



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OKEYO (Kenya)

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

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

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee must proceed at the end of the week to hold elections in respect of vacancies that had arisen in seven organs. He suggested that the Committee should elect candidates by acclamation in all those cases in which their number was equal to the number of vacancies. With regard to the Pension Committee, he invited interested delegations and candidates to reach agreement on the distribution of posts of member and alternate member. The Committee on Contributions was the only organ in respect of which there were seven candidates for six vacancies. The Asian Group had submitted three candidacies for two vacancies, in view of which a secret ballot would have to be conducted.
2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/43/L.30, L.32, L.33, L.34, L.35, L.36, L.37 and L.41 concerning agenda item 36 (A/C.5/43/50)

3. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/43/50) did not cover the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/43/L.37, as they were still being prepared. The full cost of the activities planned, excluding conference-servicing requirements, was estimated at \$1,493,400, or \$1,328,300, after application of the ratios of utilization. The latter amount was \$145,700 more than the balance of the uncommitted resources appropriated for 1988-1989 (\$1,182,600). The Secretary-General therefore concluded in paragraph 40 that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolutions A/43/L.30, L.32 to L.36 and L.41, an additional appropriation of \$145,700 would be required under sections 3 (\$57,000) and 27 (\$88,700). Conference-servicing requirements were estimated, on a full-cost basis, at \$656,500 and related to activities planned under three of the draft resolutions, namely, draft resolutions A/43/L.32, L.36 and L.41 (paras. 12, 24, 33 and 34 and annexes II to V of document A/C.5/43/50). For the reasons given in paragraph 41, the Secretary-General considered that no additional cost would be incurred under section 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 as a result of the adoption of the draft resolutions under consideration.

4. In reviewing the details provided in paragraphs 6 to 34 on the activities proposed in the draft resolutions and the comparative analysis of the 1988 and 1989 programmes activities in annex I, the Advisory Committee noted that most of the activities planned for 1989 were, in reality, a continuation of activities undertaken in 1988. However, two new major activities were planned: one in draft resolution A/43/L.41 and the other in draft resolution A/43/L.36. They were hearings on the strengthening of the oil embargo against South Africa, to be held in April 1989 (paras. 28-34), and the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on apartheid before the forty-fourth regular session (paras. 21-23). In

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paragraph 24, the Secretary-General estimated the cost of the special session at \$492,200, comprising \$457,200 for conference-servicing requirements and \$35,000 for the Department of Public Information.

5. The Advisory Committee was of the view that, taking into account resources already available under sections 3 and 27, the Secretary-General should implement the programme of work as planned and indicated in document A/C.5/43/50 and should report on any additional requirements which might arise in the context of the performance report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Accordingly, the Fifth Committee might wish to inform the General Assembly that adoption of the seven draft resolutions would not give rise to any additional appropriation at the current stage.

6. Mr. DE CLERCK (Belgium) drew attention to an error in paragraph 40 of the French version of document A/C.5/43/50, and requested confirmation that the amount of the additional appropriation was indeed \$145,700.

7. Mrs. UZOKA EMEJULU (Nigeria), Mr. DANKWA (Ghana), Mr. SANGA (Tanzania), Mr. ZONGWE (Zaire) and Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia) proposed that the Committee should await the issuance of the statement of implications of draft resolution A/43/L.37 and its consideration by the Advisory Committee before taking a decision on all the draft resolutions before it.

8. Mr. ABULY (Côte d'Ivoire) asked whether the document relating to draft resolution A/43/L.37 would be issued in all official languages simultaneously.

9. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that postponement of a decision on the draft resolutions would also delay their adoption by the General Assembly. On the other hand, there would be some difficulty in considering them separately.

10. Mr. DUVAL (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance) said that there was indeed an error in the French version of document A/C.5/43/50 and that the amount in question was indeed \$145,700. Further, the Secretariat would do its utmost to ensure that the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/43/L.37, which was to be prepared on the basis of information provided by the Department of Public Information, would be available, in all languages, on the morning of Friday, 2 December.

11. Mr. DE CLERCK (Belgium) said that the work of the Committee and of the General Assembly could be expedited by taking a decision there and then on the implications of the other draft resolutions.

12. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that it would be unwise to break up consideration of the draft resolutions. It would be preferable to wait until all the documents were ready.

13. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should postpone taking a decision on the implications of the draft resolutions until Friday, 2 December.

14. It was so decided.

Review of travel and related entitlements of representatives attending United Nations meetings (A/43/7/Add.8; A/C.5/43/4 and Corr.1)

Standards of accommodation for air travel (A/43/7/Add.8; A/C.5/43/31)

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's views on the Secretary-General's report on travel and related entitlements of representatives attending United Nations meetings were set forth in paragraphs 2 to 9 of document A/43/7/Add.8. He drew attention to paragraphs 6 to 9 in particular. He reviewed the reasons which had led up to the General Assembly's request to the Secretary-General, in resolution 42/225 (VI), to submit a report on the subject (see document A/C.5/43/4, para. 1). In paragraph 7 of its report, the Advisory Committee noted that the Secretary-General's report did not contain any specific proposal, but rather simply indicated that, if recommendation 6 of the Group of 18 was to be applied to the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, it should, in his view, be restricted to those bodies whose members were representatives of their respective Governments. For its part, the Advisory Committee was not making any recommendation on the extension of the application of recommendation 6, but, should the General Assembly take a decision on the matter, it recommended in paragraph 8 a phased approach so that the recommendation would not come into effect until expiry of the current terms of office of membership of affected members of such intergovernmental bodies. The recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 had only the most minimal financial implications.

