



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OKEYO (Kenya)

later: Mr. VAN DEN HOUT (Netherlands)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 121: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/43/659 and Corr.1; A/C.5/43.3 and 14)

1. Mr. JOSHI (Nepal) said that his delegation had always favoured a recruitment policy that paid due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, as prescribed in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. Though the increase over the past year in the number of appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution was welcome, it was difficult to understand why 10.6 per cent of those posts had gone to nationals of overrepresented Member States while more than 40 per cent of Member States were still below the limits of the desirable range. The Secretary-General should take new measures to ensure the representation of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, in posts at the higher levels. To that end, the principle of post rotation should be followed and the policy whereby posts were "inherited" abandoned, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 35/210. Where competence and qualifications were more or less the same, it was in the general interest to apply the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

2. He welcomed the action taken which had resulted in increasing the proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution and in approaching the target of 30 per cent set for 1990. In conclusion, he expressed his firm belief that the staff must be offered adequate compensation, good prospects of promotion and a sense of job security.

3. Mr. ZIADA (Iraq) stressed the importance of the composition of the Secretariat in the effort to rationalize the work of the Organization. General Assembly resolution 35/210 explicitly provided that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the principle was applied faithfully in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Those provisions had been reaffirmed in resolutions 41/206 and 42/220. In the case of representation at the higher levels and upper echelons, however, it was clear that, while some regions were overrepresented, others remained at a clear disadvantage. It was unacceptable that the Middle Eastern group, comprising 17 Member States, should have only one high-level post. It was obvious, therefore, that the various resolutions had not been applied at all. The Secretary-General should study the matter with a view to restoring equity. It would be advisable for the resolution, to be adopted in due course on the item at the current session, to specify that the term of office of staff appointed to high-level posts should not exceed 10 years and that such posts should be filled with due account being taken of the need to respect the principles of rotation and equitable geographical distribution, in particular at the level of the various regional groups.

4. Moreover, it was extremely important for the efficiency of the Organization that the staff rules and regulations, particularly with regard to career development, should be respected. In some cases, as happened in that of Judgement 411, the decisions of the Administrative Tribunal had not been applied by

(Mr. Ziada, Iraq)

the Administration, which was all the more regrettable given the high cost to the Organization of appeal procedures.

5. Mrs. KINGSMILL (Australia) said that the status of women in the Secretariat continued to be a high priority for Australia. She was concerned by the fact that the percentage of women continued to be extremely low, despite progress in the last few years, and wondered whether, given current recruitment trends, it would be possible to attain the targets set for 1990.

6. She also regretted that the mandate of the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat had not been extended beyond June 1968. In various countries, experience had shown that progress in improving the status of women could not be achieved without the driving force of senior, influential and experienced staff appointed solely for that purpose. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had indicated that he would appoint one of his associates to act as a focal point in that area. She was not convinced that that would be adequate to ensure implementation of the priorities identified by the Steering Committee. Implementation of the action programme should be the responsibility of a unit established specifically for that task, staffed at a sufficiently high level from within the Secretariat, which would also provide support for the Steering Committee. She looked forward to receiving the report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session on the progress made in implementing the Steering Committee's recommendations.

7. Mr. KAVAKURE (Burundi) said that at the United Nations, as in any undertaking, the issue of human resources was extremely important and therefore welcomed the progress made over the past two years, especially the efforts made in respect of posts subject to geographical distribution, the standardization of competitive examinations, staff mobility, career development and training.

8. The proposed staff reduction measures should be carried out without compromising the Organization's priority objectives not only in regard to peace and security but also in the economic, social, humanitarian and cultural fields. If it was found necessary to make adjustments, for example by re-establishing posts, in the course of restructuring priority should be given to those essential sectors, including conference-servicing, provided that budget expenditure was not substantially affected.

9. In the case of recruitment policies, further efforts must be made to correct the continuing inequalities in geographical representation. Overrepresented countries should show greater understanding and impartiality and refrain from putting pressure on the relevant United Nations authorities in order to force recruitment for purely selfish motives. In his report (A/43/659) the Secretary-General had indicated that he would continue to exercise flexibility in recruitment with regard to departments and offices with high vacancy rates, in particular the secretariats of regional commissions. It was to be hoped that that attitude would enable the Economic Commission for Africa, which was called upon to play a vital role in that part of the world, to carry out its mandate better.

(Mr. Kavakure, Burundi)

Appropriate action should also be taken to enable the United Nations information services and centres to carry on their work and continue recruiting national staff.

