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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OKEYO (Kenya)

later: Mr. ARASTOU (Islamic Republic of Iran)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 115: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/43/6 and Corr.1, A/43/16 and Corr.1 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/43/16 (Part II) and Add.1, A/43/124 and Add.1, A/43/179, A/43/326 and Corr.1 and A/43/326/Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2, A/43/329 and Add.1, A/43/626, A/43/651 and Add.1; A/C.5/43/CRP.4)

1. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the question of programme evaluation and design, noted the convergence of views on the need to utilize monitoring, evaluation and management reviews as instruments for more effective formulation of plans and programmes. In view of the fact that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/43/124) pointed to the lack of a conscious effort in the past to develop an adequate methodology for evaluation of programmes and urged the use of evaluation results as a basis for future plans and programmes, it was gratifying to note that the Secretary-General had indicated his intention of drawing on self-evaluations and ensuring that findings would be applied, to promote more effective formulation of the next medium-term plan. That process could facilitate enormously the setting of priorities, which should not constitute a mere catalogue of topics and issues of interest to Member States. According to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME/Rules.1 (1987)), a priority was a preferential rating for the allocation of limited resources. Consequently, priorities should take account of the context and circumstances in which the Organization carried out its programmes. If accurate evaluation was undertaken, it would be much easier to identify operational priorities for those programmes. That was the type of evaluation which the Joint Inspection Unit envisaged in its Recommendation 1, together with the submission of an analytical report.

2. With regard to Recommendation 2, his delegation considered that such a report should be submitted not only to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Question (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee, but also to specific intergovernmental bodies responsible for formulation, review and implementation of each substantive programme, in order to assist them in reformulating and achieving objectives and ensure that substantive programmes were closely connected to the relevant parts of the medium-term plan, the programme budget and the evaluation report. In addition, the Secretary-General should provide Member States with a synthesis of information and analysis like those described by the Joint Inspection Unit in paragraph 119 of its report.

3. Recommendations 3 and 4 of the Joint Inspection Unit enjoyed his delegation's support. The draft introduction to the following medium-term plan (A/43/329) represented a considerable improvement over the preceding draft and thus could serve as a basis for preparing the medium-term plan. Nevertheless, it would have to be further improved by eliminating the redundancies and repetition of themes and objectives in various chapters.

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

4. With regard to the structure of the medium-term plan, the division into four parts, each containing 10 major programmes, was an over-simplification. He wondered whether, instead of basing those major parts on the major areas identified in the Charter of the United Nations, it would not be preferable to restructure the existing major programmes on an empirical basis, taking into account the real similarities, the work-load and the pattern of resource allocation. It was particularly important to maintain the close linkage between the issues of peace and security and the concrete and acute economic, social and humanitarian priority issues.

5. His delegation urged the Secretariat to carry out a thorough evaluation of the progress achieved under the current medium-term plan, which was an integral part of the programme planning cycle. Although a set of international mechanisms for promoting international co-operation was described in paragraphs 39, 48, 51, 52, 53 and 61 of the draft introduction, there was no assessment of the efforts and progress made by the United Nations towards enhancing such mechanisms, or of the experience accumulated and progress made in enhancing the cause of multilateralism in the sectors concerned.

6. He expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would be able to submit an evaluation of efforts to revitalize multilateralism as referred to in his note concerning the perspective on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s (A/42/512), together with evaluation studies, particularly self-evaluation studies, while the proposed medium-term plan was being drafted, in order to facilitate the setting of realistic priorities. Such action would be in conformity with the recommendations contained in paragraphs 71, 72 and 73 of the Secretary-General's report (A/43/179), which the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had endorsed in paragraph 86 of Part I of its report (A/43/16 (Part I)).

7. While agreeing that the maintenance of international peace and security, the pursuit of disarmament - especially nuclear disarmament - the elaboration of international law, the promotion of economic and social development and the protection of human rights should remain the priorities of the United Nations in the near future, his delegation also attached particular importance to the work of the United Nations in the fields of development of human resources, protection of the environment and prevention and reduction of natural disasters, the latter being the major theme of the international decade for natural disaster reduction, which should be reflected explicitly in the medium-term plan. In conclusion, he supported the observations made and amendments proposed by ACABQ in paragraphs 8 to 17 of its report concerning the calendar of consultations on the following medium-term plan for the period beginning in 1992 (A/43/626).

8. Mrs. ABBAS (Pakistan) said that the foremost requirement of the medium-term plan was that it should be a dynamic instrument, and therefore must be simple. In that regard, the proposal to regroup the 31 major programmes and 148 programmes in the current plan into fewer major programmes and their components was a sound one. However, her delegation agreed with the view expressed by ACABQ in paragraph 22 of its report (A/43/626) that information explaining the rationale for the programme regroupings would have facilitated an assessment of whether the proposed changes were substantive or merely cosmetic.

