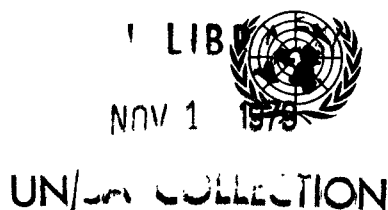


United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records \*



FIFTH COMMITTEE  
15th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 12 October 1979  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRSON (Belgium)

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

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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23 October 1979

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)  
(A/34/6, vols. I and II, A/34/7; A/C.5/34/12 and 13)

General debate

1. Mr. HILLEL (Israel) expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General to present an austerity budget for the biennium 1980-1981, on the basis of a policy of maximum restraint, which, if strictly adhered to, would strengthen the Secretariat's credibility with regard to administrative and financial affairs. In fact, the real growth of 0.8 per cent proposed in the budget before the Committee was modest by comparison with the real growth of 3.5 per cent in 1976-1977 and 2.2 per cent in 1978-1979.
2. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the proposed budget involved an increase of around \$124 million over current levels and that that figure would certainly be increased, since different organs would request additional funding for an expanded programme of work or the expansion of their activities. Member States would thus have to bear an additional burden at a time when, on the domestic plane, they were facing ever-increasing economic difficulties and were obliged to apply measures of financial restraint. That would undoubtedly affect the major contributors, but it would also affect the smaller States, like Israel, whose share in the budget would increase considerably as a result of the application of the new scale of assessments and the increasing cost of the United Nations and its operations. In that connexion, he emphasized that the assessment of Israel was unjustified and inconsistent with the economic reality of the country. His delegation agreed with those delegations who had urged the Secretary-General to renew his efforts to keep down the expenditures of the Organization as far as possible, through a process of supervision, revision of ongoing activities and the omission of projects which were ineffective or of marginal usefulness. It supported in principle ACABQ's intention to cut down substantially the estimated budget and considered that additional appropriations should be avoided by a redeployment of resources. At the same time, his delegation urged that all efforts should be made to prevent the adoption of resolutions leading to unwarranted financial implications.
3. Efforts to limit the expenditures of the United Nations should be coupled with efforts to rationalize its activities through, inter alia, the restructuring of the economic and social sectors. His delegation wished to see the United Nations draw up a table in which economic and development activities had a primary role, while others appeared in the budget according to their real significance and importance to Member States. All unjustifiable expenditures should be omitted.
4. It was regrettable that, although the United Nations was facing severe financial difficulties, it was still undertaking projects of a one-sided political nature which caused unjustified spending of contributors' money. International funds should not be utilized to set up partisan propaganda units within the Secretariat or to subsidize the functioning of organs which ignored the sovereign

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(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

rights of a Member State. As a Member of the Organization, Israel could not give its consent to the waste or misuse of international and national resources on such doubtful objectives. Instead, it would like to see in the budget more activities devoted to enhancing the economic and social well-being of Member States, particularly the developing countries.

5. Israel, to the extent its limited resources allowed, engaged in bilateral development co-operation with many States Members of the Organization from Asia, Africa and Latin America and in so doing hoped to promote the basic objective of States Members of the United Nations, namely, the achievement of true progress and the improvement of economic and social conditions.

6. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) said that the proposed budget before the Committee was considerably better than those of previous years with regard to its contents and its form. Moreover, the real increase of only 0.8 per cent for the biennium 1980-1981 showed that the new budget was in tune with the economic and financial situation in the world today. It should, nevertheless, be noted that the Secretariat had not taken into account the needs of delegations when submitting the proposed budget in two bulky volumes with more than 1,000 pages in all. The Secretariat should submit documents on time and in the most appropriate form in order to assist delegations in considering them in relation with each agenda item.

