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FIFTH COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 10 October 1979
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. PIRSON (Belgium)

later: Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico)

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Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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12 October 1979

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)
(A/34/6, Vol. I and II and Add.1, A/34/7; A/C.5/34/12 and 13)

1. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the year-by-year growth in the budget of the United Nations was a natural phenomenon to which his delegation did not object. His delegation supported the proposed programme budget (A/34/6), believing that the Secretary-General had to be given the resources he required to carry out the instructions given to him by the General Assembly. Real growth in the proposed budget had been limited to 0.8 per cent as a result of the need for financial austerity, and he hoped that the actual rate of growth, despite any increases or changes which the Committee might decide to recommend, would still be 0.8 per cent. As ACABQ had demonstrated (A/34/7, para. 9), even when planned growth in the past had been low, actual growth had been considerably higher.
2. His delegation supported the proposals of the Secretary-General relating to the Department of Public Information and was confident that the Department would take the necessary steps to impart new momentum to its work and make effective use of its resources.
3. He attached great importance to parts II and III of the proposed budget, dealing with **political** and Security Council affairs and decolonization, and hoped that further steps could be taken to safeguard peace throughout the world and to eliminate racism and colonialism, in pursuance of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. It was also important, however, that the measures contemplated should not remain simply ink on paper, and for that reason his delegation supported the view of the Advisory Committee that care must be exercised in allocating resources until it had been decided how those resources were to be used.
4. Turning to the budget proposals for the Department of Conference Services (Sect. 29), he remarked that although Arabic had nominally been a working language of the General Assembly and the Main Committees since 1973, the status of the Arabic language left much to be desired; in fact, Arabic was not being treated as a working language at all. Documents in Arabic were generally issued long after the discussion of the relevant agenda item had ended; records of meetings held during General Assembly sessions were not available in Arabic until the following July. The situation led to a certain amount of wastage and unjustified expenditure. Money was being spent on issuing documents in Arabic after the close of the conference or meeting at which they were discussed: as a result, they served only to swell the archives of the United Nations. Despite repeated complaints, the Secretariat had done nothing to remedy the situation; he could only conclude that behind the scenes a deliberate attempt was being made to obstruct the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on the use of Arabic as a working language, and he felt bound to ask what kind of action had been taken or should have been taken against those responsible.

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(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

5. His delegation was not prepared to allow the situation to remain as it was, and would insist on having the necessary administrative and financial steps taken promptly to remedy it and to spare the Fifth Committee the task of discussing the issue year after year.

6. It should be noted that, on the whole, the provision of Arabic language services, particularly in the Economic Commissions for Africa and Western Asia, was unsatisfactory and many delegations had complained about the obstacles placed in the way of the expansion of Arabic language services. He proposed that the Secretary-General should be asked to prepare a report on the status of the Arabic language in those two Commissions as a preliminary to taking measures to remedy the situation before the Fifth Committee moved on to discuss the question of the provision of Arabic language services.

7. As the work of the United Nations developed, many resolutions and programmes would be adopted which entailed specific requirements in terms of staff. His delegation did not object to staff increases provided that they did not exceed the real needs. The Secretariat should give careful consideration to all proposals for increasing staff before submitting them to the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. His delegation was surprised, for example, to learn that the Secretary-General had waived his request for 10 posts, as the Advisory Committee mentioned in paragraph 34 of its report (A/34/7).

8. His delegation agreed that ACABQ, following consultations with other bodies concerned and with the help of ICSC, should advise the Assembly on how best to proceed in the reclassification exercise. While a reclassification presupposed a substantial change in the nature of the functions associated with a given post, his delegation would rather see classification take place than let a post lie unused.