/...

(Mrs. Abbas, Pakistan)

9. Moreover, the organizational aspects clearly must be adjusted to the policy guidelines, as recognised in paragraph 3.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, which stated that the plan should be presented by programme and objective and not by organisational unit. However, in paragraph 6 (c) of the Secretariat's note on the proposed structuring of medium-term plan programmes (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), it was stated that the regrouping of programmes would permit a closer relationship between programmes and sections of the programme budget, which would increase the capacity to take account of changes in objectives and strategies. That statement gave rise to concern, since it would appear that objectives and strategies would be determined by the programme budget, which would constitute a reversal of the order stipulated in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. Her delegation was also concerned to note in paragraph 5 (d) of the Secretariat's note that programme managers often saw the plan as an administrative burden imposed on top of their programme activities and competing with the implementation of substantive tasks. That attitude suggested the non-recognition of the medium-term plan as the principal policy directive for all programme planning.

10. Her delegation fully agreed with the Advisory Committee's view in paragraph 23 of its report (A/43/626) that while efforts to streamline the medium-term plan should be encouraged, the streamlining should not be construed as reducing activities. It would therefore welcome further information on the consolidation of programmes and subprogrammes mentioned in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/43/CRP.4 as well as additional information with which to assess the impact of the proposed structure on current programmes and subprogrammes. It was stated, for instance, that activities such as employment, food and agriculture, and industrialization were part of programmes such as Global development issues and policies (programme 14) and would be reflected under the programmes of the regional commissions. That kind of modification illustrated the need for Member States to have more information on the proposed structure in order to enable them to be fully cognizant of what each programme covered. Her delegation would also like clarification as to the rationale for elevating to the category of full part, in document A/C.5/43/CRP.4, a question that, in paragraph 33 (b) of document A/43/329, had been one component of a major programme.

11. The merit of the programme planning process was gauged by monitoring and reviewing programme results, which were achieved only when programmes delivered what they were mandated to do. In that context, Pakistan shared the JIU view in paragraph 3 of its report (A/43/124) that the programme performance reports told almost nothing about "actual programme results, efficiency and effectiveness relative to the objectives which were set", and it supported the four JIU recommendations on the matter.

12. Mr. HOH (United States of America) said that in theory the medium-term plan constituted the principal policy directive of the United Nations, but that in practice the plan did not fulfil that role. As noted in document A/C.5/43/CRP.4, the General Assembly resolutions constituted a body of mandates that competed with the plan. The situation with regard to the budgetary role of the plan was similar. Although it provided one basis for drawing up the programme budget,

(Mr. Hob, United States)

Member States relied on other established mechanisms to estimate the expenses of the Organisation. The main purpose of the plan was to establish programmes of work for the Secretariat, by translating intergovernmental mandates into concrete objectives. Nevertheless, as indicated in paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/43/CRP.4, the plan was too descriptive on the one hand and often imprecise on the other, since it gave too much space to international problems and responses yet did not spell out Secretariat activities in enough detail. If the integrated programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation cycle provided for in the Regulations Governing Programme Planning were faithfully followed, the intergovernmental bodies would, in adopting the plan, review the planned Secretariat activities without engaging in wide-ranging political debate, to ensure that they followed from the relevant mandates and aimed at concrete, time-limited and feasible objectives. They would also use the plan to monitor and evaluate actual performance.

13. While the United States endorsed the Secretary-General's intention to simplify the structure of the medium-term plan, it, like the Advisory Committee, felt that the proposed changes might be only cosmetic. Indeed, the current plan had 31 major programmes which, at the same level of aggregation, had become 44 in the new plan, although they were called programmes rather than major programmes. From a technical standpoint, substantial consolidation of programmes was needed to make the next plan useful and coherent. From a budgetary standpoint, concentration of limited United Nations resources in key areas would make for more effective and efficient organisation. Concentration, however, was a separate issue from consolidation of programmes under new headings. His delegation awaited Secretariat clarification regarding the impact of the proposed restructuring on the content of programmes.

14. The United States regretted that the current major programme covering special political affairs had been divided into several separate programmes in the proposed new structure. Although it was prepared to consider the inclusion of "Namibia" and "Elimination of apartheid" as separate programmes, it could not accept the tendentious Secretariat proposal to include a programme entitled "Question of Palestine", and trusted the title could be reworked on the basis of existing consensus language, should the Committee actually recommend a new programme structure. His delegation also had serious questions regarding the proposal for a new major programme, "Economic and social affairs", which would be distinct from the major programmes entitled "International economic co-operation for development" and "International co-operation for social development". The CPC records offered no basis for creating such a major programme, which would consist of two programmes, "Economic and Social Council affairs" and "Overall issues and policies, including co-ordination". Such activities were already part of international co-operation in the economic and social fields, and the plan should not suggest otherwise. It should be noted in that connection that regulation 3.6 of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning provided that the plan should be presented by programme and objective and not by organisational unit.