10. It would have been preferable to postpone some of the restructuring measures, and they should be re-examined in the light, especially, of the comments made at the current session. In particular, Member States should be able to obtain detailed information as soon as possible on the foreseeable effects of restructuring and on recruitment to posts subject to geographical distribution. His delegation strongly hoped that the recruitment of consultants, in cases where the Organization had no sufficiently qualified staff members, would respond to the need for transparency and respect the principle of equitable geographical representation. The developing countries rarely received requests in that connection although they possessed human resources with the necessary competence.

11. In conclusion, he said that the progressive application of the restructuring policy should be accompanied by monitoring arrangements capable of forestalling improper staff reductions and any intensification of the disparities that prevented equitable geographical representation.

AGENDA ITEM 120: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/43/11 and Corr.1)

12. Mr. GANKHUYAG (Mongolia) said that, while he recognized that the task of the Committee on Contributions had not been easy, he shared the view that the proposed scale was not perfect. He noted with satisfaction, however, that the current methodology was based on the fundamental principle of capacity to pay, determined according to the national income statistics of each Member State. Experience had shown that there was no better method for establishing the scale than the application of that principle, though it should be done with flexibility and a creative approach. In his delegation's view, the Committee on Contributions should take account, in particular, of such problems as indebtedness and currency fluctuation, which affected certain categories of countries, and it would have no objection to studies designed to meet the interests of those countries more fully. Like other delegations, it was in favour of using a statistical period of 10 years as a reference base and believed that the upper limit for the application of the allowance formula for low-income countries should remain at its current level. In conclusion, it welcomed the Committee's decision not to increase the contribution of the least developed countries.

13. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said it was essential that all Member States should respect their financial obligations towards the Organization, not only for the success of the current reform process but also to make a reality of the hopes aroused by United Nations action to settle certain political questions. His delegation took note of the decisions announced by the United States in that regard and urged that country to settle all its arrears as soon as possible and to pay its contribution to the budget without any withholding or conditions, in order to help in the Organization's revitalization.

(Mr. Ladjouai, Algeria)

14. The proposed scale for 1989-1991, like the two or three previous scales, was far from perfect, in that it did not reflect the principle of capacity to pay, which was the agreed basis for the calculation of assessments. Moreover, the tendency for the assessments of some developed countries to decline at the expense of the developing countries was again evident. At a time when the third world was seriously plagued by external debt, the manipulation of the prices of raw materials and natural disasters, the assessment of the members of the Group of 77 rose from 9.67 per cent in the current scale to 10.01 per cent in the proposed scale, while that of the OECD member countries rose only slightly and that of the planned economy countries decreased. It was the duty of the Fifth Committee, therefore, as far as the short term was concerned, to make tangible improvements in the existing methodology, directed essentially at taking into account heavy external indebtedness, the exchange rate question, the formula for avoiding excessive variations of individual rates of assessment and the mitigation process. In the long term, it would be necessary to consider a methodology that could reflect the real capacity to pay of Member States, and the proposals of Norway and Mexico in that connection merited particular attention.

15. In his delegation's opinion, the proposed scale did not take the indebtedness of the developing countries sufficiently into account and the percentage deduction for the most indebted countries should perhaps be increased. It would also like to hear the view of the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions on the separate opinion in paragraph 70 of the Committee's report concerning the offsetting of the debt relief factor by the application of the scheme of limits. His delegation would also like more details about the advantages of the methodology used to take into account heavy external indebtedness in the proposed scale as compared with the formula applied in the previous scale. Perhaps debt relief should intervene after the application of the formula for limiting excessive variations of rates of assessment, which would be more in keeping with General Assembly resolution 39/247 and reflect more accurately the principle of real capacity to pay.

16. On the question of price-adjusted rates of exchange, the existence of two divergent views should lead not to abandoning the method but to improving it in such a way as to make it acceptable to those countries which had doubts about its validity. His delegation would like to know the reasons which had led the Committee on Contributions to retain the existing limits for the application of the formula for limiting variations in assessments from one scale to the next. Lastly, regarding the mitigation process, his delegation believed that though the practice was wholly acceptable it proved, nevertheless, that the methodology used to prepare the scale of assessments, which equated capacity to pay with national income, was not equitable. Criteria should therefore be established for rationalizing the process.

