement age should be somewhere between 60 and 65. His delegation also believed that the education grant and the dependency allowance should be payable to all staff members without discrimination, since the decision to found a family ought not to be influenced by the Organization.
14. Mr. PRASAD (India) said that the recommendations contained in the two JIU reports on career development in the international civil service were based on the need to ensure a high degree of professionalism, job security and reasonable opportunities of advancement and provided the foundation on which the edifice of personnel management within the United Nations system could be built, according to the requirements of the individual organizations.
15. There was a need to formulate productivity norms and appraisal methods for United Nations personnel, which would be of value in determining whether personnel were fit for promotion and in evaluating the work of consultants.
16. Progress had been made in the classification of personnel into occupational groups; that would provide encouragement to Professionals joining the system at the junior level by determining their career path and thus offering them prospects of advancement.
17. While, generally speaking, recruitment by competitive methods was to be encouraged, at the senior professional level greater emphasis should be given to broad-based interviews designed to test whether candidates possessed the necessary ability for, among other things, developing international co-operation through multilateral institutions.
18. The professional performance of consultants should be assessed on an objective basis at the end of each assignment. He noted in that connection that the majority of consultants came from the developed countries of Europe and North America and urged that efforts should be intensified to recruit more consultants from developing countries which already possessed institutions having the necessary expertise in

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(Mr. Prasad, India)

many spheres and providing services that were likely to prove more economical than those of comparable institutions in developed countries. Finally, with regard to the remuneration of consultants, there should be no discrimination between those who were former United Nations staff members and were receiving United Nations pensions and those who might be receiving pensions from other sources.

19. He concurred with the Chinese delegation in asking that the population factor should be appropriately taken into account in the computation of the desirable ranges for each country. Moreover, since the achievement of the objectives of the medium-term plan depended largely on the persons responsible for executing it, annual recruitment work plans and the overall recruitment plan should dovetail into the medium term with a view to optimum use of the human resources of the system.

20. His delegation felt strongly that recruitment by internal promotion should be limited; vacancies should be brought to the notice of as many candidates as possible in order to ensure that only the best were recruited.

21. The question of access for representatives of the staff to the Fifth Committee called for two comments: one, that the selection of staff unions and associations whose representatives might be heard should be based on objective criteria, and, two, that those representatives should be permitted to speak in the Fifth Committee only when it deemed that relevant in considering the agenda item.

22. Mr. AL-ERYANY (Yemen), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143), observed that whereas 41 Member States had been under-represented or not represented on 30 June 1982, 41 new staff members had been recruited from overrepresented countries. That seemed to run counter to the principle of equitable geographical representation. The Arab countries were under-represented and that situation should be corrected promptly. The system of permanent appointments created a situation in which two thirds of all Professional and higher posts were occupied by permanent staff, thereby impeding equitable distribution within the Secretariat and allowing one group of countries to predominate. Despite the resolutions of the General Assembly, there were still posts that were a perquisite of certain Member States.

23. As for the position of women within the Secretariat, commendable efforts had been made at the recruitment level since, as paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report stated, the measures taken under resolution 33/143 had led to a rise of 4.4 per cent in the number of women in the Secretariat.

24. The Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff members (A/C.5/37/34) reported on the cases of 166 United Nations employees, chiefly from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), arrested by Israeli troops in Lebanon, 129 of whom were still being detained. His delegation was surprised at the brevity of the Secretary-General's comments on that problem, whereas the case of a single UNESCO employee occupied several pages of the report. Moreover, it was not the first time that Israel had violated the provisions of international law, as

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(Mr. Al-Eryany, Yemen)

the United Nations well knew. His delegation accordingly demanded that the Secretary-General should become involved and do his utmost to have the staff members in question released.

