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**FIFTH COMMITTEE**

**25th meeting**

**held on**

**Friday, 4 November 1988**

**at 10 a.m.**

**New York**

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING**

**Chairman: Mr. ARASTOU (Islamic Republic of Iran)**

**later: Mr. OKEYO (Kenya)**

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

**CONTENTS**

**AGENDA ITEM 122: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)**

**AGENDA ITEM 147: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP**

**AGENDA ITEM 121: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)**

**AGENDA ITEM 115: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)**

**ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

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**Distr. GENERAL**  
**A/C.5/43/SR.25**  
**17 November 1988**  
**ENGLISH**  
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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 122: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/43/30 and Corr.1; A/C.5/43/12, 21 and 26)

1. Mr. AKWEI (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission), responding to the questions and comments that had emerged during the debate, said that, so far as the format and presentation of the report was concerned, the Commission had taken due note of the remarks made by the Bulgarian representative. As the representative of India had suggested, the Commission would also include in its report a brief glossary of technical terms, which made the report easier to understand but also longer.

2. With regard to the relations between ICSC and staff representatives, the Commission appreciated the many appeals that had been made to FICSA and CCISUA to reconsider their decision not to participate in the Commission's deliberations, participation that was essential for the proper functioning of the common system. The Commission had sought to respond to the concerns of staff by improving the consultation process and was willing to consider any further ideas put forward in that connection. As indicated in its report (A/43/30, para. 14), the Commission had taken measures, in consultation with the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), in order to enable staff representatives to participate as much as possible in its work. Accordingly, 90 per cent of the Commission's deliberations were henceforth to be held in open sessions.

3. With regard to the ICSC's recommendations concerning the education grant and dependency allowances, some delegations had expressed the view that no action should be taken thereon until after the completion of the comprehensive review. It was not possible, however, to ignore current problems facing staff, especially when those problems had not been addressed for more than five years. On the basis of technical facts concerning increases in educational and dependency costs since 1983, there was sufficient justification for the increases recommended by ICSC. Those were no more than corrective measures to offset inflation. It was therefore necessary to increase those allowances without further delay; if it had been decided to wait, before adopting the Commission's recommendations, for the comprehensive review to be completed, that would have been understood as a further refusal to tackle the problems on the basis of purely technical considerations. ICSC also intended to include those allowances in the comprehensive review. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the 50-per-cent increase of the grant would be fully applied only to staff members who incurred expenses of more than \$9,000 per child per annum. Delegations would find detailed information in support of the increases recommended by the Commission in the annex to his statement.

4. Turning to the question of the margin between the remuneration of the United States federal civil service and that of United Nations staff, he recalled that, in 1985, the margin had been around 121. ICSC, applying the directives set forth in General Assembly resolutions 40/244 and 42/221, had brought the margin down to around 115 and had kept it there, and thus made it predictable within a specific

(Mr. Akwei)

time-frame. It was true, as the Soviet delegation had observed, that, if data were taken for the past three years, an average level of the margin would be at 116.6. That figure would, however, change if a longer period was taken. It was because of such variations that the Fifth Committee had requested ICSC to abide by a one-year period, which brought the margin operation more closely in line with the budget process. So far as financial implications of the margin for 1989 were concerned, whatever change occurred, it would be contained more or less within the budget since the projection of a 15-per-cent margin had already been approved by the General Assembly.

5. As for the reasons and cost implications of the variations in the United Nations-to-United States net salary ratio at the Professional and higher categories, it should be noted first of all that the ratio did not include the New York/Washington cost-of-living differential which would make it substantially lower. Secondly, the fact that salary ratios varied from grade to grade did not result in any financial implications, because the comparison was made on a base of weighted averages. Lastly, as the United States federal civil service was of a rank-in-person type, it was difficult to compare the D-1 and, especially, the D-2 levels with the corresponding senior executive service levels. However, since those higher levels were limited in number, they did not have a significant impact on the margin calculations.

