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UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mrs. Flor Acconciamezza de RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1988, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its forty-third session the item entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.
2. The Fifth Committee considered this item at its 13th, 16th, 20th, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 32nd and 50th meetings, on 21, 25, 28 and 31 October, 2, 4 and 16 November and 18 December 1988. Comments made in the course of the discussion of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/43/SR.13, 16, 20, 22, 24, 25, 32 and 50).
3. For the consideration of this item, the Committee had before it the fourteenth annual report of the International Civil Service Commission. 1/
4. The Committee also had before it the comments of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (A/C.5/43/12 and Add.1) and those of the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (A/C.5/43/21), a resolution adopted by the Administrative Council of the International Telecommunication Union (A/C.5/43/26), as well as a statement of the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/43/30 and Corr.1).

recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/C.5/43/19) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/43/7/Add.3).

5. The report of the International Civil Service Commission was introduced by its Chairman at the 13th meeting, on 21 October.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.5/43/L.14

6. At the 50th meeting, on 18 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. T. T. van den Hout (Netherlands), introduced draft resolution A/C.5/43/L.14, which was elaborated following informal consultations.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/43/L.14 without a vote (see para. 9).

8. Statements in explanation of position were made by the representatives of Norway on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Australia, the United States of America, Belgium, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Italy, Algeria, Argentina and Swaziland. The Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission made some remarks which were commented upon by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

9. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations common system: report of the
International Civil Service Commission

The General Assembly,

Having considered the fourteenth annual report of the International Civil Service Commission 2/ and other related reports, 3/

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/43/30 and Corr. 1).

3/ A/C.5/43/12 and Add.1, A/C.5/43/19, A/C.5/43/21, A/C.5/43/26 and A/43/7/Add.3.

I

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE
STAFF IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER CATEGORIES

Recalling that, by part III of its resolution 42/221 of 21 December 1987, it requested the International Civil Service Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of the conditions of service of the staff in the Professional and higher categories in order to provide a sound and stable methodological basis for their remuneration,

Reaffirming the guidelines provided in paragraph 1 of section III of resolution 42/221,

Recalling also that, by part III, paragraph 3, of resolution 42/221, the Commission was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-third session a preliminary report on the comprehensive review containing an analysis of the subject, together with an outline of one or more possible alternatives,

Noting that the preliminary report on the comprehensive review contained in chapter III, section C, of the report of the International Civil Service Commission, 2/ does not contain the analysis requested,

Bearing in mind that the International Civil Service Commission should allocate the highest priority to the comprehensive review in its programme of work for 1989,

Recognizing that the scope of the review should not necessarily be limited to the four areas identified by the Commission in its preliminary report,

Mindful of the interrelationship between these four areas and of the need for conditions of service whose component parts are appropriately balanced,

Emphasizing, in the light of the long-term consequences of this review, the desirability in the review process for close co-operation between the Commission, the organizations of the United Nations common system and the staff representatives,

1. Requests the Commission, as a priority, to pursue the comprehensive review and, if necessary, to adjust its programme of work and schedule of meetings for 1989, in order to provide conditions for substantive discussion and finalization of the comprehensive review at its second session in 1989;

2. Invites the Commission to make arrangements to allow for the fullest participation of organizations and staff representatives in all aspects and at all stages of the comprehensive review;

3. Also requests the Commission to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session together with a preliminary

assessment of the impact of the relevant recommendations therein on pensionable remuneration;

4. Further requests the Commission in its review to be guided by the following:

(a) The Commission should examine all elements of the present conditions of service and after identifying problems related to staff recruitment, retention and mobility, should propose solutions to these problems;

(b) The proposed solutions should be accompanied by an indication of their financial implications, together with an estimate of the overall costs;

(c) The overall costs should, as far as possible, be comparable to the costs of the current remuneration system;

(1) Comparator

(a) The Noblemaire principle should continue to serve as the basis of comparison between United Nations emoluments and those of the highest-paying civil service - currently the United States Federal Civil Service - which, by its size and structure, lends itself to such comparison;

(b) The Commission should review how best the application of the Noblemaire principle can ensure the competitiveness of United Nations remuneration without resorting to comparison with the private sector;

(c) In this connection the Commission should undertake a comparative study of the concept of the margin including the way in which it is intended to compensate for expatriation;

(2) Remuneration system

(a) A single world-wide salary scale should be a fundamental goal of the remuneration system. Within this framework, a review should be made of how best special recruitment needs can be accommodated. The Commission should look into the present multiplicity of salary scales with a view to their correlation and possible amalgamation;

(b) In the context of equalizing purchasing power, the Commission should consider among other alternatives:

(i) The division of the pay package into its major component parts, one of which would be housing, reflecting the spending patterns of staff;

(ii) Major simplification of the post adjustment system, including eliminating negative post adjustment, separating out the housing component, streamlining the cost-of-living survey and computation process;

(c) The Commission should also review the rationale and magnitude of all elements of remuneration;

(3) Motivation and productivity

Consideration should be given to enhancing productivity through the introduction of incentives for merit and rewards on promotion payable on a one-time basis, coupled with less financial reward for longevity, which should be linked to a more rigorous performance appraisal system. Consideration should also be given to the introduction of administrative arrangements and of other non-monetary awards for meritorious service. The Commission should review and report on the current practice of automatic advancement to the next step without rigorous performance appraisal as well as on existing and new possible non-monetary awards for meritorious performance;