9. Turning to the question of improved career prospects for staff, he reminded the Committee of the situation in which some members of the language services had found themselves in late 1979 and early 1980. His delegation did not know what recommendations the Inquirer appointed to look into the events had made or the fate of the staff concerned; there was no mention of the subject in the budget documents. It had hoped at the time that the staff would not have to resort to strike action in order to draw attention to their position, but it understood the motives which had induced them to do so. The staff of the language services, it should be noted, were selected by means of a tough competitive examination and were required to possess very high educational qualifications, yet they were appointed at the P-2 or P-3 level, and after many years of hard work, the highest grade most of them could aspire to was P-4 - which meant one promotion during an entire career; the possibility of a second promotion was virtually non-existent, failing the death or retirement of the incumbent P-5 post. The low grading of the posts available to members of the language services and their lack of promotion prospects discouraged many qualified linguists from seeking work in the United Nations, and those already serving tended to look elsewhere for jobs affording better prospects. The Secretariat thus lost staff in whose training it had

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(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

invested considerable time and effort, and it consumed a great deal of time in looking for replacements. Experienced language staff should not be treated with such indifference. The fortunate and influential few experienced no difficulty in moving to posts in other departments, but those who were interested only in their work stood little chance of advancement. It was his delegation's hope that the necessary measures would be taken to apply the same standards of justice and equity in protecting interests of all staff of the Organization.

10. His delegation was disturbed by the increasing costs of official travel by staff members on missions. Some of the burden should be borne by the members of other United Nations bodies which adopted decisions and dispatched staff on missions in numbers which were quite out of proportion to the importance of the exercise. A limit should be set on the number of staff travelling on missions, and part of the savings so achieved could be applied to solving the problems of staff members who had been unfairly treated and to other more important work.

11. The units concerned with transnational corporations must have the resources they needed to shoulder their responsibilities: his delegation supported the Secretary-General's original proposals. On the other hand, the Advisory Committee had done well in not recommending any reduction in the appropriations for the Economic Commission for Europe; similar reasoning should have been used in the case of some other bodies.

12. As far as maintenance and construction were concerned, his delegation would prefer to see the resources directed towards activities other than extensive alterations to the General Assembly Hall and other facilities, and endorsed the opinions expressed by ACABQ in paragraphs 32.21 and 32.22 of its report (A/34/7).

13. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the Committee should, in drafting the budget, be guided by the awareness that the Organization's expenses must not be allowed to increase without limit; support for that view had been expressed at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly by a number of Member States whose aggregate contributions accounted for the funding of three quarters of all regular budget expenditure.

14. His delegation had noted with satisfaction from the Secretary-General's opening statement that it had been made incumbent on the Secretariat to display a particular measure of austerity, restraint and economy in its preparatory work for the budget. It was already clear, however, that the Secretariat had failed to comply with the decision by the General Assembly that budget estimates and the report of ACABQ should be transmitted to all Member States at least five weeks prior to the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly. The delay in the release of those documents had made it extremely difficult to examine them in detail. The Secretariat's short-comings in that respect were seriously impeding the work of the Committee, and his delegation expected that similar instances would not occur in future.

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(Mr. Richter, German
Democratic Republic)

15. The programme budget was primarily an administrative budget, designed to ensure the work of the General Assembly and its organs; consequently, all elements not serving that purpose should be eliminated. His delegation had consistently advocated that measures relating to technical co-operation should be entrusted to UNDP, with additional contributions being made within that framework. It was resolutely opposed to attempts to finance from the regular budget activities which had since their inception been conducted as extrabudgetary measures. There must be no room for expenditures resulting from the measures taken by some Members, in defiance of relevant rules and decisions, which were listed under the technical term "United Nations bonds".

16. The foreword to the proposed programme budget (A/34/6) indicated that the proposed expenditure of more than \$1.2 billion constituted an 11.3 per cent increase over the previous year. That result, however, was derived from two figures which could not be compared since one related to planned expenditures in 1978-1979, and the other to the Secretary-General's first proposal for 1980-1981. If expenditure estimates for 1980-1981 were compared to those for 1978-1979, the increase amounted to 28.9 per cent. Initial estimates, however, formed only part of the Organization's expenditures during a fiscal year, and hints of anticipated revised estimates were to be found in several sections of the document before the Committee. Such growth rates far exceeded the average growth in national income in Member States. No matter when or for what reasons additional expenditures might arise, they had to be financed from Members' national income. His delegation held that the growth of national income in all Member States should be taken as the criterion for planning all growth in expenditure and that the growth of the budget should not exceed national income growth in all Member States.