6. ICSC hoped that the General Assembly would provide it with guidelines concerning the comprehensive review of conditions of service for the Professionals and higher grades, given the divergent views expressed on the matter. Should the comprehensive review be continued if the staff representatives did not reverse their decision not to participate in the Commission's work? Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/221, ICSC, in its report, had given an outline of options without submitting either a detailed analytical study of the subject or cost implications, as none had been requested. It was to be hoped that, on the basis of that conceptual synopsis, the Fifth Committee would be able to provide some guidance as to how ICSC should continue its work. Given the numerous assignments given to ICSC, all of which had financial implications for the comprehensive review and some of which would not be carried out before the forty-fourth session, it seemed difficult to undertake a truly comprehensive review in time for that session.

7. Given the time constraints facing the Commission, it must be remembered that the bodies responsible for carrying out the four major reviews of the remuneration system since the foundation of the Organization had been given more time than ICSC. They had also been given a more limited mandate, namely, a salary review pure and simple, to the exclusion, in particular, of the troublesome post-adjustment system. Finally, the world economic and monetary situation had then been relatively stable, which was no longer the case. Given the numerous complex issues delegated to ICSC for inclusion in its comprehensive review, its secretariat was faced with developing, in a short time, technical and statistical studies which would require considerable time and cost.

8. Some delegations had stated that any measures taken on the basis of the conclusions of the comprehensive review should be contained within existing

(Mr. Akwei)

financial resources, whereas others had emphasized that, in order to attract competent staff, an acceptable level of remuneration was required. It should be remembered that ICSC, being a technical body, would present the various alternatives together with full financial implications. The final, i.e. the essentially political, decision would be for the General Assembly to adopt.

9. Some delegations had taken the view that comparisons with the private sector were contrary to the Noblemaire principle. It should be recalled, however, that the operation of the Pay Comparability Act, in accordance with which pay levels of the United States federal civil service were fixed, indirectly linked the level of United Nations pay with private sector levels. Moreover, in determining General Service pay, comparisons had always been made with the private sector. The Noblemaire principle, whose validity did not seem to be at issue, was applied to comparisons of net salary. It was clear, however, that pay calculated on the basis of that method was no longer adequate to attract staff with the requisite qualifications to serve with United Nations organizations. That was why the General Assembly had requested ICSC to undertake a comprehensive review of conditions of service and to develop a method based on the comparison of total entitlements. ICSC had also been commissioned to study the possibility of having no comparator at all. Although most pay systems seemed to require some kind of comparator, the idea might well be feasible.

10. With regard to incentives to mobility, it would be recalled that ICSC had decided that the assignment allowance should take into account the mobility factor and it intended to pursue the matter further. A distinction should, however, be made between expatriation and mobility. Non-expatriate staff, who accounted for not more than 14 per cent of total staff, did not receive any expatriate benefits, save indirectly through the margin, which had been maintained regularly by the General Assembly. Expatriate staff did not receive any mobility allowance unless they were actually mobile. It had been proposed that mobility should be taken into account for career development purposes. It should be noted, however, that the mobility factor was not of equal importance in all organizations of the common system. Lastly, some delegations had rightly drawn attention to the necessity of developing a remuneration system that was fair to the staff serving in the field, where more than half the entire staff worked.

11. With regard to motivation and productivity, it was obvious that non-material factors, such as career prospects and training opportunities, played a role in attracting and retaining highly qualified staff and in improving their productivity. It was not for a technical body like ICSC to take into account elements that could not be quantified, such as the prestige of serving in the international civil service.

12. Various other observations and suggestions had been made concerning merit pay, supplementary payments and the setting of targets for equitable geographical distribution. They would be given careful consideration by ICSC.

**AGENDA ITEM 147: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP  
(A/43/696 and A/43/768)**

13. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) (A/43/768), pointed out that, at the resumed forty-second session, he had given the Fifth Committee the views of ACABQ on the Secretary-General's initial estimates. At that time, the Fifth Committee had recommended the General Assembly to appropriate an amount of \$35.7 million gross pending the submission by the Secretary-General of an updated report at the forty-third session.