(Mr. Hoh, United States)

15. His delegation believed that the draft introduction to the plan was too long and detailed. At any rate, it was an honest attempt to strike a balance among the interests of the different Member States, where consensus was often elusive. It expected that the revised text presented the following year would take account of its concerns and those of other delegations. Furthermore, although it was aware that priority-setting was complicated and could not be resolved by the Secretary-General if Member States were unwilling to come to grips with it, his delegation would have liked the treatment of priorities to have been something other than a repetition of mandates. For all those reasons, it wondered if it might not be best in future introductions merely to enunciate basic principles and goals.

16. Lastly, his delegation observed that the text of the letter on the draft introduction which had been adopted by the First Committee was not a consensus document. His delegation had registered objections which had somehow been overlooked in the press of time. Regarding the recruitment of staff referred to in the letter, the United States adhered to the provisions of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

17. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Greece on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Economic Community, to the effect that the agenda and working methods of CPC required review if it was to fulfil more efficiently its key role as the intergovernmental body responsible for examining programmatic and budgetary questions, in support of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly. The current year had seen the new 34-member CPC at work for the first time; the level of input had been higher, but there had been difficulties over the programme of work and procedural matters, despite meticulous preparation of the organizational session and frequent ad hoc consultations during the session. The phenomenon was not a new one, but the crisis had become more acute now that CPC had an increased agenda but the same constraints as in previous years.

18. Since CPC was required to report through the Economic and Social Council, and the Secretariat, in turn, also had to produce reports, often in a rush, and since many documents had less than three months' lead time, it was therefore impossible for the six-week rule to be strictly adhered to. CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should acknowledge that fact and make the necessary adjustments. Regarding the representation of Member States in CPC, it should be pointed out that most delegations were led by representatives based in New York and who, furthermore, participated in the Fifth Committee - a fact which might actually facilitate a change in the pattern of CPC meetings, with more frequent, but shorter, sessions spread throughout the year. Such a change would call further into question the anomalous arrangement whereby the cost of bringing representatives from capitals was charged to the ordinary budget of the Organization. CPC should not engage in substantive debate on issues more appropriately handled in other bodies, since its functions were precisely those of co-ordination. His comments were not intended as criticism of the work of the current Chairman or Bureau of CPC, who were owed a debt of gratitude for having concluded the Committee's business despite the difficulties that had arisen.

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

19. The conclusions and recommendations appearing in the report (A/43/16) reflected a consensus which had been difficult to achieve. At the same time, it had to be recognized that the section of the report dealing with discussion of the draft introduction to the medium-term plan and the structure of the plan itself revealed a wide diversity of views. It was in such situations that one appreciated the full value of an independent Secretariat acting in accordance with the Regulations and Rules approved by the General Assembly. The medium-term plan was the object of an extensive programme of consultation and a calendar of regular revision which gave the competent intergovernmental bodies ample opportunity to exert their influence. His delegation hoped and expected that that aspect, as well as the essential role of the Secretariat, would be adequately recognized in any resolutions eventually adopted.

20. The medium-term plan was essentially a practical instrument for the translation of legislative mandates into programmed activity. All mandates were valid, whether adopted by vote or by consensus. None the less, the more the Organization was able to proceed by consensus, the more it was thereby strengthened and consequently better able to fulfil the principles and purposes set out in the Charter. The Secretary-General's proposal to relate the medium-term plan to Charter principles was an attractive one. Nevertheless, while the revised structure set out in document A/C.5/43/CRP.4 corresponded to concerns his delegation shared, on balance it would have preferred the version presented earlier to CPC, which had given, for instance, due prominence to the broad concepts of self-determination. That important Charter principle should neither be omitted from the title of the relevant major programme nor relegated to a position of secondary importance. His delegation's support for fundamental freedoms included an unshakable attachment to the freedom of opinion and expression. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided for the freedom to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

21. The replies to the request for comments addressed to the Chairmen of the other Main Committees by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee included a number of communications on behalf of individual Member States or groups of Member States which in some instances covered a range of issues that was rather wider than was justified by the terms of the request. In that regard his delegation, like that of the United States, had had to indicate its reservations about the text of the letter from the Chairman of the First Committee, which had not enjoyed consensus support. Regarding the attachment to the letter from the Chairman of the Special Political Committee (A/SPC/43/L.10), which contained a statement from a particular group of Member States relating, inter alia, to an item under consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, his delegation considered that the new item to be discussed in the Legal Sub-Committee was an important matter, but that it was premature at that point to decide on the setting up of a working group for that purpose. It would prefer first to hear the views of delegations at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee on the substance of the matter, before deciding on the best way of proceeding. The comments made in the Second Committee to the effect that activities in the economic and social sectors should be covered under a single major programme openly conflicted with a suggestion by some Member States as recorded in the CPC report.