7. A study of the programmes, subprogrammes and programme elements showed that the structure of the utilization of funds had not changed dramatically in comparison with the preceding biennium. His delegation would, nevertheless, like to draw attention to some important issues. Firstly, there appeared to be a constant shift in expenditures away from substantive activities in favour of an increase in supporting and conference services, which accounted for 33.68 per cent of the total budget resources. Secondly, the consumption of the budget resources for economic, social and humanitarian activities, which probably accounted for about 90 per cent of United Nations activities, was relatively modest and represented only 33.4 per cent of the resources, which was less than the expenses for supporting and conference services. Thirdly, there was not a clear specification of activities that had been completed. Each programme should have its deadline and include an exhaustive statement specifying the activities that could be eliminated, so as to allow the redeployment of resources to accommodate other needs. In the future, the proposed budget should include information about the origin of the request for a particular programme, subprogramme or programme element, a deadline for each activity and an explanation why a particular programme, subprogramme or programme element had not been completed on time. Fourthly, in several tables in the draft budget, reference was made to the redeployment of resources, but it was not explained what happened to the staff who had been working on activities that were completed or considered obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective. However, the redeployment of resources in cases where nothing had been completed was a waste of time and funds which could have been used to benefit developing countries through technical assistance activities.

8. His delegation considered that a rational approach should be applied to the

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(Mr. Bunc, Yugoslavia)

new personnel policy. According to the data provided by the relevant organs, 75 per cent of the budget outlays were expenses for salaries and staff benefits. Therefore, it was gratifying that the Secretary-General had proposed only a 0.7 per cent increase in the number of employees. Lastly, it should be pointed out that the extrabudgetary resources for the current biennium had reached the level of the resources of the regular budget. However, there was no indication as to the authority responsible for allocating extrabudgetary resources. His delegation believed that there should now be two different budgets, one governed by Member States and the other outside their control, and it would like to receive an appropriate explanation about the allocation of extrabudgetary resources and the authority responsible for such allocation.

9. In the planning and review of budget expenditures, Member States must establish priorities reflecting their preference for a greater number of substantive programmes or for more conferences and supporting services. The identification of waste and inefficiency was a mark of good management, and rewards should go to good administrators and to useful programmes and activities.

10. Mr. MALLOUM (Mauritania) paid a tribute to the Secretary-General for the policy of reducing expenditures reflected in the proposed budget for the biennium 1980-1981, which showed the need for stringent management at a time when the international community was going through grave economic difficulties. He also congratulated the Director of the Budget Division for the concise and detailed presentation of the document, which was in line with General Assembly resolutions.

11. In view of the world economic situation, United Nations resources must be administered strictly and effectively, and to that end a start must be made by eliminating superfluous or secondary expenditures, identifying and eliminating activities that were completed, obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective and redeploying existing resources. Mauritania, which was affected by the deterioration of the world trading system and a drought which had lasted for more than 10 years, found itself obliged to make a larger contribution to the United Nations, owing to the increase in the Organization's expenditures. Nevertheless, it would fulfil its financial obligation towards an Organization whose objective was the maintenance of world peace and security and the development of international co-operation.

12. His delegation wished to point out that the real growth rate mentioned by the Secretary-General did not exactly reflect the reality. As stated in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/34/7, para. 14), real growth was somewhat higher than indicated, principally because of the understatement of real growth in conference servicing. The Advisory Committee had also noted that, even excluding the question of conference services, the total additional resources requested by the Secretary-General for recurrent items in 1980-1981, compared to the resources available to him in 1978-1979, were higher in real terms than the predicted resource growth, which had been estimated at approximately \$7 million. The Secretary-General had also planned on a growth rate of 2.2 per cent for the 1976-1977 biennium, but that rate had risen to 5.1 per cent. Accordingly, the growth rate would probably be higher than now indicated.

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(Mr. Malloum, Mauritania)

13. In his opening address (A/C.5/34/12), the Secretary-General had said that one of the reasons why he had adopted a policy of budgetary austerity was that Member States, whose contributions accounted for nearly three fourths of the budget, had failed to support the revised appropriations. Nevertheless, it was important to note that, for the most part, the budget increase could be attributed to the impact of inflation and of variations in exchange rates and that some of the developed countries were largely responsible for the economic difficulties the world was experiencing, because of their obsession with eliminating the dependence of currencies on gold. As a result, the international monetary system based on fixed exchange rates had been replaced by a system of floating exchange rates which in turn had generated fluctuations and disarray in prices enabling some countries to raise the prices of their products as the value of their currency declines, while others, which did not have that option, bore all the consequences of the new system.

14. Monetary problems should not obscure the fact that raw materials were non-renewable resources and that higher prices for raw materials helped to offset higher prices of capital equipment exported by the developed countries.

15. Therefore, by making a large contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations, the developed countries were merely assuming their responsibility for a situation which they had created and of which they were the sole beneficiaries.