17. The flaws in the current methodology must not lead, however, to the rejection of the proposed scale. Although his delegation found the increase in its assessment, one of the few in Africa to be regularly raised, unjustified, it would, in a spirit of co-operation, propose that the scale should be adopted without a vote. At the same time, the Committee should instruct the Committee on

(Mr. Ladjouai, Algeria)

Contributions to make specific recommendations on the four points he had mentioned at the next session of the General Assembly.

18. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that there were two main points to be addressed in respect of the report of the Committee on Contributions and the debate to which it had given rise: had the Committee properly discharged the mandate conferred upon it by the General Assembly, in particular in resolution 42/208, and was the current methodology satisfactory and equitable? The reply to the first question was undoubtedly positive. Many delegations, in particular the representative of China, had noted the Committee's serious and careful approach to the consideration of the new scale and its efforts to alleviate the burden of the developing countries.

19. The current methodology was the result of a long process culminating in a balance between the interests of the developed, developing and socialist countries and a compromise between technical and political considerations. He recalled that General Assembly resolution 42/208 had been rather laconic in its guidance on methodology, to such an extent that it could be assumed that there was nothing against the current methodology. That methodology had its merits: it was accepted by the membership at large, had been tested over a sufficiently long time span, was applicable and was based on available data for all Member States. But it also had demerits.

20. His delegation urged the Committee on Contributions to pay particular attention to ensuring that the scale of assessments reflected general trends in the world economy, including the growing disparities between, on the one hand, the major developed countries and the so-called newly industrialized countries, and, on the other hand, the vast majority of other countries. Account should also be taken of the serious problems arising from external debt. Specifically, consideration could be given to the adoption of a weighted statistical base period: if the General Assembly wanted to maintain a 10-year base period, the eighth, ninth and tenth years would then be given a higher weighting in the calculation of assessments. His delegation was open to all other proposals that would make the methodology more equitable and the formulation of the scale less contentious.

21. Poland considered the Committee on Contributions to be the competent organ to deal with short- and long-term solutions with respect to the financing of the expenses of the Organization. That Committee, supported by its secretariat, was fully equipped to discharge that task, and the establishment of a new expert group to improve the existing methodology, as proposed by some delegations, would thus be futile. The suggestion had also been made that the scale should be approved for one year only, to allow for the formulation of a new methodology. That solution was not a practical one, since, even if a notable improvement could be proposed over such a short time-scale, the new methodology could not be applied until it had been approved by the General Assembly, and no delegation would agree to accept major changes without knowing what their effect would be in practice. A minimum of two years was thus required. With regard to mitigation, his delegation considered that the practice, long employed by the Committee on Contributions, was subjective

(Mr. Abraszewski, Poland)

by nature and thus generated a lot of criticism, but offered practical benefits, particularly for developing countries.

22. His delegation thus considered that the most desirable immediate course of action would be to adopt the scale of assessments for 1989-1991 proposed by the Committee on Contributions. At the same time, the Fifth Committee could, in a separate part of the same resolution, or in a separate resolution, give the Committee on Contributions new, clear, specific and practical guidance on how to make the scale more equitable. It should not be thought that his delegation was advocating adoption of the new scale simply because his country's assessment had been reduced. In reality, the current methodology had resulted in an over-assessment of 9 points in comparison with the machine scale and of as much as 17 points in comparison with the current scale. Further, Poland, which was experiencing very serious debt-servicing problems, had been granted no relief for indebtedness, which had not prevented it from taking on one point for the mitigation process. His delegation wished to stress very firmly the need to follow established procedure so as not to further aggravate the Organization's financial crisis. The time had come for restraint and a sense of responsibility; the interests of particular countries must not compromise the financial viability of the Organization as a whole.

23. Mr. RALLIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the member States of the European Community, said that the Twelve had consistently demonstrated their commitment to the United Nations by paying their assessed contributions to the regular budget promptly and in full. Collectively, they were the biggest contributor, accounting for almost 30 per cent of the Organization's budget. It was reasonable to expect all Member States to similarly respect their obligations.

24. The European Community delegations reaffirmed that the scale of assessments should be based on the principle of capacity to pay. That principle had been confirmed every year by the General Assembly, but its application had become increasingly complex due to the introduction of successive guidelines. In the interest of simplicity, the Twelve advocated the application of a system based solely on national income, with an allowance for low per capita income countries. It seemed that over a period of time revision of the initial methodology to make the scale more equitable had had the opposite effect. It was thus in everyone's interest to examine any proposed modification very carefully, taking into account its long-term implications. Furthermore, the capacity to pay of Member States must be determined in an objective manner, on the basis of recent comparable data.