14. The Advisory Committee had requested the Secretary-General to indicate in the updated report what voluntary contributions towards the financing of UNIIMOG had been received. It had also indicated its intention of reviewing the procedures governing the use of voluntary contributions to the current operation and to peace-keeping operations in general.

15. The Advisory Committee had gone thoroughly into the revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General, taking into consideration the potential growth of peace-keeping operations and the associated expenditure. The question of voluntary contributions was dealt with in paragraphs 26 to 34 of document A/43/768. The Advisory Committee had sought to improve the procedures applicable. There were two kinds of contributions, those in cash and those in kind; contributions in kind could take the form of supplies or services. The current practice with cash contributions was to place them in a suspense account and regard them as advances which must be repaid to their donors. Given the changing nature of peace-keeping operations, the Advisory Committee thought that the procedure should be modified as indicated in paragraph 31 of its report: voluntary contributions should, unless otherwise specified by the donor, be considered current income which could eventually be used to reduce the level of assessments. If voluntary cash contributions were to be regarded as advances, the donors should so specify.

16. As for contributions in kind, the Advisory Committee held that their cash value must be established; it called upon the Secretary-General, in paragraph 30 of its report, to submit no later than 1 April 1989 technical guidelines for the valuation of supplies and services. Once again, the cash value of such supplies and services should be regarded as current income which would ultimately be used to reduce assessable costs. If it was specified that the cash value of such contributions should be regarded as an advance, the Advisory Committee suggested in paragraph 31 of its report that the condition should be agreed to only after strict application of all existing procedures for procurement, including, where applicable, competitive bidding.

17. In paragraph 32, the Advisory Committee recommended that the budget estimates for peace-keeping should include information on the cash contributions and contributions in kind that had been received.

(Mr. Mselle)

18. In paragraph 34, the Advisory Committee dealt with contributions in cash or in kind which were tied to or in the form of unbudgeted activities, goods or services. It believed the Secretary-General should be permitted to accept such contributions provided that the purposes for which they were made were consistent with the policies, aims and activities of the operation in question. The Secretary-General should, of course, report contributions of that kind. The Advisory Committee intended to monitor information on such contributions, and would propose further guidelines as necessary.

19. In its report, the Advisory Committee detailed the revised estimates and gave reasons for its recommendations. Table 1 showed that the initial estimates had amounted to \$73.8 million. The revised estimates amounted to \$58,127,000, or \$15,673,000 less. The reduction was explained in the Committee's report. The Advisory Committee had, however, learnt that the sum of \$20 million associated with a military signals unit furnished by one Member State was under negotiation. As indicated in paragraph 5 of the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretary-General would revert to the matter of the cost of the signals unit in the context of the future financing requirements of UNIIMOG, as appropriate. In paragraph 9 of its report, the Advisory Committee indicated that, given the uncertainties relating to the \$20 million, the final cost of the military signals unit would likely be lower than anticipated.

20. For reasons given in paragraphs 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the net expenditure relating to UNIIMOG should not exceed \$53.5 million. As \$35 million net had already been appropriated, the amount to be assessed on Member States should not exceed \$18.5 million net. In the light of his earlier comments on the treatment of voluntary contributions, however, the Advisory Committee had spent some time considering whether the \$11 million received in voluntary contributions should be offset against the amount of \$18.5 million. After hearing from the representatives of the Secretary-General, and considering the total contributions collected to date for the initial mandate period of UNIIMOG, it recommended that the \$11 million should be taken into account in calculating the amount to be assessed on Member States for the next mandate period (para. 20).

21. The Advisory Committee would follow the same procedure during its consideration of the estimates for the next mandate period, in accordance with the recommendation it made in paragraph 25. In that same paragraph it recommended that, should the Security Council renew the mandate of UNIIMOG, the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments for the 12-month period beginning 9 February 1989 at a rate not to exceed \$7,986,000 gross (\$7.8 million net) per month, subject to the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee for the actual level of commitments to be entered into for each mandate period approved subsequent to 8 February 1989.