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

The medium-term plan provided for the translation of mandated activity into programmes and required decisions to be taken on the allocation of responsibilities, an allocation which, if it was to be coherent, must reflect administrative structures. Consequently, the plan needed to make sense in terms of the structure of the programme budget.

22. Mr. GURUGE (Sri Lanka), referring to the recommendation made by CPC in paragraph 115 of its report (A/43/16), that a reference to resolutions 42/20 and 42/46 of the General Assembly should be included in paragraph 3.10 of chapter III (International justice and law) of the medium-term plan, said that resolution 42/20 was one in the series of resolutions on the law of the sea adopted annually on the basis of the annual reports of the Secretary-General on the subject. It was not appropriate to refer to the resolution on the law of the sea under the programme on international justice and law since the latter was strictly legal and did not encompass other political or specialized aspects of substantive fields, while the law of the sea was a specialized branch of international relations encompassing the fields of law, politics and economics. For that reason, a specialized office had been set up, the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. Reference to those resolutions in paragraph 3.10 would mean that all other resolutions of the General Assembly, whether on outer space, human rights, or economic and social matters, could also be included there, since they all had some legal dimension. Acceptance of the recommendations of CPC would result in duplication and an obvious overlapping of mandates and activities. His delegation therefore urged that the recommendation should be reconsidered.

23. Mr. HAMADZIRIPI (Zimbabwe) said that recent developments in international relations had attested to the United Nations indispensable role in the realization of the aspirations of all peoples to peace and security. Nevertheless, much remained to be done, particularly with regard to decolonization and the right of peoples to self-determination. Those issues should be given appropriate emphasis in the medium-term plan, which was the principal policy directive of the United Nations. The Organization had accorded apartheid, Namibian independence and the Palestinian question, the prominence they deserved. United Nations activities in those areas should, therefore, be reflected appropriately in the draft plan. In that connection, provision should be made for measures relating to the preparation of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and for efforts to mobilize the instruments available to ensure the rapid elimination of apartheid. Caution was advisable in the case of Namibia and should not be taken for granted that the matter would have been resolved by the beginning of the next plan, i.e., by 1992. The plan should also ensure that the establishment of the new international economic order continued to be one of the major objectives of the United Nations objectives, and highlight the need to resolve the interrelated problems of money, finance, external debt, international trade and development.

24. As far as the programme structure of the draft plan was concerned, any streamlining should not result in a downgrading or reduction of the Organization's activities, particularly in the areas in question. Furthermore, it would be preferable for the structure adopted not to crystallize or "strait jacket" activities, but to provide the necessary flexibility to adjust to legislative changes, including changes in its operational environment.

25. Mr. ZONGWE (Zaire), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, having examined the proposed programme structure of the medium-term plan (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), the Group considered that the introduction to the plan should highlight, in a co-ordinated manner the principal orientations of the United Nations, and indicate objectives and strategies. Accordingly, regulation 3.7 and rule 103.7 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, should serve as a guide for formulation of the plan.

26. With regard to mandates and programmes, the slogan "United Nations for a Better World" must not remain mere words. The Organization must persist with programmes designed to achieve its self-determination of peoples, in particular, the Palestinian and Namibian peoples, and the elimination of apartheid. The sooner such fundamental human issues were resolved, the fewer the programmes there would be to share budget resources. The African Group hoped that the next medium-term plan would provide for the reinforcement of programmes relating to economic and social development in order to eradicate the poverty, squalor, hunger and ignorance afflicting all parts of the world, but, in particular, Africa. That continent was currently suffering the effects of unprecedented natural disasters, calling for more concerted action on the part of the United Nations to provide not only immediate solutions, but also, and above all, solutions to long-term problems. It was highly encouraging, therefore, to note in paragraph 61 of the Secretary-General's note (A/43/329) that the critical situation in Africa would continue to be of major concern to the United Nations in the coming decade. The Secretary-General should, however, propose also a substantial programme with the view to achieve the economic and social advancement of peoples throughout the world.

27. The Group of African States fully agreed with the role of the United Nations in the economic and social sphere as described in paragraphs 51 to 54 of the note. With regard to the establishment of programme priorities, it considered that the provisions of section II of resolution 36/228 A would continue to provide the most appropriate framework. As far as the proposed structure was concerned, the regrouping of programmes and subprogrammes was certainly a simplification, but it did not reflect fully the range and content of United Nations activities, which meant that there was a risk that such activities might be reduced. On the other hand, the Group agreed with the comments made by the Secretariat in paragraphs 8 and 10 of its note (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), which concerned, respectively, the procedure for submitting and reviewing proposals, and the scope and transparency of the plan.

