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Summary record of the 25th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 November 2002, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Sharma (Nepal)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Agenda item 112: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 *(continued)*

Conversion into established posts of some temporary assistance posts financed under section 2 of the programme budget (continued) (A/57/473)

Cases in which incumbents of the posts are being paid at a level other than the one provided for the post (continued) (A/57/466)

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1. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) recalled that, in paragraph 59 of resolution 56/253, the General Assembly had reaffirmed paragraphs 62 and 63 of the annex to its resolution 51/241, in which it had requested that “[t]he senior management structure should be considered in the context of the overall structure of the Organization, desired lines of authority and decision-making” and that the Organization should have “a clear pyramid structure”. However, those paragraphs were not mentioned in the report on the comprehensive review of the post structure of the Secretariat (A/57/483), which merely stated that the current post structure and distribution of posts did not indicate any apparent anomalies that could be characterized as top-heaviness of the Secretariat structure.

2. According to the report, the United States Federal Government had one supervisor for every seven staff, as compared to a ratio of 1:10 in the Secretariat for regular budget posts. In that connection, he pointed out

that the post equivalencies used to compare the structure of the two civil services differed from those used by the International Civil Service Commission to compare salaries. He would be grateful for an explanation in that regard and would revert to that issue during the informal consultations.

3. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that, while the current post structure and distribution of posts did not indicate any apparent anomalies that might suggest that the Secretariat was top-heavy, the report in question would have been more convincing had it contained statistical information, tables or graphs to illustrate the conclusions reached by the consultant responsible for the review. He would await further clarification in that regard.

4. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) stressed that the document on post structure was only a summary of the in-depth review conducted by the consultant. On the basis of copious statistical information, the consultant had concluded that the current post structure and distribution of posts did not indicate any apparent anomalies, which meant that the Secretariat had a pyramid structure and that responsibilities within the hierarchy were well defined. Additional information on the consultant’s analysis and the supporting statistical information would be transmitted to delegations during the informal consultations.

5. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) reiterated his request for clarification of paragraphs 4 and 5 of document A/57/466. More specifically, he would like to know whether the decision made by the Secretary-General in 1990, referred to in paragraph 4, had had permanent or temporary consequences. Having taken note of the additional information provided about that exception, he also enquired as to the current status of the other case mentioned in paragraph 5.

6. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the specific situation referred to in paragraph 4 of document A/57/466 had persisted because the individual concerned had continued to perform the same duties. The name of that individual had appeared in the 1997 promotion register, but the promotion had never been regularized owing to the lack of an available post at the required level. With regard to the second case referred to by the representative of Japan, the posts in question were, at a certain moment in time, occupied by staff members

whose grade was lower than that of the post. Those were temporary situations which were regularized through the normal vacancy management system administered by the Office of Human Resources Management.

7. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) pointed out that, in accordance with the rules governing the comparator, a civil servant could be assigned to a post at a higher grade than his own for a maximum of two years. The adoption of a similar provision by the United Nations would prevent such situations from lasting for 10 years or more.

8. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in answer to its questions, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the specific case mentioned in paragraph 4 of document A/57/466 had resulted from a decision of the Administrative Tribunal. The staff member in question had appeared in the promotion register but had not been promoted. He had filed an appeal and had obtained redress. However, the rules currently in force at the United Nations meant that promotions, even when deserved, could only be awarded if a post at the required level was available. In the case at issue, the Secretary-General had requested the reclassification of the post occupied by the staff member concerned, but the General Assembly had not given its approval.

9. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) confirmed that the reclassification of the post in question had been requested in the context of the draft budget for the biennium 2002-2003. He was surprised that delegations were so interested in that single case, given that the Secretariat managed 9,000 posts. In his view, adopting a rule similar to that enforced by the comparator would lead to an increase in the number of such cases. The absence of such a rule meant that the Organization was able to exercise stricter control.

10. **The Chairman** suggested that the Secretariat should draft, for the Committee's consideration, a draft decision in which the General Assembly would take note of the three reports contained in documents A/57/473, A/57/466 and A/57/464, and endorse the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/57/7/Add.14).

11. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) said that the section of the draft decision relating to the second report should

specify that the Assembly "reaffirmed paragraph 7 of its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001".

12. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to his suggestion and to the proposal made by the representative of Japan.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to consider the reports contained in documents A/57/471, A/57/483, A/57/478 and A/57/474 as quickly as possible during informal consultations.

15. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.