25. Mr. BASHARAT ALI (Bangladesh) said that he was gratified that the target for the appointment of nationals of under-represented or unrepresented Member States had been met during the period from July 1981 to June 1982. The medium-term recruitment plan that the Office of Personnel Services was completing should improve the situation still further. Nevertheless the Secretary-General should redouble his efforts to accelerate the pace of increase in the representation of developing countries in the senior and policy-formulating posts, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 35/210. On the other hand, the target of having 25 per cent of posts subject to geographic distribution occupied by women staff members had not been reached, but a trend had been set in that direction and the medium-term recruitment plan was expected to hasten the process.

26. It was stated in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/37/143) that staff having permanent resident status in but not the nationality of the country of their duty station were not subject to the principle of geographical distribution. His delegation would welcome clarification on that point.

27. Under paragraphs 1 (c) and 2 of section II of resolution 35/210 the General Assembly had allocated 240 posts, to be distributed among all regions, to the population factor. His delegation asked what the criteria for determining the levels of those posts were.

28. In paragraph 43 of their report (A/C.5/37/24) the staff unions and associations of the United Nations Secretariat expressed the view that the 30 per cent quota of P-1 and P-2 level posts laid down by the General Assembly for the promotion of General Services staff to the Professional category was insufficient. They asked that the quota should be raised to 50 per cent. The Secretary-General considered that percentage fair and reasonable. The matter should not be considered in isolation, however, because it was inextricably linked with the concept of geographical distribution. To alter the existing quota might threaten the delicate balance of geographical distribution of Professional posts in the Secretariat.

29. The cause of all those difficulties lay in the fact that the concept of geographical distribution was not applied, directly or indirectly, to the General Services category, the composition of which in no way reflected the international character of the Organization. As matters stood, only 30 countries were occupying the overwhelming majority of posts in the General Services category. Reference to the data on the situation in New York on 30 June 1982 would reveal that only 2 countries had more than 200 staff members, 4 countries more than 100, 9 more than 50 and 14 more than 30 staff members, and that only 28 countries had more than 15 persons in that category. In the circumstances the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the quota would merely add to the difficulties and allow the imbalance in the General Services category to creep into the Professional category.

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(Mr. Basharat Ali, Bangladesh)

30. In fact, it was the recruitment procedures that were to blame for that anomalous situation. Staff regulation 4.2 exempted General Services staff from the geographical distribution rule. Staff in that category were therefore locally recruited, and that prevented nationals of countries that could provide personnel from occupying various types of posts in that category. Their nationals had to obtain the necessary visas, to travel to a headquarters city and to apply for a job which they might very well not obtain. Consideration should therefore be given to the possibility of recruiting a limited number of General Services staff through United Nations offices in Member States so as to make the Secretariat representative at all levels. The Secretariat might carry out a study on the subject and identify the parameters to be taken into account, bearing in mind that while procedures and regulations were there to solve problems, there was nothing sacred about them.

31. Mr. SLØRDAHL (Norway) said the Nordic countries, on whose behalf he was speaking, shared the concern expressed by other delegations at the many cases of arrest and detention of international civil servants reported by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/37/34. In some cases the executive heads concerned had been able to secure, to a great extent, compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 36/232. Nevertheless, the Nordic countries were perturbed about the increasing number of arrests and the lack of progress in many of the cases previously reported.

32. The United Nations Charter and the resolutions and conventions adopted by the General Assembly stated quite clearly the rights which the officials of the United Nations system had when exercising their functions. It was for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the executive heads of the specialized agencies to determine the scope of those functions. Consequently, it was of paramount importance that they should gain access to arrested or detained staff members in order to be able to determine whether immunity should be waived.

33. The Nordic countries welcomed the measures adopted by the Secretary-General in the light of the recommendations of the United Nations Task Force on the Safety and Security of the International Civil Service. Those measures would help to preserve the immunity of officials, which was an integral part of an independent international civil service. The Nordic countries therefore appealed to all Member States to recognize and fully respect the independent status of the international civil service and the privileges and immunities accorded to it.

34. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), said that the documentation on personnel questions was so voluminous that the Committee would find it impossible to draw up appropriate guidelines. The Committee itself was responsible to some extent for that situation. It had failed to entrust the International Civil Service Commission, at the time of the latter's establishment, with the task of elaborating recommendations on personnel questions. Currently, the work of the secretariat of ACABQ overlapped with that of ICSC, although the latter was supposed to be the only body authorized to consider personnel questions. The other bodies which dealt with those questions did not co-ordinate their work with ICSC, with the result that time and resources were squandered. In his delegation's opinion, ICSC should play a far more active role in the area of

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(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

personnel questions and remuneration, as provided for by its statute. It was time to introduce some order in that area and to stem the flow of documentation.

35. As to the composition of the Secretariat, his delegation would appreciate some information from the Office of Personnel Services concerning the geographical distribution of posts by region, with an indication of the proportion of posts assigned to the population factor in each case.

36. Mr. GODFREY (New Zealand) reminded the Committee of the Secretary-General's statement to the effect that the General Assembly guidelines on personnel matters constituted a suitable framework within which to achieve the desired results and that it would be premature to issue new guidelines. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that he, as chief administrative officer, should be given the opportunity to tackle the many problems which existed. Its attitude towards ICSC was similar: ICSC should itself take the initiative to make desirable modifications in the conditions of service of the international civil servants, provided that such changes were based on technical, as distinct from political, factors.

37. While good progress was being made in the area of equitable distribution of posts, the same could not be said of the situation of women in the Secretariat. The target for the proportion of women had not been reached and, in fact, the gains had been only marginal. All concerned must therefore redouble their efforts to recruit women with the necessary qualifications.

38. The study carried out by ICSC on the concepts of career was a useful one, and it was reassuring to note that JIU had proposed similar recommendations in its second report on the same question. The various proposals needed now to be examined in detail, and steps should be taken to ensure that the two studies were acted on. His delegation assumed that the necessary measures would be incorporated in the plan of action proposed by the Secretary-General, but would be grateful to know how the Secretariat intended to proceed.

39. His delegation was still studying the question of a possible salary increase for Professional staff but, like other delegations, thought that the political climate was unfavourable for such an increase. The technical arguments for the increase could not simply be ignored, however. It was important to know whether the present level of Professional salaries was causing recruitment problems, not only in the United Nations but also in the specialized agencies.

40. In the present circumstances it was all the more necessary to look carefully at various selective improvements in conditions of service whose purpose was to deal with specific problems. His delegation supported what ICSC was doing in the area of rent subsidies for duty stations where rents were inordinately high. It trusted that ICSC would complete its study of the proposed scheme as soon as possible. It also supported the increase in the children's allowance and the modest improvement in the conditions of eligibility for the education grant. The level of the former had remained unchanged for eight years; in connection with the latter, there was still a number of problems which ICSC should study further.

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(Mr. Godfrey, New Zealand)

41. In a statement to the Committee on 9 November the Secretary-General had referred to the differences in the principles governing the remuneration of the Professional and the General Service staff, respectively. Those differences existed for valid reasons and it sometimes seemed that misunderstandings about them led to unrealistic expectations on the part of some staff. What was necessary was to treat both categories of staff fairly and to examine recommendations for improvements in the case of either category impartially.

42. The Secretary-General should be given greater flexibility with regard to the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category. One method might be to institute a roster of General Service staff who had passed the competitive examination, in the same way as was done for candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries. Movement from the General Service to the Professional category should be in harmony with the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the geographical distribution of posts.

43. Much had been said about staff morale. High morale depended primarily on respect for the principles of good management; it was not simply a matter of salaries and conditions of service. If fairness, impartiality and efficiency were lacking in the Organization, no amount of money would compensate career staff for their absence.