22. Paragraph 10 of the report called on the Secretary-General to prepare a report for consideration by ACABQ on reimbursement to troop-contributing States, which should also address the broad issues involved. In paragraph 22, the Advisory

(Mr. Msellie)

Committee asked the Secretary-General to consider whether a reserve stock of communications and other equipment could be set up for drawing on in the initial stages of an operation such as UNIIMOG.

23. Paragraph 23 of the report dealt briefly with the "start-up" costs of peace-keeping operations. The Advisory Committee had discussed the possibility of setting up a working capital fund, and would return to that point. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General should analyse the problems involved with the start-up of peace-keeping operations and suggest guidelines for the creation of a working capital fund including the appropriate size for such a fund, means of financing it, and procedures for its utilization.

24. Mr. SINGH (Fiji), referring to document ST/ADM/SER.B/302 on the status of contributions to the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group as at 30 September 1988, asked whether the Secretariat could provide the Committee with more up-to-date information on that subject.

AGENDA ITEM 121: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/43/659; A/C.5/43/6, 14, 25 and 27)

25. Mr. EL AMRANI (Morocco) said that the current session of the General Assembly was taking place at a time of successes for the United Nations with regard to the establishment of international peace and security. His delegation warmly congratulated the peace-keeping forces on receiving the Nobel Prize. That historic award was confirmation of the unique value of the Organization.

26. His delegation had no doubts that the policies pursued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management were conducive to the development of a qualified and competent staff. However, the reform process undertaken in pursuance of resolution 41/213 should not adversely affect the principle of equitable geographical distribution. In that connection, it was regrettable that of 66 individuals recently appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution, 7 or 10.6 per cent, were nationals of overrepresented Member States, while the number of unrepresented Member States had not been reduced. Other States within their desirable ranges had seen the number of their nationals in the Secretariat decline. There was no justification for reducing the quota of developing countries in order to increase the quota of already overrepresented wealthy countries. That was an imbalance which should be rectified, especially in the current final stage of the reform process.

27. The Organization's efforts to improve the position of women should be reflected in an increase in the number of women at all levels of the Secretariat, especially in decision-making posts. The increase in the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution from 25.7 per cent in 1987 to 26.3 per cent in 1988 was not inconsiderable. Further efforts should be made to achieve the target of 30 per cent by 1990. The proportion of women within each regional group should also be increased. For example, of the 424 staff members from Africa in 1988, only 51, or 12 per cent, were women.

(Mr. El Amrani, Morocco)

28. The conditions of service and career prospects of United Nations staff should be improved, since more than ever the Organization required a confident and dedicated staff if it was to achieve its objectives. It was regrettable in that connection that the staff representatives had decided to suspend their participation in the work of the International Civil Service Commission, a step which ran counter to the interests of all concerned. Only dialogue and negotiation could restore the climate of trust which was indispensable to the smooth functioning of the Organization.

29. Some Member States made deductions from the salaries of their nationals serving as United Nations staff members, while others made supplementary payments to them. Such practices, which undermined the independence of the international civil service, were disturbing.

30. On the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, his delegation appealed to States Members which were holding staff members of international organizations in detention to release them.

31. Mr. VILLADSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the reduction of the Secretariat was a long and painful process which could not but have an effect on the morale of the staff, as it coincided with the financial crisis and the accompanying uncertainty. The staff had nevertheless reacted in a highly commendable and positive way. The Nordic delegations noted that, where occupational readjustments were necessary as a result of the retrenchment process, the cases of the staff members concerned would receive special attention under the comprehensive training plan that was being drawn up. There was a need for a clear, coherent and transparent personnel policy; it should be a priority, at the same time, to develop the best possible rules and regulations concerning personnel.