16. His delegation also noted that the appropriations requested for salaries and common staff costs absorbed slightly more than three quarters of the budget for the entire 1980-1981 biennium. That was a huge amount, even though the revised appropriations for 1978-1979 had remained at the same level. In that connexion, steps should be taken to reduce staff costs and to improve staff efficiency. For example, the Secretary-General should make full use of all available staff, thus reducing the number of new posts requested; moreover, he should apply a salary policy compatible with the financial limitations of the Organization. With regard to the question of reclassification, his delegation thought the Advisory Committee should hold consultations with the Secretariat, other organizations within the United Nations system and the International Civil Service Commission in order to find the best way of solving that problem.

17. His delegation agreed with those that had expressed disapproval at the delay in issuing the budget documents and the report of the Advisory Committee; as a result, delegations had not had enough time to study them. He asked the Secretariat, in future, to take all steps necessary to ensure that budget documents were issued in all the official languages not later than three weeks before the opening of the session.

18. His delegation reserved the right to express its views again during the consideration of the various sections of the budget.

19. Mr. EL-AYADHI (Tunisia) expressed appreciation of the Secretariat's efforts with respect to the presentation of the budget, but deplored the unforgivable delay in issuing the relevant documents. He also thanked the Secretary-General for taking

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(Mr. El-Ayadhi, Tunisia)

into account the interests of Member States and the world economic situation and for attempting to contain the increase in United Nations expenditure so far as possible. In addition, he expressed appreciation to the Advisory Committee and its Chairman for their valuable co-operation. The work of the Advisory Committee in analysing the budget greatly facilitated the deliberations of the Fifth Committee. It was important for the Advisory Committee to indicate to what extent it had taken into account the guidelines established in the Medium-Term Plan for the period 1980-1983, particularly with regard to part IV of the budget (economic, social and humanitarian activities).

20. Budgetary matters had undergone radical change throughout the world, at both the national and international levels. Originally, they had been the responsibility of legislative and deliberative bodies, but they now depended primarily on technical staff; the deliberative bodies merely rubber-stamped them because they had understood that their task was primarily to monitor expenditure, not simply to adopt the budget.

21. With regard to the adoption of the budget, his delegation would like to know the exact amount of the appropriations requested for the biennium 1980-1981, how much the figure \$1,214,203,200 represented in real terms and whether the net amount of the funds required for the biennium, to be prorated among Member States, totalled \$993,148,100.

22. Acceptance of the very concept of budgeting automatically set a mandatory legal limit on expenditure which could not be exceeded. He wondered whether the United Nations budget respected that rule. If so, he questioned the justification for revised estimates, which generated additional appropriations. It was natural under special, unforeseen or unforeseeable circumstances for additional appropriations to be requested, but, with present methods of calculation and projection, it should be possible to bring the proposed budget more into line with reality. Institutionalization of the practice of revised estimates and of supplementary appropriations at the end of the year did not represent the essence of the programme budget system. That system, which had only been introduced recently, was a good tool but it needed to be perfected, with greater emphasis on economy and greater restraint in programmes as well as in administrative or overhead costs, which absorbed more than 75 per cent of the appropriations.

23. It was not a matter of choosing between inflated requests for appropriations, which were not very realistic but which acted as a safety valve, and the inevitable year-end revision of the budget due to new requests for appropriations that totally altered the complexion of the budget originally adopted. The issue to be decided was whether to adopt a budget or to grant power to incur debts. Of course, some flexibility was necessary and provision had therefore been made for certain procedures, such as the transfer of funds between sections, but still within the limits of approved appropriations.

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(Mr. El-Ayadhi, Tunisia)

24. Many proposals had been made with regard to the redistribution of resources, and his delegation whole-heartedly supported them and hoped that the Secretary-General and programme managers would take the measures they indicated.

25. Secondly, his delegation wanted information about extrabudgetary funds, which were the most reassuring component of the budget estimates. The extrabudgetary funds for the biennium exceeded the amount of regular budget funds. That was a welcome addition which would strengthen the organization's financial capacity and, therefore, its activities. However, he would welcome an explanation of the precise purpose of extrabudgetary funds in the context of the total resources at the Secretary-General's disposal. His delegation would also like to know more about the criteria for allocating extrabudgetary funds.