(4) Mobility and hardship

The Commission should analyse how best adequate incentives can be provided for mobility and for service in hardship duty stations. It should take into account the particular needs of those organizations whose programmes require that staff be reassigned to and from headquarters and field locations. In reviewing the scope and purpose of all the current allowances payable in cases of mobility and hardship, the entitlements provided by the comparator for non-diplomatic expatriates may serve as a general point of reference. In this respect, the Commission should, bearing in mind the different types of contractual arrangements existing in the system, review whether incentives should be provided by way of lump sums on transfers in lieu of or as well as ongoing payments in the form of allowances to compensate for hardships;

5. Requests the Commission to analyse the feasibility of utilizing existing data sources; in this regard, consideration should be given to both public and private sources which publish timely and accurate data on relevant subjects;

II

FUNCTIONING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL
SERVICE COMMISSION

Recalling paragraph 1 of its resolution 3042 (XXVII) of 19 December 1972, whereby it decided to establish in principle an international civil service commission consisting of independent experts having the requisite qualifications and experience who would be appointed in their individual capacities by the General Assembly,

Recalling further the subsequent establishment of the Commission by its resolution 3357 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974,

Reaffirming the importance of the role of the Commission as an independent technical body answerable to the General Assembly,

Recalling also its request contained in section VIII of resolution 42/221 of 21 December 1987 that the Commission should undertake a study of its functioning with a view to enhancing its work,

Expressing concern over the position taken by the staff representatives to suspend their participation in the work of the Commission,

Noting that the Commission has not found it possible to undertake a more in-depth review of its functioning,

Noting further the need to undertake, as soon as possible, a full review of the functioning of the Commission, including the definition of the role of the Commission in relation to the determination of the conditions of service of the staff, and the Commission's relation to the General Assembly,

1. Requests the Commission to expand the review of its functioning in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations common system and staff representatives and to present proposals thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;

2. Invites the Commission to review its rules of procedure at the earliest opportunity to allow for the fullest possible consultations with, and, to the greatest extent possible, the presence of organizations and staff representatives in its deliberations;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General, in the context of article 4 of the statute of the Commission, to propose to the General Assembly an appropriate deadline for the submission of candidatures for appointment to the Commission so as to allow for full and timely consultations with the three parties concerned;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly to reflect the views resulting from the consultations referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. Urges the two staff representative bodies to resume participation in the work of the Commission at the earliest possible opportunity;

III

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION 2/

A. Functioning of the post adjustment within the margin range

Recalling that in its resolution 40/244 of 18 December 1985, it approved the range of 110 to 120, with a desirable mid-point of 115, for the net remuneration margin, on the understanding that the margin would be maintained at a level around the desirable mid-point of 115 over a period of time,

Recalling also that in section I, paragraph 1, of its resolution 42/221 of 21 December 1987, it decided to maintain the methodology described in annex I to the report of the International Civil Service Commission 4/ to the General Assembly at its fortieth session for the calculation of the margin between the net remuneration of staff in the Professional and higher categories of the United Nations and that of the comparator civil service, which should continue to be applied for the time being,

Confirming that the decisions of the Commission contained in paragraph 17 of its report 2/ are in conformity with the decision of the General Assembly contained in section I, paragraph 1, of resolution 42/221,

Noting that the determination of parameters for the operation of the post adjustment system within the margin range should be considered as a principle under article 10 (a) of the Statute of the Commission,

Noting further that, under the four-month rule currently in operation, when a post adjustment index increases by 5 per cent above the level corresponding to the class of post adjustment currently being paid, a new class of post adjustment at Headquarters becomes effective only after a waiting period of four months, during which the post adjustment index must not have fallen below the level corresponding to the new class,

1. Takes note of the guidelines to be followed for the maintenance of the net remuneration margin around the desirable mid-point of 115 over a period of time contained in paragraph 23 of the Commission's report 2/ and decides that the resulting margin referred to in paragraphs 23 (b) and (c) relates to the average of the successive margins reported to the General Assembly from 1986 onwards (1 October 1985-30 September 1986) and continuing until the submission of the report on the margin methodology requested by the General Assembly for presentation to its forty-fifth session;

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/40/30 and Corr.1).

2. Decides, as an interim measure and until the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, that the application of the above guidelines should not result in the granting of successive classes of post adjustment in New York at less than four-month intervals;

B. Allowances

Having reviewed chapters V and XIII of the report of the International Civil Service Commission, 2/

1. Requests the Commission to include, as an integral part of the comprehensive review, a study of:

- (a) The purpose and conditions of an education grant;
- (b) The purpose and methodology for dependency allowances for staff in the Professional and higher categories;

2. Approves, as an interim measure and until a revised system based on the above study is adopted:

- (a) The recommendations of the Commission concerning the education grant as outlined under paragraph 75 of its report; 2/
- (b) The recommendations of the Commission concerning the children's allowance for the Professional and higher categories as contained in paragraph 79 (a) of its report; 2/

3. Approves consequently the relevant amendments to staff regulations 3.2 and 3.4 (a) (i);

C. Others

Recalling its resolutions 40/244 and 41/207 of 18 December 1985 and 11 December 1986, and concerned with the uneven progress achieved by the organizations of the United Nations common system regarding implementation of the Commission's recommendations approved by the General Assembly in 1985,

Recalling also section II of its resolution 37/126 of 17 December 1982 and section VII of its resolution 42/221 of 21 December 1987,

1. Endorses the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission contained in paragraph 91 of its report concerning special measures to be undertaken by the organizations for the recruitment of women, and requests the Commission to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the progress made in this regard, with supporting data for each organization of the United Nations common system;

2. Requests the Commission to continue its review of the practices of supplementary payments and deductions, to pursue its collection of information on these practices and to include such information in its report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.