32. The Nordic countries were committed to the requirements set out in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which emphasized the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency and recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. As the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had stated, maintaining such a balance was not an easy matter, but the Organization had made progress in that regard: the number of Member States within their desirable ranges had never been higher or the number of overrepresented States lower since 1984. The number of underrepresented States, which included two Nordic countries, had increased somewhat, although the level of remuneration might have something to do with that fact.

33. The proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had increased steadily, if slowly, since 1985, but the pace had slowed down from 1987 to 1988. The proportion of women now stood at 26.3 per cent, which was modest when it was recalled that the United Nations should be setting an example for Member States. The Nordic countries urged the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to achieve the target of 30 per cent by 1990. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had expressed concern at how few women there were in the upper echelons of the Secretariat, and the Steering Committee for the Improvement



(Mr. Villadsen, Denmark)

of the Status of Women in the Secretariat had once again recommended that full advantage should be taken of the limited opportunities for appointments to such posts possible under the current constraints. In spite of that recommendation, there were still few women in decision-making posts, while women continued to be disproportionately represented at the junior levels.

34. The Nordic countries shared the disappointment of the Steering Committee over the fact that none of the nine appointments made at the D-2 level since the recruitment freeze had gone to women, and that of the 22 staff members recruited during the freeze at the D-1 and P-5 levels, only two were women. Since the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had confirmed that the functions of the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat of the United Nations had been transferred to a full-time senior staff member in the Office of Human Resources Management who would be acting as the focal point in that area, the Nordic countries would like more information, preferably in a job description, about that officer's responsibilities and about any other duties he or she might have. It would also be of interest to know if the Steering Committee would continue to function as a monitoring organ or if another mechanism would be created for that purpose.

35. Praiseworthy efforts had been made to improve the contents and presentation of the report on the composition of the Secretariat. The Nordic countries proposed that, in future reports, the total numbers of the staff of the various United Nations organs as at 30 June of the reporting year (table A) should be supplemented by the corresponding numbers for the preceding five years or so, thus making it possible to keep track of staff developments. The Nordic countries regretted that the report on the privileges and immunities of international civil servants had not yet been issued, and reserved the right to speak at a later stage on that point and on the problem of administration of justice in the United Nations.

36. Ms. FRIESSNIGG (Austria) said that only the best qualified and trained staff would enable the Organization to assume the increasingly important role it was called upon to play at a time when it was instituting decisive administrative and financial reforms. Austria, which had always taken a very active interest in personnel questions, wished to express its appreciation to the staff for what they were accomplishing during trying times.

37. Her delegation, which was sponsoring an initiative in the Third Committee aimed at fostering participation of women at all levels of public life, welcomed the higher percentage of women in the Secretariat as a whole and especially at the Professional and decision-making levels. The improved career development opportunities and the progress made towards achieving by 1990 the goal of a 30-per-cent representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution were encouraging. Much, however, remained to be done, and new goals would have to be set as the status of women improved. It was therefore important that the work accomplished by the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat of the United Nations should be carried forward by a suitably competent person equipped with the necessary authority. Her delegation joined the Nordic countries in requesting detailed information on the specific responsibilities of

(Ms. Friessnigg, Austria)

the senior staff member who had recently been designated, apparently on a temporary basis, to act as the focal point for the advancement of women in the Secretariat.

38. The quality of United Nations programmes and activities depended essentially on the competence, qualifications and commitment of the staff, and hence the need to develop an effective career-development and recruitment policy, particularly in times of financial crisis, and to bear in mind the criteria in paragraph 3 of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administration and Financial Functioning of the United Nations ("Group of 18"). Austria remained firmly committed to the principles and methods established for competitive examinations in General Assembly resolution 35/210 and its annex, and asked the Secretariat, in line with resolution 42/220 A, to recruit professionals at the P-1, P-2 and P-3 levels who had been successful in national competitive examinations. Her delegation further supported the re-introduction of an identical format for the internal and external examinations, as recommended by the Group of 18.