25. In the scale proposed for the triennium 1989-1991, the contributions of some member States of the European Community had increased while others had decreased, reflecting changes in the relative capacity to pay of those States and the size of their economies. There was nothing extraordinary about a smaller State having a lower assessment than a larger State, even if the larger State had a lower per capita income, a consideration that applied to all the States Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. Rallis, Greece)

26. With regard to the methodology used to formulate the proposed scale, the Twelve had serious reservations about taking into account the external indebtedness of individual countries. It should be recalled that the indebtedness factor had been introduced on the basis of an ad hoc resolution, which had not provided for its permanent inclusion in the methodology. Further, its impact had been marginal and had not helped low-income countries. In addition, the lack of reliable data on the repayment of principal had led the Committee on Contributions to use various hypotheses which had not accurately reflected the burden borne by countries as a result of their external indebtedness, which had only confused the situation further.

27. The studies carried out over the years by the Committee on Contributions had confirmed that national income remained the only indicator that was strictly comparable for all countries. The price-adjusted rates of exchange method used in the current exercise had not been entirely satisfactory, and the Committee on Contributions had decided, in most cases, not to apply it. The Twelve concurred with that decision and encouraged the Committee to continue its studies with a view to determining appropriate exchange rates.

28. With regard to the statistical data used as a basis for the calculation of national income, the Committee on Contributions noted some improvement but it was regrettable that some countries had still not submitted complete data.

29. The Twelve agreed with the Committee on Contributions that the scheme to avoid excessive variations of individual rates of assessment between successive scales should not be changed. They recalled that the scheme was not designed to give relief to individual countries, but was a means of seeking to avoid excessive variations. They continued to believe, however, that capacity to pay must remain the fundamental criterion.

30. The Twelve were also concerned by the significant adjustments made under the mitigation process. In most cases mitigation did not seem to be justified on the basis of scientific economic criteria, and the reasons for the adjustments had not been clearly explained.

31. The Twelve considered that the machine scale, after application of various relief factors and the scheme to avoid excessive variations, would more faithfully reflect the guidelines approved by the General Assembly. None the less, they were prepared to accept the recommendation of the Committee on Contributions provided that consensus was reached. If discussion was to be reopened, the Twelve reserved their position.

32. With regard to the contributions of non-member States, the Twelve supported the decisions reflected in paragraph 64 of the report of the Committee on Contributions. The methodology for calculating assessments should be fair, but as simple as possible. In conclusion, he said that the Committee on Contributions must remain the sole organ responsible for formulation of the scale and must be accorded the necessary freedom to carry out its work successfully.

33. Mr. AL-JETEELI (Kuwait) said that, in spite of General Assembly resolution 42/208, the Committee on Contributions had made no serious attempt to improve the methodology for calculating assessments. Some components of the methodology, such as the statistical base period, no longer reflected the economic fluctuations experienced by some Member States. His delegation was of the view that the time had come to shorten the statistical base period to five years or less.

34. The General Assembly had also called for a review of the limits in the scheme to avoid excessive variations of individual rates of assessment between successive scales. His delegation attached considerable importance to that aspect of the methodology and hoped that the Committee on Contributions would continue its work on the matter so as to develop a more realistic scale. The application of the price-adjusted rates of exchange formula, with adjustments to national income data, would also contribute to a more equitable scale.

35. It was disquieting that the present methodology did not take into account the economic disparity between developing and developed countries. Increased assessments had been proposed for many developing countries, whereas some developed countries had been granted reductions. Thus Kuwait's assessment had been increased on several occasions. His delegation was well aware that determining the scale of assessments was no easy matter; indeed, the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions had admitted that the proposed scale was not perfect. His delegation thus hoped that continued efforts would be made to improve it.

36. Mr. van den Hout (Netherlands) took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 AND 114: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989 (continued) (A/43/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and (Part II) and Add.1, A/43/286 and Corr.1, A/43/651 and Add.1; A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1)

37. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the United Nations was a qualitatively new phenomenon in international relations inasmuch as it gave substance to the will of the international community. As such, it had the respect and the active support of the Soviet Union. The authority of the Organization could not be enhanced, however, unless the question of improving its efficiency in administrative and financial terms was resolved.

38. At the adoption of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, during the forty-second session of the General Assembly, emphasis had been laid on the transitional nature of the proposals and the difficulty of discussing them in detail before the reform process had yielded more concrete results. The same could clearly be said of the revised estimates now before the Fifth Committee, and of the second progress report on the implementation of resolution 41/213. He would therefore confine himself to general comments.