28. Relevant, in that connection, were the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 22 and 23 of its report (A/43/626), on the need to explain the rationale behind the proposed regroupings. Such an explanation would make it easier to determine whether the changes planned concerned substantive issues or were simply a manner of form. Accordingly, the Group of African States wished to know more about how the programmes in the existing structure, listed in annex II to the note by the Secretariat (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), were incorporated into the proposed structure set out in annex I. Furthermore, it recalled that, in accordance with regulations 3.4 and 3.6 of the Regulations and Rules, the plan should serve as a framework for the formulation of budgets, and be presented by programme and objective and not by

(Mr. Zongwe, Zaire)

organisational unit. Lastly, since it was not in possession of sufficient information, the Group of African States was not in a position to express an opinion on the proposals with regard to the next medium-term plan.

29. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) agreed with the statements made by the representatives of Zimbabwe and Zaire, and said that, although both the General Assembly and the Secretary-General had repeatedly recalled the need to evaluate programme performance, the matter had not received the attention it deserved from the relevant deliberative bodies. Implementation of the United Nations programmes for the period 1984-1985 had been examined only briefly. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Joint Inspection Unit had not received the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the programmes for the period 1986-1987. The provisions of the Regulations and Rules were not being applied. That situation was attributable to the absence of a precise method for evaluating and monitoring the performance of United Nations activities, to delays in the submission of reports, and to the fact that so little time was allowed for examination of those reports. The measures envisaged by the Secretary-General to improve the evaluation process, the application of self-evaluation methods and the computerization of programme-monitoring data should be supported by the Fifth Committee, but they called also for an in-depth study consistent with the supposed importance of the evaluation process.

30. With regard to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes (A/43/124), his delegation considered that some of the recommendations, particularly the first, deserved special attention.

31. The draft introduction to the medium-term plan annexed to document A/43/329 was better than its predecessor (A/42/512), despite the fact that the new draft did not consider the role of the United Nations in the 1990s. In accordance with the provisions of the Regulations and Rules, the draft introduction must include objectives [and strategy] and trends, and indicate the means of achieving the new international economic order and of promoting the rights of peoples still victims of colonialism or racist ideologies. The United Nations should serve as a forum for negotiations to achieve those objectives. It was important to correct the impression produced in the draft introduction, by the attempt to make United Nations objectives more realistic, that the Organization's role was intended to be that of a "think tank" for studying development problems.

32. As far as the mandates and programmes were concerned, emphasis might have been given in the draft to the need to restore the occupied Arab territories and to decide upon the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the apartheid régime; the special role of the United Nations with regard to the Namibian and Palestinian questions; State terrorism directed against the Palestinian people and against the peoples of Namibia and Azania; obstacles to development, such as debt, and the need to harmonize the activities of the specialized agencies with mainstream United Nations activity in the economic and financial fields. Programme priorities must not be established on the basis of isolated proposals, but must take account of priority activities in the economic, social and political fields, stipulated in United Nations resolutions and mandates.

(Mr. Ladjouzi, Algeria)

33. The primary purpose of the new programme structure of the medium-term plan proposed by the Secretariat was to improve the plan's presentation. His delegation shared that concern, for programme planning meant more than merely compiling mandates. The review process could also be improved, for, unlike the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 42/215, the revisions made by CPC at its spring session had been merely cosmetic. The second purpose was to reduce the number of major programmes and bring them into line with the fundamental purposes of the Charter. However, reduction of programmes was not an objective of resolution 41/213 on review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. The Group of 18 had concluded that the size of the Secretariat could be reduced without prejudice to the programmes, and that conclusion must always be kept in mind. With respect to the need to bring the major programmes into line with the fundamental purposes of the Charter, it must be remembered that the Charter was a basic instrument of principle, not a management tool, and that the major programmes of the current plan were consistent with those fundamental purposes both in terms of number and in terms of content. The proposal's third purpose was to adapt the structure of the programmes to the Secretariat's organisational structure. In that connection, his delegation shared the opinion of several other delegations that the procedure should be reversed. Lastly, the main objective was to regroup programmes and subprogrammes. Such an exercise was perhaps necessary, but he wondered who was to carry it out and on the basis of what criteria, and what would be its effects on the volume of activities. Furthermore, just as difficulties were being encountered in verifying whether recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 was having adverse effects on the programmes, so it would be difficult to verify the assurances offered in document A/43/329 that regrouping would not involve a reduction of activities. Documents A/43/329 and A/C.5/43/CRP.4 did not clarify those points. His delegation thought that so important an exercise should be carried out by the Member States in collaboration with the Secretariat and on the basis of clear criteria. It also agreed with the Advisory Committee concerning the need to avoid any reduction of activities.