39. Mr. GORITA (Romania) observed that personnel questions could not be separated from the administrative and budgetary reform undertaken pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, on the basis of the recommendations of the Group of 18. His delegation attached particular importance to recommendation 15 and trusted that it would be fully implemented, so that the agreed staff reductions would be in effect by the target dates.

40. As indicated in the report on the composition of the Secretariat, only 30 per cent of the appointments made during the reporting period were of nationals from underrepresented Member States, which had themselves risen from 25 to 27, while more than 10 per cent of those appointed were nationals of overrepresented States. Such a situation did not satisfy either the provisions of resolution 42/220 A or the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts. As one of the underrepresented countries, Romania did not even come up to the lower limit of the desirable range. It therefore hoped that its representation in the Secretariat would develop more equitably, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, and it emphasized in that regard the need to seek the agreement of Governments when their nationals were appointed. Romania stood ready to present qualified candidates, for high-level posts as well, and trusted that some of the candidates who had passed the national competitive examinations held in Bucharest in September would be offered Secretariat posts.

41. Mr. LAUJOUZI (Algeria) observed that the staff retrenchment plan developed in consultation with the staff by the Office of Human Resources Management provided that post reductions would come about essentially through attrition. His delegation hoped that this principle of social justice would be applied to all categories of staff. The plan would also have to take into account another principle, that of the equitable geographical distribution of posts, an area where staff retrenchment could actually help correct the current inequities.

(Mr. Ladjouzi, Algeria)

42. One of the priorities of the plan should be to make it possible, by favouring mobility, to fill vacant posts in the regional commissions and in hardship duty stations. Since the financial incentives appeared to be inadequate, perhaps consideration should be given to a system in which mobility would be an integral part of the career pattern. In the meantime, the Office of Human Resources Management should do its best to develop a systematic staff-rotation programme.

43. His delegation was completely satisfied with the way in which recommendation 46 of the Group of 18 regarding the representation of women in the Secretariat had been put into effect, but it could not say the same with regard to recommendation 47. The two interim reports of the Secretary-General contained no suggestions for improving the representation of nationals of developing countries in higher-level posts. It was, of course, understandable that priority had been given to implementing recommendation 15 during the first two years of the reform but, in view of the results already achieved, greater effort must now be made to carry out the other recommendations of the Group of 18, particularly recommendations 41, 47, 48 and 54.

44. The demoralization of the staff was a result both of the continuing financial crisis and of the determination of some Member States to favour the recruitment and promotion of their nationals. The Secretariat must resist all pressures of that nature. Transparency in personnel management, effective recourse procedures, particularly as a result of streamlining, and a scrupulous observance of selection and recruitment criteria were the only means of guaranteeing equal rights for staff members.

45. Ms. CUNNINGHAM (Vice-President of the Staff Committee) said that there had been much talk of reform of the United Nations. The much-needed personnel reform, however, was failing to keep pace with administrative and financial reforms which had been instituted. Change, seen largely as an end in itself, was leading to results which might jeopardize the chances for a true renewal of the Organization. The financial crisis, which was due to the continued refusal of some Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter, had resulted in reductions in personnel, which had had a negative effect on programme delivery. It was all the more surprising therefore to hear calls for further cuts when the main asset of the Organization in carrying out its programmes was its personnel - personnel which must be highly dedicated and motivated. While financial savings had certainly been achieved as a result of post reduction through attrition, they had not been accompanied by a coherent plan to set priorities in activities, allocate resources rationally and reward staff for hard work well done.

46. As the financial uncertainties persisted and career opportunities dwindled, staff morale had plummeted. Attempting to address immediate needs, the Administration had taken a number of temporary measures. Staff-management relations had been severely strained by the tendency to adopt expedient solutions with very far-reaching implications to complex problems. When respect for the Staff Rules and Regulations was viewed as little more than an obstacle to reform, the measures taken could not but give rise to dissension and dissatisfaction, as

(Ms. Cunningham)

demonstrated by the recent events surrounding the reorganization of the Department of Public Information.