39. His delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General's second progress report on the implementation of resolution 41/213 was general in nature; like the Advisory Committee, it hoped that the final

(Mr. Vislykh, USSR)

report would provide complete descriptions and justifications for all the steps taken as part of the restructuring process.

40. For the moment, the reform process seemed to be proceeding satisfactorily, particularly as far as the political organs of the Secretariat and those responsible for administration and management were concerned. His delegation was nevertheless disappointed at the lack of progress by the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council. It hoped that efforts in that direction would continue and bear fruit, thus allowing the problems raised by the pattern of conferences to be dealt with.

41. On the subject of the Organization's financial standing, his delegation considered it essential to abide strictly by the Charter and provide the United Nations with sound foundations. It fully shared the Secretary-General's opinion that "for the process of reform to reach fruition, Member States must ... provide their full support, politically and financially, to the Organization".

42. His delegation had noted the Secretary-General's intention to trim the staff of the Secretariat by 13 per cent by the end of the current budgetary period. At the same time, it endorsed the recommendation of CPC calling upon the Secretary-General to make every effort to implement recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 in full. That was a vital aspect of the reform, and his delegation counted on the Secretary-General to take steps to that end when the budget proposals for 1990-1991 were drawn up.

43. As to the staffing of the Department of Conference Services, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the costs of restoring 100 posts within the Department should be met from existing appropriations by, among other things, making further cuts in the staff of other units. His delegation reserved the right to make additional comments on those points at a later stage, in particular during the consideration of the budget outline for 1990-1991.

44. Mr. GITSOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation was generally satisfied with the progress of the reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General. It was, however, concerned that the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council had not completed its study of the structure and functioning of the economic and social bodies.

45. The reduction in staff proposed by the Secretary-General, 13.02 per cent, was fairly close to the 15 per cent called for in recommendation 15. None the less, his delegation expected the recommendation to be implemented in full in the next budgetary biennium. On the subject of conference services, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to restore 100 posts in New York and Geneva, partly offsetting the cost by cutting a further 50 posts in other departments.

46. The information on organizational changes provided in the third chapter of the revised estimates (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1) was insufficient to permit any final judgement

(Mr. Gitsov, Bulgaria)

to be made, apparently owing to the transitional nature of the budget. His delegation had taken note of the changes in the Department of Public Information proposed in the fourth chapter of the Secretary-General's report, including the establishment of a new Bureau of Programme Operations, and the reservations expressed in that regard by the Advisory Committee and CPC. As regards the final chapter of the Secretary-General's report, his delegation reiterated its concern at the practice of converting temporary posts into permanent ones, and endorsed the Advisory Committee's intention of reviewing each proposal for conversion in future.

47. The second progress report of the Secretary-General, as the Advisory Committee had remarked, was general in character; inevitably so, given the transitional budget and the reforms now in progress. His delegation would be willing to take part in the final assessment of the implementation of resolution 41/213 when the reform process had been completed.

48. The CHAIRMAN announced that replies to questions on the revised estimates raised by delegations would be given as the various chapters of document A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1 were considered. He suggested that the Committee should begin by discussing chapter I, then take chapters II, III, V and VI together, and conclude with chapter IV.

49. It was so decided.

50. Mr. Okeyo (Kenya) resumed the Chair.

Revised estimates - chapter I

51. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), speaking with reference to chapter I of the revised estimates, said that, in response to the Advisory Committee's request in paragraph 18 of its report (A/43/651), the Secretariat had replied by letter to the Chairman. The Committee had then had an exchange of views with the representative of the Secretary-General. On the basis of the foregoing, it had issued a further report (A/43/651/Add.1). As was stated in paragraph 2 of that addendum, the Secretary-General had informed the Advisory Committee that he was not in a position to submit proposals for further post reductions until he had been apprised of the results of the various intergovernmental and Secretariat reviews under way, since any further reductions of resources would have an adverse affect on programmes. The representative of the Secretary-General had been unable to inform the Committee of the precise effect on programmes of the reductions in question. The Advisory Committee was therefore recommending that the Secretary-General be requested to report on the matter in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, which would be submitted at the forty-fourth session. It would be noted that, in its addendum, the Advisory Committee had not specified which areas should be the target of the offsetting reduction of 50 posts recommended by it, since that was for the Secretary-General to decide.

52. If accepted, the Advisory Committee's proposals would leave unchanged the table following paragraph 30 in the revised budget estimates (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1).