44. Concern for staff morale had been one of the reasons why his delegation had supported the idea of staff access to the Fifth Committee. It would be recalled that it had been the New Zealand delegation which had formally proposed that the Committee should hear the representative of FICSA. His delegation could also have supported the suggestion to hear, at the current session, a representative of the Co-ordinating Committee. However, at the present stage in the deliberations and because the hearing of the staff was a new development, it would not be unreasonable to wait until the next session of the General Assembly before considering changes to or an extension of the present procedures. At that time the Committee would have the benefit of the studies which were being conducted by ICSC and CCAQ on the whole question of staff representation.

45. It seemed to his delegation that at future sessions items 111 (Personnel questions) and 112 (Report of the International Civil Service Commission) could be considered together. Alternatively, the Committee could consider the ICSC report first and then take up the item on personnel questions.

46. Mr. HUSSAINI (Palestine Liberation Organization) referred to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and specialized agencies and related organizations (A/C.5/37/34), where it was stated that 166 UNRWA staff - teachers, administrators, nurses and doctors - had been arrested in Lebanon by the Israeli armed forces. He was amazed that the arrest of those officials had been dealt with in a few lines, whereas the case of a UNESCO official, Mr. Percy Stulz, had received five pages. The UNRWA officials arrested by the Israelis had been among the 15,000 to 20,000 Palestinians taken prisoner, beaten and tortured by the Israeli army.

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(Mr. Hussaini, PLO)

47. He cited at length an article published on 5 August 1982 in the Christian Science Monitor, which described the treatment received by prisoners. In the same context, he also quoted passages of articles published on 22 and 29 June 1982 in The Village Voice, on 2 and 21 July 1982 in The New York Times, on 28 June 1982 in The Baltimore Sun and on 8 November 1982 in The Jerusalem Post.

48. Referring to paragraph 37 of the report, which concerned travel restrictions imposed on international civil servants, he said that those restrictions were part of a brutal campaign pursued by the Israeli military authorities, which had imposed military curfews, demolished houses and arrested many residents of the Palestinian refugee camps. He cited articles that had appeared in The Jerusalem Post of 27 October and 3 November, and in Ha'aretz of 31 October, and emphasized the position taken by Amnesty International.

49. His delegation therefore urged the Secretary-General to take all immediate measures for the release of the international civil servants who had been arrested, so that they might return to their work, which was of an essential nature. He added that the United Nations and the international community must impose the necessary sanctions against the Zionist entity, which had violated the most basic norms, laws and regulations of the Charter and of international law.

50. He ended by quoting with emotion from an article in the Canadian Toronto Star of 4 November concerning a young, badly deformed Palestinian girl who had made a symbolic appeal to the international community for an end to the sufferings of the Palestinians.

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

51. Mr. KRISTIANSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the 10 States members of the European Economic Community, noted that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had thoroughly discussed the question of an increase in the level of remuneration for those in the Professional and higher categories without being able to agree on a recommendation. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Secretary-General had urged the Fifth Committee to increase salaries by 5 per cent, one of the arguments in favour being the loss of purchasing power in recent years, compared to the increase in the real value of remuneration of national civil servants in the other countries where the headquarters of the organizations of the United Nations system were located.

52. In that connection, the States members of EEC wished to state their firm commitment to the Noblemaire principle, but noted that the margin between the remuneration of United Nations staff and that paid in the United States federal civil service had increased since 1977/78 from 9 per cent to about 18 per cent. Since the margin recommended by the 1971-1972 Special Committee had been 15 per cent, the members of EEC concluded that the Noblemaire principle was well adhered to. They therefore saw no reason justifying support for a salary increase, especially since the remuneration of civil service employees of equivalent levels had decreased in real terms since 1975 in most of the States members of EEC,

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(Mr. Kristiansen, Denmark)

owing to economic problems. A further increase would simply strengthen the impression that the United Nations was out of touch with current economic realities. Further, that increase would entail significant additional expenditure, and would affect the funds available for voluntarily funded multilateral activities.

53. On the other hand, while the 10 members of EEC opposed a general salary increase, they did not rule out the possibility of using selective action to solve special problems faced by some groups of staff members. The high housing costs for newcomers to New York and some other headquarter duty stations were a very serious problem and ICSC should give the highest priority to the study it had undertaken concerning the impact on the post adjustment system of an extension of the rental subsidy schemes.