34. The programme structure proposed in annex I of the note by the Secretariat (A/C.5/43/CRP.4) was preferable to the one suggested at the latest session of CPC. It provided, for example, for the inclusion of the questions of Namibia and Palestine and African economic recovery and development as programmes, and regional co-operation for economic and social development as a major programme. However, it offered no explanation as to the relevance of the proposed structure and such important questions as the debt and science and technology for development had been either omitted entirely or given excessively brief treatment. In order to be adopted, the structure would have to be revised in the light of the political concerns indicated by the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the Chairman of the African Group, and of the economic considerations indicated by the Group of 77 at the forty-second session of the General Assembly, at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, and at the current session of the Second Committee, as well as of other opinions expressed in the Main Committees and in the General Assembly.

35. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that various intergovernmental bodies and the Main Committees had correctly pointed out that the information provided to them was not sufficient to enable them to reach substantive conclusions and recommendations on the various issues at stake. That had been, for example, the unanimous view of CPC and the Advisory Committee. Although the Secretariat had provided additional information, in particular on the structure of the new medium-term plan (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), further clarification was needed. The Secretariat had not offered sufficient justification of the need for the proposed changes, apart from indicating that the new structure had been formulated in the context of the Charter. But the Charter was not a management tool. The format of the plan's present structure provided a considerable degree of preciseness and transparency. More specific information was therefore needed concerning the practical coherence of the new structure and the current structure. There could be a more precise indication, for instance, of where in the new structure the major programmes and subprogrammes of the current structure would be inserted. That would also help to clarify, at the same time, the two questions raised by the Advisory Committee: whether the proposed changes were substantive or merely cosmetic, and whether the streamlining of the medium-term plan might not entail the risk of a reduction of activities (A/43/626, paras. 22 and 23).

36. It was important strictly to observe the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, in particular regulation 3.2 and rule 103.2. The Secretary-General should adequately reflect, in his proposals on the new medium-term plan, the legislative mandates of all intergovernmental bodies, particularly those relating to the priority issues, such as African economic recovery and development, women, the elimination of apartheid, and the questions of Namibia and Palestine. The proposals should take fully into account the views expressed by Member States in intergovernmental bodies, including CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as the clear guidelines set out in General Assembly resolution 36/228, section II.

37. His delegation welcomed the proposed calendar of consultations contained in paragraph 12 of document A/43/329/Add.1 and it endorsed the period of the new medium-term plan proposed by CPC. It also supported CPC's opinion that the Secretary-General should ensure effective co-ordination with the specialized agencies, including those having a different programming cycle. It shared the concern expressed by many delegations concerning the lack of transparency of the revisions of the medium-term plan and the resulting confusion. As CPC and the Advisory Committee had suggested, the Secretary-General should prepare a new methodology for revisions of the plan, perhaps using the loose-leaf format suggested by CPC in paragraph 104 of its report (A/43/16 (Part I)), and submit it to CPC at its twenty-ninth session.

38. With respect to the comments made on the text of the report of the First Committee to the Fifth Committee concerning the medium-term plan, his delegation wished to stress that the text had been approved without a vote by a Main Committee. Efforts had been made to question the validity of the principle of equitable geographical distribution applicable to the Secretariat, and Uganda was not prepared to accept a reopening of that debate in the Fifth Committee. Furthermore, the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom on the

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

recent meetings of CPC were most unfortunate. Such comments clearly would have adverse consequences for the political consensus achieved for the approval of General Assembly resolution 41/213, and raised doubts not only about the seriousness of the approach to the question of the effectiveness of the Organization's work but also about the objective and purpose of any proposals concerning the strengthening of the work of the Committee on Conferences, in particular the question of its composition and mandate, which was currently under negotiation.

39. Mr. JEMAIL (Tunisia), referring to the proposed new structure of the medium-term plan (A/C.5/43/CRP.4), said that, as was clear from regulation 3.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the formulation of the medium-term plan could not be left entirely to the Secretariat. The plan should constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations, as established in regulation 3.3. Only in that way could it serve as the main guideline both for the Secretariat and for Member States. In order to do so, the plan must be conceived rationally and applied flexibly and from time to time incorporate new mandates from the General Assembly. Until it was completely integrated into the overall system of evaluation, the plan could not serve as an instrument for guaranteeing that programmes were executed. Such an arrangement would make it easier to determine which programmes had achieved their goal and which were in some way lacking. That idea was related to the optimal use of resources. The plan should not be confined within a rigid budgeting process, as was implied in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/43/CRP.4. On the contrary, the budget should be adjusted to the plan, to ensure that no programme or subprogramme was left without resources. Regulation 3.4, which provided that the medium-term plan should serve as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budgets, bore out his thesis.

40. His delegation was not convinced that, in order to establish a close relationship between the medium-term plan and the programme budget, the structure of programmes should be adapted to the structure of the Secretariat. That viewpoint was not in keeping with the desired flexibility of the medium-term plan. In any event, the Secretariat would need to provide additional information on that matter.