47. Any reform which failed to involve those directly affected was unlikely to succeed. Whole categories of staff, such as those in the General Service category, seemed to have been left out of the planning efforts. It was urgently necessary to develop a coherent system of career development which rewarded performance and encouraged mobility. An intrinsic part of any meaningful system to allocate human resources, particularly at a time of retrenchment, was a comprehensive training programme. It was incomprehensible how any announced intention to promote career development could be taken seriously when no significant allocation of funds for training had been requested, let alone approved. The Organization offered little opportunity for staff to keep abreast of developments in their respective fields of expertise. At a time when technological developments were changing methods of work, that oversight could only render the Organization less responsive.

48. With regard to mobility, while some steps including additional financial incentives, had been taken in favour of staff who accepted assignments to field duty stations, the entire remuneration package offered away from Headquarters continued to work as a disincentive to any meaningful movement of staff. The negative post adjustment, for example, should be eliminated. The staff representatives proposed as a further step that upon transfer to a duty station with a post adjustment level lower than his previous one, a staff member should continue to receive salary at the higher rate for a year in order to be able to continue to meet his financial obligations.

49. Within the framework of a major study on compensation for the Professional category, it was an opportune moment to examine the feasibility of creating a unified personnel structure which eliminated the arbitrary divisions between the two categories of staff. The impediments to movement into the Professional category, particularly in view of the increasingly limited chances for movement through the internal competitive examination, had a major negative influence on the morale of the General Service staff. The quota of posts allocated for the internal competitive examination should be set at 50 per cent, keeping in mind that 60 per cent of the staff in the General Service category were women.

50. It was regrettable that much of the progress achieved in improving the status of women in the Secretariat had been undercut by the financial crisis. More recently recruited women had often been in a far more vulnerable position with respect to the retrenchment exercise. It also appeared that few women were currently being recruited. Lastly, the Staff Committee was deeply concerned at the increase in the number of violations of staff privileges and immunities by Governments. A detailed list of those cases had been provided in the appendix to document A/C.5/43/27. Of particular concern was the fate of imprisoned or detained staff who had serious medical problems. The Staff Committee proposed that medical teams should be sent to visit those staff. It was also necessary to clearly spell out policies to protect the rights of those staff with regard to their contractual and pay status and the full reinstatement of those fortunate enough to be released. Those policies should be uniformly applied.

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

51. Mrs. PELLICER (Mexico) said that, when CPC had been considering the revisions to the medium-term plan extended to 1992 and the introduction to the medium-term plan for the period beginning in 1992, most of the members of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination had stressed that the elements were insufficient to assess the relevance of the new structure proposed for the medium-term plan. It was essential in particular to know which criteria had led to the reduction in the number of programmes, of which there were now 40, and their regrouping into four major programmes. Although the activities of the Organization should certainly be rationalized, it was clear that merely reducing the number of programmes did not in itself guarantee success. It would be useful to know why it had been decided to eliminate or not to give priority to certain programmes which concerned in particular the developing countries. In response to a request by CPC, the Secretariat had provided, in an informal document, a list of the 40 programmes regrouped into four major programmes. That information, however, was not sufficient to permit a real discussion of the question. Her delegation felt that, in those conditions, it could not take an informed decision and, reserving the right to return to that question in due course, requested the Secretariat to provide the necessary documents to the members of the Fifth Committee.

52. Mr. Okeyo (Kenya) took the Chair.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

53. Mr. TIEWUL (Secretary of the Committee), responding to the request made by the representative of the Soviet Union at the preceding meeting, said that as of 28 October the Fifth Committee had held 20 formal meetings. The number of hours lost because meetings had begun late or had risen earlier than planned were respectively eight hours and 10 minutes and eight hours and 55 minutes, or a total of 17 hours and five minutes lost. It should, however, be made clear that in certain cases meetings had risen earlier so that informal consultations could be held.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.