54. With regard to child allowances, which had not been increased since 1 January 1975, the 10 members of EEC supported the recommendation of ICSC to increase the allowance from \$450 to \$700. That would entail, according to the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/37/37), an appropriation of \$1.3 million in 1983 for the United Nations alone and, for the entire system, a total of \$4.9 million. They also supported the decision of ICSC to raise the child allowances for General Service personnel.

55. On the other hand, the members of EEC had reservations on the recommendation of ICSC to increase the installation grant with effect from 1 January 1983. They questioned the basis on which the actual increases had been decided, in view of the unconvincing arguments presented in the report.

56. Mrs. van DRUENEN LITTLE (Netherlands) said that her delegation felt that it would have been better to deal with item 112 before item 111. It also noted that there was sometimes a considerable divergence between the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and those of ICSC. In order to facilitate a decision, she reiterated the suggestion put forward in 1981 by Mr. Bertrand, of JIU, concerning the submission to Member States of a short-list of personnel policy options. She also welcomed the initiative taken by the ICSC secretariat to identify those areas in the JIU report (JIU/REP/82/3, attached to document A/37/528) and in the ICSC annual report, annex I, where points of convergence and divergence existed; she would like to see that approach followed in future reports.

57. Her delegation had always considered it preferable to hear the opinion of the staff during the Committee's deliberations. Without wanting to determine how the staff should be represented, her delegation was of the opinion that the Committee should not interfere unnecessarily in staff-management relations, something which was avoidable provided there existed orderly mechanisms through which ways and means for implementing personnel policies could be defined.

58. As for the need to protect United Nations and its staff members from undue pressure and threats, her delegation was glad to note that the Secretary-General was seriously committed to doing everything within his power to maintain the integrity and independence of the staff.

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(Mrs. van Druenen Little, Netherlands)

59. With regard to the unanimous recommendation of ACC concerning a possible increase of net salaries for staff in the Professional and higher categories, her delegation felt that the Committee should address itself to those questions which, from a social point of view, were more urgent, and it hoped that action would be taken, for instance, in regard to the housing situation of staff members who had recently arrived or were due to arrive in New York.

60. For the system as a whole, her delegation was much more concerned about certain proposals that would apply rigidly the principle of equitable geographical distribution to every department or section of the various organizations. She also thought that an increase in the number of fixed-term contracts as opposed to career appointments ran counter to the independence of the staff and to the notion of rational planning of human resources.

61. Turning to the question of career development, she said that her delegation supported the position of ICSC on human-resources planning, but held the view that grade linking was incompatible with the systematic approach chosen by ICSC.

62. Her delegation also supported the idea of ICSC that all appointees should, after a probationary period or perhaps three years, be considered for career service. Such prospects were necessary for staff morale.

63. As for the method of calculating post adjustment, she believed that a change might be made within the framework of a comparative study of total compensation.

64. Mr. ZAPICO (Spain) said that his delegation attached much importance to the work of ICSC, which affected the functioning of all the organizations of the United Nations system; decisions concerning staff remuneration, promotion and career development should be based on the principles of the independence of the international civil service, uniformity and equity.

65. His delegation noted with satisfaction that ICSC had succeeded in defining the means of adjusting cost-of-living differential factors in respect of staff in the Professional and higher categories who had retired in those countries where the rates of taxation on pensions were lower than the tax rates taken into account in the calculation of base pensions. It regretted, however, that ICSC had been unable to elaborate a special index for pensioners and was concerned at the slow progress made. In order to ensure maintenance of the purchasing power of pensioners, it was important to submit as soon as possible proposals concerning the special index that would take account of those factors other than rates of taxation which had a noticeable effect on the real value of pensions.