41. In principle, his delegation was in favour of improving the structure of the programmes. However, that should not imply any reduction in activities. Furthermore, such reduction would not be justified by the mandates of the General Assembly. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, for its part, had come to the conclusion that it could not examine the new structure in depth because it lacked sufficient information.

42. Although it was a considerable improvement on the document originally submitted to CPC, document A/C.5/43/CRP.4 still did not provide enough information to enable Member States to reach a definite decision on the matter. It should be pointed out that the medium-term plan must remain in force for several years, and that the Secretariat had not indicated how it proposed to incorporate in the new structure all the programmes in the existing plan. The explanations provided in

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(Mr. Jemil, Tunisia)

that connection in paragraph 8 of document A/C.5/43/CRP.4 were inadequate. Tunisia agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Secretariat should give reasons for its statements, setting forth the criteria used in the proposed regroupings. Similarly, it considered that the question of priorities was one of the basic elements of the medium-term plan and that consequently the plan should reflect those priorities as faithfully as possible. Accordingly, the omissions in the new programme structure, to which members of the Group of 77 had drawn attention in CPC, were inexplicable. Unfortunately, those omissions related to priority matters. It would be advisable, in future, for Member States to reach agreement on a set of priorities; in determining those priorities attention should also be given to the role that should be played by the Secretary-General. In that connection, mention should be made of regulation 3.7 of the Programme Planning Regulations which stressed the importance of the introduction to the medium-term plan as a projection for the future. It was also necessary to establish closer co-operation between the Secretariat and Member States so that the medium-term plan did not constitute the "administrative burden" referred to in paragraph 5 (d) of document A/C.5/43/CRP.4.

43. Referring to the comments made by the United Kingdom representative, he recalled that the international community, in General Assembly resolution 41/213, had recognized the importance of the role assigned to CPC and had made it one of the principal organs of the United Nations. At its last session, CPC had worked very hard on reforms to the United Nations and had succeeded in adopting most of its decisions by consensus, in accordance with the spirit of the resolution in question. His delegation considered, therefore, that the comments of the United Kingdom representative were neither constructive nor conducive to enhancing the trust of Member States in the Organization.

44. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), responding to the various questions asked during the debate, said that the reference to General Assembly resolution 42/20 in the medium-term plan did not in any way alter the existing functions of the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. The inclusion of Assembly resolution 42/46 in the mandate of the Office of Legal Affairs simply reflected the already existing co-operation between those two units, which was more intensive in matters relating to questions of the Law of the Sea and Antarctica. There had been no question of altering the distribution of functions between them.

45. Regarding the decision not to include resolution 32/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women in the revised medium-term plan, he noted that the resolution had not been confirmed or ratified by the Economic and Social Council; the Council had confined itself to taking note of it. That did not constitute a sufficient mandate for its incorporation in the medium-term plan. Regarding the process of drafting the introduction to the medium-term plan, he said that all the comments made would be taken into account by the Secretary-General when he revised the draft introduction, which would be introduced in 1990 together with the medium-term plan.

(Mr. Baudot)

46. Referring to the comment that the Secretary-General's report on the preparation of the next medium-term plan apparently requested the Fifth Committee to "endorse" the proposed structure (A/43/329, para. 9), he agreed that it might have been better to use another word. The Programme Planning and Budget Division, in its capacity as the central organ of the Secretariat, must instruct the various departments on how to prepare the draft chapters of the budget which must obviously be based on a structure. That made it necessary to take an internal decision. The main thing was the degree of flexibility that would be available during the preparation of the plan in 1990. In so far as the Fifth Committee or the General Assembly could reach agreement on a structure, the task of the Secretariat would be very much easier. Even if the General Assembly could not reach full agreement on the details of the structure, there would be opportunities to amend it during preparation of the plan.

47. Stress had been laid during the discussion in the Fifth Committee, as well as in CPC, on the need for more information so as to be able to evaluate the plan structure better. For example, some delegations had asked for information about what subprogrammes would be included in the proposed programmes. However, it was not appropriate for the Secretariat to present a list of subprogrammes until they had been considered by the various specialized, regional and other legislative bodies in the course of 1990. That was precisely one of the reasons why the question of the simplified structure offered no danger as far as the content of activities was concerned, since all the legislative bodies would have an opportunity in 1990 to evaluate the content of the plan in terms of subprogrammes and activities.