(Mr. Mselle)

The budgetary implications which would result from the restoration of 100 posts under section 29 and the reduction of 50 additional posts under other sections should be reflected in the second performance report for the biennium 1988-1989, to be submitted in 1989. The Advisory Committee expected that report to indicate also any planned transfers between budget sections, it being understood that the amount to be transferred to section 29 in order to restore the 100 posts would not exceed \$9.9 million.

53. As was clear from the staffing table in paragraph 21 of the revised estimates, the total number of posts on 1 January 1990 would be 9,957. On the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, that total would be 10,007 posts, or a net increase of 50 posts for the budget as a whole. The Advisory Committee wished to stress that its recommendation would result in a net increase of the number of posts, not a decrease.

54. If the Advisory Committee's recommendation was not accepted, the staffing table would have to show an increase of 100 posts instead of 50 posts. In addition, more substantial amounts would have to be transferred between budget sections. In his statement of programme budget implications (A/43/16, Part I, Add.1), the Secretary-General had said that the cost of restoring 100 posts without an offsetting reduction of 50 posts under other sections could be financed from existing appropriations. The Secretary-General did not, however, rule out the possibility of requesting additional appropriations for the purpose in the second performance report for the biennium 1988-1989. On the other hand, if the offsetting reduction of 50 posts suggested by the Advisory Committee was accepted, there would be no need for additional appropriations. It should therefore be emphasized that if it was decided to restore the 100 posts without an offsetting reduction of 50 posts elsewhere, additional appropriations would probably be required within the framework of the current budget and there would certainly be an increase in the real value of the budgetary requirements in the next programme budget proposals.

55. Since the revised estimates did not follow the normal format of budget documents, it should be stated, so as to avoid any confusion, that in the table in paragraph 21, part I corresponded to section 1 of the budget, part II to sections 2 A and 2 B, part III to section 3, part IV to sections 4 to 24, part V to sections 25 and 26, part VI to section 27 and part VII to sections 28 and 29.

56. Mrs. ZHANG Xian (China) remarked that CPC had advocated an overall staff cut of 12.1 per cent, but of only 10 per cent in the Department of Conference Services so that essential conference services could continue to be provided under satisfactory conditions. The Advisory Committee had recommended the restoration of 100 posts out of the 357 initially proposed for abolition under section 29. Her delegation supported the principle of a 10-per-cent cut in posts for conference services in New York and Geneva, believing that the 13-per-cent reduction recommended by the Group of 18 had not been based on a rigorous analysis of needs and need not be followed to the letter. It should be recalled that the Secretary-General had been requested to implement recommendation 15 with

(Mrs. Zhang Xian, China)

flexibility so that programmes did not suffer. It was clear in that light that the 14.1-per-cent cut originally planned for the Department of Conference Services was not acceptable.

57. Concerning the proposed reduction of 50 posts to offset the restoration of 100 posts in Conference Services, her delegation believed the reduction plan proposed by the Secretary-General for sections other than section 29 was the result of extensive consultations with the heads of department concerned and took account of the requirements of programme implementation. It was doubtful, therefore, whether the further cuts proposed could be made without affecting activities under other sections of the budget. The Secretariat had told the Advisory Committee that any further reduction in resources would adversely affect programmes. As for absorbing the costs of the 100 posts within existing appropriations, her delegation agreed that every effort should be made to restrict budgetary growth and avoid additional expenditure, but considered that carrying out the programmes approved by the General Assembly must continue to be the primary objective.

58. Finally, her delegation emphasized that staff cuts affected not only the revised estimates for 1988-1989, but also the budget outline for 1990-1991 shortly to be submitted to the Fifth Committee. The question would have long-term repercussions on the work of the Organization. The greatest caution must be exercised in implementing recommendation 15.

59. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) pointed out that recommendation 15 had been drawn up by the Group of 18 on the basis of a survey which had revealed duplication and fragmentation of responsibilities and too many senior-level staff in many sectors. The reductions proposed sought to remedy those shortcomings and made the Organization more efficient. As the Secretary-General stated in paragraph 23 of document A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1, the reductions planned would certainly have an effect on programmes and the volume of activities. His delegation would like the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee and CPC to prove that the steps they advocated would really enable the problems of wastage he had mentioned to be dealt with.

60. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) gave an undertaking that the Secretariat would reply to all questions raised on items 49 and 114, including that of the criteria on which the Secretary-General had based his proposals for reductions in posts.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.