66. In view of the divergent opinions of ICSC and the United States delegation on the comparison of total compensation received by international civil servants, particularly where the age of retirement was concerned, his delegation felt that ICSC should continue to study the issue of the age of retirement and submit a definitive proposal to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. For its part, his delegation believed that in comparing total compensation the elements

(Mr. Zapico, Spain)

of compensation connected with expatriate status listed in annex V to the ICSC report should be taken into account.

67. His delegation had given careful consideration to the arguments for and against a possible increase in salaries for the Professional and higher categories made by ICSC, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and FICSA. In current economic conditions, the immediate effect of a salary rise for international civil servants was likely to be a reduction in the resources allocated to economic and social programmes. Nevertheless, his delegation had not yet taken a final position and reserved the right to return to the matter later.

68. The study by ICSC on the concepts of career, types of appointment, career development and related questions should permit better use to be made of human resources. Flexibility must be used to enable the results of the study to be applied to the various bodies of the United Nations system; a joint, integrated approach might seem desirable in certain cases, but must arise naturally out of the situations facing the different bodies concerned.

69. His delegation wished to express its concern at the unacceptable infringements of the safety and immunities of United Nations officials, and the constant restrictions on the independence of the Organization.

70. Mr. SAKUMA (Japan) explained that, according to the Noblemaire principle, the remuneration offered by the United Nations should be somewhat higher than that offered by the highest-paying national civil service in order to attract staff from that national civil service to the United Nations. His delegation felt that there should be a 15 per cent margin between the two, and that the current method of comparison was still valid: the incorporation of other variables would only add to the confusion. Besides, nothing suggested that the Organization was having difficulty in recruiting qualified candidates from any Member State because of the level of remuneration it offered, which was still very high even if it did fall below private sector salaries in the United States.

71. His delegation had always assumed that ICSC's recommendations and conclusions were based on accurate statistical data and objective analysis, with the task of the Fifth Committee being to rule on the wisdom of those recommendations, not to judge their technical underpinning. But the representative of the Member State with the comparator civil service had declared that the ICSC study on the comparison of total compensation was technically deficient. ICSC should therefore re-examine the work to which objections had been raised before the Committee decided whether to include expatriate benefits in such a comparison.

72. For similar reasons his delegation was not yet able to take a stand on the increase in salaries for Professional staff. While it understood the positions adopted by the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, and the staff representative, he believed that the Commission could examine the problem more thoroughly on the basis of the Noblemaire principle. In that connection, the comparisons that ACC had made between salaries in the United Nations and in

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(Mr. Sakuma, Japan)

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and other organizations appeared irrelevant to the issue.

73. In his delegation's view, the current 18 per cent margin between the remuneration of United Nations and United States civil servants was satisfactory. Real purchasing power could not be the only criterion used in determining salary levels. Economic realities also had to be taken into account. For example, his own country was about to freeze the base salaries of all its civil servants. Under the circumstances it was difficult to justify a substantial increase in salaries for United Nations staff. As the post adjustment system provided automatic salary increments, it was inadvisable at present to raise base salaries.

74. The Commission had been right not to take a decision on the mandatory age of retirement. Although the proposal to raise the age to 62 had to be considered, that consideration should take place in the context of overall staffing policy. Such a move did seem likely to improve the actuarial position of the Pension Fund, but it had to be studied with all its ramifications, such as its effects on staff vitality and the question of promotions. His delegation accordingly intended to wait for the Commission's views on the issue before taking a decision.

75. The post adjustment system was one of the most complicated technical problems. Even after the consolidation of 30 points of post adjustment, base salaries remained smaller than the post adjustment at certain duty stations. In that context, his delegation welcomed the publication of a booklet on the post adjustment system, as announced by the Chairman of ICSC.

76. Vital as it might be for the compensation offered by the Organization to be high, that in itself would not guarantee the smooth functioning of the United Nations. The staff of the Organization must be prepared to devote their lives to the service of the international community. His delegation hoped staff members would understand that they must to some extent share the difficulties facing all Member States.