17. The bulk of the additional expenditure planned for 1980-1981 resulted from costs due to inflation and currency fluctuation. Since 1978 more than four fifths of the total increase had been due to expenses incurred, not as a result of the Organization's activities, but solely owing to the capitalist crisis. His delegation objected to any automatic approach being adopted in planning the programme budget which would levy such additional expenditure upon all Members.

18. Although the Secretariat had made some efforts to release financial resources through savings, as reported in document A/C.5/34/4, it had failed to display the necessary consistency. It appeared that efficiency had seldom been subjected to critical scrutiny, and that the proposed programme budget was no more than an aggregate of the sums requested by individual programme managers. His delegation was concerned that all human and material resources of the Secretariat should be used in such a way to secure maximum efficiency. The majority of Member States expected considerably higher standards of the officers in their employ than did the Secretariat and they were justified in expecting the United Nations to make more effective use of its existing resources. Better use of working hours by all members of the Secretariat would be an important step in that connexion.

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(Mr. Richter, German
Democratic Republic)

19. In a number of cases the proposed programme budget called for expenditures far exceeding the planned medium-term figures. His delegation felt that programme budgeting had to be based on existing medium-term plans, and that such gross deviations were inadmissible. In the case of some items, such as certain increases listed as "special upward adjustment", more detailed information and explanations would be necessary. Moreover, his delegation agreed with ACABQ (A/34/7, para. 59) that there was a need for additional procedures with regard to the creation of extrabudgetary posts.

20. The statements in individual sections of the proposed programme budget on the methodology used for its preparation added little to what had been said in the foreword. More detailed information might have been expected about the figures on which the estimates were based: for example, how the figures for common staff costs at various duty stations were computed and what elements were used as the basis for calculating the costs of posts in the Secretariat.

21. Mrs. DERRE (France) said that the Secretary-General had taken into account most of the concerns of her delegation and of most contributors in recognizing that financial austerity and economy were a necessity for all Member States.

22. As the Fifth Committee was concerned not only with budgetary matters but with administrative questions as well, she wished to draw attention to problems relating to the issuing of official documents. Her delegation was disturbed by increasing delays in the distribution of documents in all the official languages, which had a detrimental effect on the work of the Organization. For example, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had been unable to consider the proposed programme budget at the proper time and its recommendations might therefore be submitted too late to be taken fully into account by the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee. Moreover, the lengthy budget document had been made available to Member States only a few days prior to the opening of the session. Similar delays were affecting the work of other legislative bodies of the Organization. Her delegation had on numerous occasions drawn attention to the problem, and was of the view that a comprehensive review should be carried out with a view to identifying the underlying causes, especially in the work of the Department of Conference Services.

23. However, practical reforms needed to be coupled with a reduction in the volume of documentation. Efforts to that end had already been made, in particular by the Economic and Social Council, and further efforts were needed. A substantial reduction in the volume of documentation would make it possible to ensure the simultaneous distribution of documents in all languages, as should normally be the case.

24. She was gratified to note that the presentation of the programme budget was improving from biennium to biennium, so that it had become easy to compare the budget with the medium-term plan. In accordance with the Committee's request, the foreword to the budget provided a satisfactory summary of the expenditures of the Organization and highlighted general budgetary trends. Her delegation was not, however, entirely satisfied with the method used to calculate the estimates for the

(Mrs. Derre, France)

biennium 1980-1981. In particular, the revaluation of the 1978-1979 resource base seemed in some instances to be excessive. Her delegation's position on full budgeting as currently practised by the United Nations was well known.

25. She was happy to note that the proposals for new recruitment were relatively modest. Her delegation remained firmly opposed to transferring to the regular budget posts originally financed from extrabudgetary resources. Such posts were established for specific purposes reflecting the wishes of one or more States, and it was unfair to shift the burden of funding them to the international community as whole at some later stage.

26. On the subject of the utilization of available resources, she said that the provisions of numerous resolutions calling for the partial absorption of inflation through savings or the redeployment of resources should be implemented. No real efforts had been made to eliminate programmes which were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective. Programme managers should review every programme with complete objectivity, bearing constantly in mind the paramount concern of effectiveness to users.