48. With regard to the relationship between the proposed structure and the current structure of the plan, a relatively simple chart had been prepared that could perhaps be distributed in the course of informal consultations, on the understanding that it was an informal document and not a conference room paper. The numerous questions raised about the relationship between the medium-term plan and the programme budget suggested that the note submitted might not be sufficiently clear in that respect. If it gave the impression that the plan was to be established on the basis of the budget and not vice versa, then that impression must be corrected. The chapters of the plan were unrelated to the structure of the Secretariat or the sections of the programme budget. Moreover, if the structure of the plan with regard to programmes and subprogrammes departed too far from the structure of budget sections, which largely corresponded to the structure of the Secretariat's functions, that would reduce the plan's effectiveness with regard to those functions and the opportunities for Member States to see how it was implemented.

49. Another very important aspect was flexibility in the structure and content of the plan. With regard to the structure, nothing prevented the General Assembly from adding or eliminating programmes. The Secretariat was convinced, however, that it was extremely difficult to revise the content of the plan as the latest meeting of CPC had demonstrated. It was precisely the structure and complexity of the plan that made it difficult to revise.

(Mr. Baudot)

50. One central problem was the relationship between a simplified structure and the content of activities. In 1990, the decision-making bodies would be considering subprogrammes and activities and Member States would have to consider how far the plan's new structure would enable activities to be undertaken. Moreover, the programmes that would start in 1992 had barely been defined. There was an element of continuity in the United Nations but also an element of renewal and dynamism, and it was hoped therefore that by the time the plan was adopted some initiatives would have been taken with regard to programmes, subprogrammes and mandates that would enable the Secretariat to define programmes and subprogrammes precisely.

51. With regard to the relationship between the structure of the plan and that of the Secretariat, the latter's structure was not an arbitrary one; in principle, it reflected the objectives assigned to it by Member States. There was little difference, therefore, between a plan based on objectives and one based on organisational units, since most Secretariat units reflected, or sought to reflect, the objectives of Member States.

52. Mr. HAAS (Federal Republic of Germany) asked whether the letters addressed to the Chairman by the Chairmen of the other Main Committees would become official documents of the Fifth Committee or would simply be distributed to delegations in their current form.

53. Mr. SCHASTNY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation was somewhat disappointed by the answer it had received concerning the inclusion in the medium-term plan of the provisions of the resolution on the legal and social status of women. The content of resolutions often made it necessary to revise the medium-term plan. The resolution in question had been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Secretariat should have focused its efforts on securing the adoption of that resolution at one of the two sessions of the Economic and Social Council. He hoped that further explanations would be given as to the future of the resolution, which was not very clear.

54. Mr. MAUS (Mexico) said that his delegation was interested in knowing in what form the Committee would receive the replies of the other Main Committees. It was also its understanding that the Second Committee had a statement by the Group of 77 which would be useful for the Fifth Committee to receive officially. Lastly, he hoped the document referred to by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division would be distributed shortly.

55. Mr. BOUR (France) said that the answers given by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division raised further doubts. For example, with regard to the validity of mandates and the manner in which they must be reflected in the medium-term plan, he wished to know whether it was necessary to cite the relevant resolutions in different programmes in cases of co-operation between a number of departments or units of the Secretariat. With regard to the statement by the representative of the Byelorussian SSR, it was clearly impossible to include all resolutions since there was an order of priority among them. Until they were approved by the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly, proposals by

(Mr. Bour, France)

subsidiary organs were not, in his view, resolutions which created mandates. He would also like to hear from the Secretariat whether there were any precise rules governing the extent to which mandates must be taken into account in the medium-term plan. If there were not, or if such rules were in any way vague, his delegation would ask the Secretariat to submit the relevant proposals with a view to simplifying the structure and presentation of the medium-term plan.

56. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the replies of all the Main Committees and the statement made in the Second Committee by the Group of 77 would be distributed to the Fifth Committee. He would like to seek further information before replying in detail to the question raised by the representative of the Byelorussian SSR concerning the resolution of the Commission on the Status of Women.

57. As to the questions raised by the representative of France, the same resolution could appear in different sections of the plan. That would be the case, for instance, with a resolution on development strategy, which obviously affected many programmes. With regard to the level of the legislative mandates that might appear in the plan, his preliminary response would be that decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the principal organs of the United Nations would have to be taken into account. It was his impression that the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning contained no definitions of mandates, but he would have to check whether that was the case.

58. Mr. HOH (United States of America) said that, in his reply, the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division had said that the Secretariat saw little difference between planning by objectives and planning by organizational units. His delegation would like the Secretariat to clarify that point, since regulation 3.6 (b) of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning stated that programmes should consist, within a major programme, of all activities in a sector which were under the responsibility of a distinct organizational unit. That would seem to indicate that any component of the Secretariat's proposals that referred to an organizational unit must be considered at programme level and not at major programme level.

59. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that there were, indeed, differences, between planning by objectives and planning by organizational units, but that their importance should not be exaggerated since they were to some extent artificial. That was what he had really meant in his reply. He agreed that the relationship between objectives and organizational units existed essentially at programme level, not at major programme level.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.