77. Mr. ALBANO (Philippines) said that his delegation had already emphasized the importance of career development as one of the pillars of a strong international civil service. It agreed with the proposal by ICSC to reduce the number of types of appointment if that would make staff management easier. Yet in view of the international nature of the standards applicable to the 20,000 employees of the common system, the existence of different types of appointment was hardly inconceivable. The problem was really one of turning fixed-term into permanent appointments. In some cases, staff members found themselves trapped at a certain level after several years of service and had to wait to be given a type of appointment corresponding to their seniority and qualifications. ICSC should issue guidelines allowing United Nations bodies to offer the appropriate type of appointment to their staff after, for example, five years of continuous and satisfactory service.

(Mr. Albano, Philippines)

78. His delegation endorsed the integrated approach to personnel policy advocated by ICSC, together with the concept of human resources planning as the basis of a systematic approach to integrated personnel management, taking into account the comments of the Joint Inspection Unit. It hoped to hear the views of ICSC on promotion policy, which was the touchstone of career development.

79. On the matter of the comparison of total compensation, careful attention should be paid to the objections raised by the delegation of the country with the comparator civil service in order to avoid conflicting interpretations of the data submitted to the Committee. In that connection, it might be advisable to review the methods followed by ICSC.

80. In view of increasing housing costs in New York and elsewhere, the Commission should consider the possibility of expanding the current rental subsidy system.

81. The restructuring of the grades in the General Service category on the basis of job classification standards was a major breakthrough and should significantly improve career prospects for thousands of staff members. His delegation would eventually like more detailed information on the salary scales applicable to those grades, and the relationship between them and the salaries offered on the outside job market.

82. His delegation was sorry that ICSC had been unable to take a decision on the question of the mandatory retirement age. The Joint Staff Pension Board had apparently recommended raising the retirement age to 62, but had done so since the publication of the ICSC report. Since some organizations had already extended the mandatory age beyond 60, the Secretary-General should take a decision on the matter as soon as possible. Finally, it was interesting to note that the Commission had been requested to study, in collaboration with the Pension Board, all possible measures to correct the actuarial imbalance of the Pension Fund. His delegation would like to know how ICSC intended to proceed with that task.

83. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) noted with satisfaction that ICSC had completed the comprehensive review of the post-adjustment system requested by the General Assembly in resolution 36/233. It was his delegation's expectation that the combined effect of the post adjustment and other benefits - such as the children's and assignment allowances and the installation grant - would offset other losses experienced by the staff.

84. His delegation also understood fully the Commission's decision to increase the children's allowance from \$450 to \$700, effective 1 January 1983. That decision, and similar ones such as the decision on differences in remuneration between men and women in Geneva and that on the education grant, were concrete evidence of further efforts by ICSC to improve conditions of service throughout the United Nations system. Those efforts must be pursued in order to consolidate the international civil service.

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(Mr. Ziniel, Ghana)

85. Because his delegation attached great importance to multilateral assistance, it believed that dedicated and competent field officers must administer such assistance. It therefore welcomed the Commission's continued interest in finding incentives to attract and retain competent field officers. In that connection, it regretted that the information on lists of qualifying duty stations given in Chapter VII of the ICSC report (A/37/70) was inadequate. At the thirty-fifth session, his delegation had expressed reservations about some criteria such as climate and isolation which had the potential for abuse. He would therefore like to have an indication of the criteria to be used to establish provisionally entitlements of duty stations which had not previously been examined, as well as information on the developments in the classification of duty stations alluded to in paragraph 223 of the report.

86. With regard to the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories, his delegation noted with concern that the representative of FICSA and some members of ICSC had attempted to extend the comparison to be made in application of the Noblemaire principle to salary levels in the private sector. As in the past, such a comparison could be made only with the actual remuneration of the United States federal civil service.