16. With regard to standards of accommodation for air travel, the comments of the Advisory Committee on the Secretary-General's report were contained in paragraphs 10 to 12 of document A/43/7/Add.8. The Advisory Committee considered that it was still too early to have a clear picture of the impact which the General Assembly's decision in resolution 42/214 would have. That resolution specified that only the Secretary-General and heads of delegations representing least developed countries at General Assembly sessions would be authorized to travel in first class.

17. Mr. JEMAYEL (Tunisia) said that according to the figures contained in document A/C.5/43/4, the travel costs and subsistence allowances of members of intergovernmental organs were relatively low in comparison with the expenditure incurred by the Organization under those headings for expert organs. Application of recommendation 6 of the Group of 18 would thus generate only minor savings and might even impair greater efficiency. Indeed, a number of developing countries not included among the least developed countries would be unable to pay the travel costs of their representatives and could no longer be represented on those organs, the importance of which had, however, been recognized by the General Assembly itself when it had decided that the travel costs and subsistence allowances of

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their members would be met by the Organization. Moreover, those organs were broadly comparable to expert organs. The change envisaged was all the more unacceptable since the list of organs concerned included, among others, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, which had political implications. For those reasons his delegation asked the Committee not to consider the proposal.

18. Mr. TETTAMANTI (Argentina) said that the application of recommendation 6 of the Group of 18 to intergovernmental organs might well lead to a loss of quality in terms of the representation of Member States. In fact, very frequently, members of such organs were not on the staff of the permanent missions to the United Nations, but came from their respective capitals. He fully understood the Advisory Committee's position, but, since he was not clear how to interpret paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Committee's report in terms of the implications of the proposed amendment, he endorsed the position taken by the Tunisian delegation and proposed that the Committee should not take a decision on the matter.

19. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) agreed with the representative of Tunisia that certain intergovernmental organs were in fact expert organs, and shared the doubts expressed by the representative of Argentina concerning paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Advisory Committee's report. Accordingly, he supported the position taken by Tunisia and Argentina.

20. Mr. WU Gang (China) noted that the measures taken by the Secretary-General to restrict expenditure on air travel had already led to savings and had, accordingly, alleviated the financial situation.

21. With regard to the entitlements granted to members of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, he agreed with the previous speakers. He stressed that the developing countries would have difficulty in selecting experts to represent them from members of their permanent missions inasmuch as the limited staff of the missions were already overworked. He thus considered that the Organization should continue to meet the travel expenses of members of intergovernmental organs and proposed that the Fifth Committee should not take a decision on the item under consideration.

22. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that he supported the previous speakers and vigorously opposed application of recommendation 6 of the Group of 18 to intergovernmental organs.

23. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) also endorsed the views expressed by previous speakers. Intergovernmental organs could not be discriminated against by comparison with expert organs since each held its mandate from a deliberative organ. The Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should reconsider their proposal and recommendation respectively.

24. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that he agreed with the viewpoints expressed by the previous speakers. In his view the decision would tend to undermine broad geographical representation on the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The thrust of the Secretary-General's report was clear, even though it did not contain any proposal as such.

25. Mr. GUPTA (India) and Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia) agreed that the Committee should not take a decision on the proposed amendment.

26. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that, in document A/C.5/43/4, of the \$7.2 million included in the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 for the travel costs of members of subsidiary organs, \$1.2 million related to intergovernmental organs. The Organization could thus make savings under that heading, and his delegation proposed that the Fifth Committee should decide to extend the application of recommendation 6 of the Group of 18 to those organs, in accordance with the procedure indicated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 8 of its report. Further, his delegation agreed with the Board of Auditors that the members of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation did not sit in their individual capacities but represented their Governments.

27. Although the statistical data provided to date on the savings that would be generated by amending the rules applicable to standards of accommodation for air travel were not significant, the tables contained in document A/C.5/43/31 clearly showed that savings had already resulted. His delegation hoped that the number of exceptions would be further reduced. His Government would like the Secretariat to specify the measures that had been taken to inform staff of the new provisions, what procedure had been devised for exceptions and what arrangements had been taken by UNDP and UNICEF, to which the new rules would also apply.

28. Mr. UPTON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation would support the extension to subsidiary organs of recommendation 6 of the Group of 18. With respect to document A/C.5/43/31, he inquired whether note a/ appearing at the end of the first table meant that at the current time delegations could still claim reimbursement of the travel costs of their representatives relating to the forty-first session. If that was indeed the case, he wished to know whether that would be in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

29. Ms. MILLS (Deputy Controller), replying to the representative of the United States, said that no circular had yet been issued, but that the Controller had given instructions to heads of departments and certifying officers to apply the new rules relating to air travel. The Secretary-General had delegated authority to rule on requests for exceptions to the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. In such cases the Under-Secretary-General would act in consultation with the Controller, and, if necessary, with the service concerned. That procedure would also apply to UNDP and UNICEF.

30. The Deputy Controller gave an affirmative answer to the question put by the representative of the United Kingdom and stated that, in accordance with the

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Financial Regulations and Rules, requests for reimbursement could be submitted under that heading until 31 December 1988. In any event, there would be few such requests.

31. The CHAIRMAN, referring to a statement by one delegation, said that the Advisory Committee had not made any recommendation. Noting that delegations did not seem to wish to take a decision, he suggested that they should conduct informal consultations on the matter. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to follow that procedure.

32. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.