27. In view of the proposed large increase in France's rate of assessment and the serious economic difficulties which the country was experiencing, she was particularly concerned over the rate of growth in United Nations expenditure. The proposed rise in France's rate of assessment would increase its financial burden by over \$2 million for the first year of the biennium. In addition, the new rate of assessment would have an impact on her country's assessed contributions to the budgets of the specialized agencies, at a time when France was increasing its voluntary contributions to United Nations programmes, including an increase of 55 per cent in its contribution to UNDP.

28. The Secretary-General's budget proposals provided for a rate of real growth of 0.8 per cent. That rate, while acceptable in itself, was based on a revised budget which her delegation had been unable to accept. Accordingly, her delegation would determine its final position on the budget proposals only after all requests for supplementary appropriations had been submitted, particularly those for UNIDO, UNCTAD and the follow-up to the Conference on Science and Technology for Development.

29. Her delegation was confident that the Secretary-General would make every effort to keep spending within the limits of the budget throughout the biennium 1980-1981.

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AGENDA ITEM 96: FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS, AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (continued) (A/C.5/34/L.5/Rev.1 and L.6)

- (a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
- (b) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
- (c) UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
- (d) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH
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- (f) UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

30. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to revised draft resolution A/C.5/34/L.5/Rev.1, which incorporated changes proposed by the representatives of the Soviet Union and Romania. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft resolution without a vote.

31. It was so decided.

32. Mr. BRUCE (Canada), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/34/L.6, said that there had been widespread recognition that the special report prepared by the Auditor General of Canada on the basis of his long-term experience on the Board of Auditors (A/C.5/34/L.3), deserved serious study. The draft resolution which his delegation had prepared did not prejudge in any way the proposals in document A/C.5/34/L.3, but rather would have the Assembly merely take note of them.

33. In preparing the draft resolution, his delegation had anticipated that there would be differences of view as to the substance of document A/C.5/34/L.3. It had also taken note of the statements of Member States requesting the submission of opinions on the Board's organization and professional practices which would enable the General Assembly to decide whether there was a need for changes and, if so, to determine what those changes should be. Because the proposal was of direct interest to the Board of Auditors, it was only natural that their views should be sought. Since any proposed reforms would also affect the entire United Nations system, it was highly appropriate for the Panel of External Auditors to be asked to give their views as well. While the views of Member States would normally be presented in the Fifth Committee, it was clearly not possible to have a substantive debate at the current session. In order to expedite the Committee's consideration of the matter, therefore, the draft resolution also requested the Secretary-General to solicit the views of Member States. That would, of course, not preclude further observations being made at the thirty-fifth session.

34. It was essential to obtain the views of the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies and organizations of the system which would be affected, together with preliminary financial and administrative implications, so as to have as complete a picture as possible. If the Committee should decide that some

(Mr. Bruce, Canada)

changes were desirable, the Secretary-General could present at a later stage a more precise statement of the financial, staffing and administrative implications. As was customary, the Advisory Committee would also comment on the Secretary-General's report.

35. On the basis of suggestions from a number of delegations, his delegation had decided to delete the word "improved" from the second preambular paragraph and the word "relevant" from the third preambular paragraph. In addition, the words "if possible" should be added after the word "containing" in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

36. Given the purely procedural nature of the draft resolution, he hoped that it could be approved by consensus.

37. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) said that his delegation did not share the value judgement implied in the first preambular paragraph, and proposed that the word "that" and the words "call for the most effective available system of auditing" should be deleted from that paragraph. He saw no reason to solicit the views of Member States in writing, as called for in paragraph 2, since the matter was an important one which would have to be considered thoroughly in the Fifth Committee. Moreover, a report on the administrative and financial implications of the proposed reforms should be requested only after a final decision was taken. Accordingly, he proposed that the words "of Member States," and the words "and containing the financial and administrative implications of the proposed reforms" should be deleted from that paragraph.

38. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the third preambular paragraph was not sufficiently explicit and proposed that the words "comments of the thirty-fourth session" should be replaced by the words "comments made by Member States of the United Nations at the thirty-fourth session". He also proposed that the words "and the Panel of External Auditors" should be deleted from paragraph 1 and that paragraph 2 should be amended to read: "2. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report including his own views through the Advisory Committee to the thirty-fifth session."

39. Mrs. DERRE (France) observed that the preamble of the draft resolution contained an implicit criticism of existing auditing practices. Her delegation was not dissatisfied with those practices and believed that the Committee should remain completely neutral for the moment. She therefore favoured the deletion of the preamble and the transformation of the draft resolution into an objective and impartial draft decision. She endorsed the amendments to the operative part of the draft resolution proposed by the Soviet representative.

40. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that it would be more correct from the technical point of view for the Committee to include two separate requests in the draft resolution, one to the Secretary-General to submit a report and one to the Advisory Committee to submit its own views and recommendations on the Secretary-General's report, since it was not customary to ask the Secretary-General to submit reports to the Assembly through the Advisory Committee.

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41. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that the Board of Auditors was performing its task satisfactorily and there was no need to reorganize the Board or increase expenditure on it. He endorsed the amendments proposed by the representatives of Egypt and the Soviet Union. His delegation also favoured adopting a draft decision rather than a draft resolution.

42. Mr. GOSS (Australia) said that there seemed to be a divergence between those who took a static view of auditing and those who wanted to improve efficiency. It was surprising that those who were worried that auditing might cost too much did not seem to want information on the financial implications, and that some of those who believed that it would have a great impact on the way the Organization operated did not want to know about the administrative implications. As he understood it, the purpose of the draft resolution was to ascertain what the consequences would be should it be decided to implement the recommendations contained in document A/C.5/34/L.3, whereas some of the amendments that had been proposed to the draft resolution would prevent the Committee from doing that. A further paradox was that there seemed to be a reluctance to seek the views of the Panel of External Auditors, whereas the specialized agencies, some of which had their own entirely separate auditing practices, were to be consulted.

43. He suggested that the representative of Canada should form a small working group of interested delegations to work out an acceptable text.

44. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) said that there was a close link between draft resolution A/C.5/34/L.6 and the recommendations in document A/C.5/34/L.3, concerning which his delegation had some reservations. As a first step, the Canadian delegation should ascertain the reaction of other delegations to those recommendations and explain the reasons for the proposed changes in the system. His delegation supported the amendments proposed by the representatives of Egypt, France and the Soviet Union.

45. Mr. KOBINIA SEKYI (Ghana) said that his delegation had difficulty with the wording of the first preambular paragraph, in view of the fact that initial measures, in the form of system based auditing, had been taken and that system was working well. As his country provided one member of the Board of Auditors, his delegation was sensitive to any suggestion that the Board was not doing its work properly, especially since no complaint of that nature had been voiced in the Committee. He was appreciative of the amendments proposed by the representative of Egypt; it was important that any report to be submitted to the thirty-fifth session should be made available to delegations in good time for them to obtain the advice of specialists at Headquarters. His delegation would like to join the proposed small working group to finalize the text of the draft resolution.

46. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representative of Canada should be given sufficient time to reflect on the amendments that had been submitted and to consult interested delegations. Any amendment which was unacceptable to the Canadian delegation would, of course, be submitted separately and put to the vote.

47. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) said he was agreeable to following the procedure suggested by the Chairman.

48. Mr. Buj-Flores (Mexico) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 17: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS (continued):

(c) APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (A/34/263; A/C.5/34/14)

49. The CHAIRMAN said that, as indicated in document A/C.5/34/14, the Government of Belgium had proposed its Senior President of the Audit Office (the Belgian equivalent of an auditor-general) to fill the vacancy which would arise in the membership of the Board as a result of the expiry on 30 June 1980 of the term of office of the Auditor General of Canada. Since there was only one candidate and only one vacancy to be filled, he said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee did not wish to hold a secret ballot.

50. It was so decided.

51. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Senior President of the Audit Office of Belgium to the Board of Auditors for a period of three years beginning on 1 July 1980.