87. That attempt to broaden the application of the Noblemaire principle formed the basis of the demand now before the Commission for an increase in professional salaries. It should be pointed out that the margin between United Nations salaries and those of the United States federal civil service was currently 18.2 per cent, although in the past it had been decided that it should be 15 per cent and could even be reduced to reflect economic realities. If the Committee yielded to that demand, the margin would become a disturbing 23.2 per cent. All the arguments advanced in support of the increase did not address the central question: was the level of United Nations remuneration sufficient to attract high-calibre staff?

88. It could in fact be argued that United Nations salaries were unrealistically high and should be reduced. The world economic situation had worsened since the adoption of the programme budget for the 1982-1983 biennium and Member States had had to resort to austerity measures to the point that they were often no longer able to finance essential assistance programmes. At the recent Pledging Conference, the UNDP Administrator had advised developing countries to revise their estimates of United Nations assistance downwards by 55 per cent over the next three years. A salary increase would only aggravate the situation and Ghana could not therefore support it.

89. His delegation recognized the need to improve the comparison of total compensation between the comparator civil service and the international civil service. In resolution 36/233, however, the General Assembly had specifically excluded expatriate benefits from the envisaged studies. His delegation was surprised therefore that FICSA still expected the Commission to extend the study to include expatriate benefits. In the view of his delegation, the provisions of resolution 36/233 should be strictly adhered to and there was no need to allocate resources to the Commission for that purpose.

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(Mr. Ziniel, Ghana)

90. His delegation was also mystified by some of the arguments advanced in support of a review of total compensation for United Nations staff. For instance, it was argued that the fact that United Nations officials were forced to retire at the age of 60, while no such limitation existed on the United States side, represented a disadvantage to the international civil service.

91. In his delegation's view, that was in fact a definite advantage, for international civil servants could enjoy their retirement for a longer period of time. He was also aware that some retired international staff took up consultancy jobs at the United Nations and were thus in a financially comfortable position. Moreover, to raise the retirement age would conflict with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 33/143. Above all, that was a subjective judgement which should not be brought to bear on decisions affecting over 155 countries and more than 40,000 staff members.

92. Mr. BANGURA (Sierra Leone) endorsed the proposal made by the representative of New Zealand with regard to the order in which the Committee should consider the agenda items on the ICSC report and personnel questions.

93. With regard to recruitment policies, the various steps envisaged in the medium-term plan should conform to the principles of efficiency, competence and integrity. Due regard should also be paid to the recruitment of staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and the recruitment of personnel from developing countries to policy-making posts. Moreover, personnel from unrepresented and under-represented countries should not be recruited simply to enable the Secretariat to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly.

94. His delegation was encouraged by the target achieved in the recruitment of women to the Secretariat in the past year and hoped that further progress would be made in that direction within the framework of the medium-term recruitment plan.

95. With regard to the ratio between fixed-term contracts and permanent contracts, his delegation believed that fixed-term contracts were more suited to carrying out certain functions in certain United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. A balance should be struck between the two kinds of appointments, however, in order to ensure the necessary continuity and also equity in the distribution of posts in the Secretariat.

96. With regard to career development, the situation of staff members who had served in the Secretariat satisfactorily and continuously on fixed-term contracts for a period of five years or more should be given due consideration with a view to granting them a permanent appointment.

97. The supplementary payments made by certain governments to their nationals serving in the United Nations system were incompatible with the concept of an independent civil service. His delegation therefore supported the recommendation of ICSC that the practice of supplementary payments was unnecessary, inappropriate and undesirable and, moreover, inconsistent with the provisions of the Staff Regulations.

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(Mr. Bangura, Sierra Leone)

98. With regard to the remuneration of staff in the professional and higher categories, as a small developing country Sierra Leone would have some difficulties with increasing professional salaries because of the United Nations current financial emergency, although it supported the principle of fair and equitable remuneration.

99. The Fifth Committee must try to improve the conditions of service of United Nations staff members. In that connection, he noted that the education grant was so far awarded only to staff in the professional and higher categories. Such discrimination should perhaps be ended and a formula devised for extending the scope of the award to all officials in the common system.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.