52. The recommendation was adopted.

53. Mr. ERNEMANN (Belgium) thanked the Committee on behalf of his Government for the honour it had bestowed on his country and for its expression of confidence. Should the General Assembly approve the Committee's recommendation, his Government would make every effort to ensure that the task was carried out with due competence and care. He paid tribute to the Government of Canada which had made the services of its Auditor General available for more than two decades.

54. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 102: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (continued) (A/34/32, A/34/528)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/34/3/Add.37 and 38)

55. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) expressed his delegation's confidence in the Committee on Conferences as a valuable organ in the General Assembly's efforts to ensure the optimum apportionment of conference resources, facilities and services, and improved co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system. The increasingly serious problems of providing conference facilities, interpretation services and documentation made that work all the more important. Failure to provide documentation in good time was detrimental to the smooth functioning of conferences and meetings. It was his delegation's conviction that the number of conferences was reaching the limit and that, given the law of diminishing returns, it was high time to give serious consideration to the relative costs and benefits of any new or additional conferences or meetings.

56. As his delegation had pointed out at the thirty-third session, the budget for

(Mr. Kuyama Japan)

conference services for the biennium 1978-1979 amounted to 15 per cent of the regular budget, largely as a result of the ever-increasing number of conferences and cancellations of scheduled meetings with interpretation services. He therefore subscribed to the idea of setting a limit to the number or total duration of conferences, the financing of all conferences above that limit to be subject to a review of priorities and cancellation of meetings with lower priority. Resources released as a result of the identification and elimination of marginal or obsolete activities could then be reallocated to priority activities, meetings or conferences.

57. The practical measures taken by the Economic and Social Council with regard to the duration of sessions, and the control and limitation of documentation were an encouraging, if small, step in the right direction. His delegation wholeheartedly agreed with the statement made by the President of the Economic and Social Council in his letter of 19 September 1979 (A/34/528) with regard to documentation and the calendar of conferences. It endorsed a number of recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/34/32).

58. Mr. del ROSARIO (Philippines) said that the recommendations made in paragraph 79 of the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/34/32) indicated that practical steps were being taken towards rationalizing the pattern of conferences. It would be noted, however, from the proposed programme budget (A/34/6, vol. II) that an initial sum of \$184 million was being requested for conference services for the biennium 1980-1981, and the final sum would necessarily be higher when the supplementary appropriations were added.

59. Although the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences were regulatory rather than mandatory, they should be observed as far as possible, because they were intended not only to avoid waste of meagre resources but to ensure efficiency in the servicing of meetings and conferences. He requested information from the Secretariat on the elements involved in the cancellation of a meeting, including estimated figures on the loss in work/hours and documentation, according to the size of the conference or meeting concerned. He also wondered what problems were created in servicing requirements and the workload of the Secretariat when changes or additions were made to the approved calendar of conferences.

60. His delegation supported the view of the Committee on Conferences that invitations by specialized agencies should be discouraged because of the additional expenditure involved, which ultimately had to be met by Member States. He sought clarification as to the sharing of expenses between participants and the host country when a meeting or conference was held at the headquarters of a United Nations body or a specialized agency.

61. His delegation welcomed the Economic and Social Council decision (1979/81) not to authorize additional departures from the biennial cycle of meetings once the calendar of conferences had been adopted. He requested information on the financial implications of any change made in the calendar of conferences by force of circumstances. While the quota system for the allocation of conference resources had merit, his delegation had reservations about any system which might impose

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(Mr. del Rosario, Philippines)

limits on important meetings and conferences of great concern to developing countries. A differentiation should be made in the workload standards of the Secretariat for servicing at Headquarters and away from Headquarters. It was common, for instance, when a conference was held in a Member State for the regular staff to be assisted by local staff, thereby minimizing staff requirements from Headquarters, as well as costs. He would appreciate information on what guidelines, if any, were used for such conferences held away from Headquarters.

62. He noted that the meeting of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, for which his country would act as host in January 1980, was not included in the calendar of conferences.

63. His delegation supported recommendations 1 to 7 of the Committee on Conferences and endorsed the calendar of conferences for 1980-1981, subject to any changes which might be decided on by the General Assembly at the current session.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.