26. Tunisia was a developing country with limited resources. Its Government and people were much concerned with sound administration and very cautious about budgetary expenditure. In particular, the effects of disbursements of foreign currency were felt both at the State level and at the level of the ordinary citizen. Tunisia's assessment had been increased by 50 per cent in the new scale, so that it would have to pay \$3 for every \$1,000 of expenditure, and while that was only a small percentage, it was a heavy burden in terms of the real cost to the country, so that his delegation was more worried than others by the growth in United Nations expenditure.

27. While it was true that any active institution needed adequate funds, they could always be administered with greater economy. With a little more financial control, the United Nations might be able to boast of exemplary management, thanks to a reasonable reduction in overhead costs.

28. His delegation reserved the right to state its views on the allocation of funds for the various activities when the budget estimates were considered section by section.

29. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that his delegation had read with great attention the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financial statements and accounts of the Board of Auditors (A/34/486) and considered that the observations in paragraphs 7 to 14 were honest, logical and reasonable.

30. In order to understand the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981, it must be considered in the light of the increase in the activities and responsibilities of the United Nations and the initiatives it had taken to preserve international peace and security. There was a necessary correlation between the size of the budget and the expansion of the Organization's activities.

31. One of the problems of major concern to his delegation was that of the equitable distribution of senior-level posts within the Secretariat. The estimates in the documents before the Committee showed a considerable increase in such posts, and that increase was growing more pronounced with every year while the distribution

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(Mr. Hounouvou, Benin)

of high-level posts between Member States worked more and more to the advantage of the great Powers. At the same time, there were serious anomalies in the distribution of the financial burdens. The assessments of certain great Powers were going down while their political influence in the Secretariat was increasing, having regard to their numerical representation.

32. The establishment of new senior-level posts in the Secretariat should proceed in accordance with criteria clearly defined by the General Assembly. The explanations which were usually given in that matter did not seem to accord with existing priorities. That was an important matter which must be borne in mind if further deplorable injustices to States like Benin were to be avoided.

33. Finally, his delegation supported economy measures provided that they were not at the expense of efficiency. He reserved the right to speak again on matters of particular interest to his delegation.

34. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that in his opening statement (A/C.5/34/12) the Secretary-General had explained the basic assumptions underlying the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, which he had described as a "budget of austerity". The Secretary-General had drawn the Committee's attention to the unfavourable world economic situation, and the increasingly critical attention being focused on public sector spending. In the case of the United Nations, that trend had been reflected in the criticisms expressed during the debate, as well as in the voting patterns, so that Member States which contributed 75 per cent of the United Nations budget had been unable to vote in favour of the revised appropriations for 1979. As the Secretary-General had explained, the budget estimates provided for a real growth of only 0.8 per cent, which worked out to an annual increase in real terms of something less than 0.5 per cent. In taking note of that very small rate, which might rise to 1 per cent because of the financial implications of draft resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, it was important to realize that the rate of real growth of the military budgets of some of the major Powers was expected to be around 3 per cent per annum. That was a hard reality which the United Nations must change, as a body in which humanity had placed all its hopes for peace, justice and a new and equitable international economic order.

35. His delegation accepted the advice of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee regarding methodology and regarded that matter as settled for the time being. However, some speakers had made suggestions concerning budgetary policies and he would therefore like to make the following observations. While it was true to say that the proposed budget amounted to \$1.214 million on the expenditure side, a much more meaningful figure was the net figure of \$993,148,000, which was the amount that Member States would be called upon to contribute. In comparing the proposed budget with the budget of 10 years ago, it was advisable to use the net rather than the gross budget figures. Secondly, if non-recurrent items were included in the estimate of real growth, the results would be misleading, at least for the short term. For example, the total of non-recurrent expenditures for 1978-79 was \$57.8 million and the Secretary-General proposed \$35.5 million for 1980-1981

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(Mr. Kemal, Pakistan)

at 1979 rates or \$39.8 million at 1980-1981 rates, or about \$18 million less than for the previous biennium. If he had included a comparison of non-recurrent expenditures for both budgets, he would have ended up with a negative growth budget for the biennium 1980-1981. That might be acceptable for political reasons but his delegation wondered whether it would be justified. In any case, he believed that it might be useful to compare the non-recurrent expenditures over two or more biennial periods.

36. He agreed that the increase in the staff of an organization was a useful indicator of its real growth. However, for purposes of comparison, it was necessary to consider sufficiently long periods. Comparison of one biennium with the biennium immediately preceding it could yield misleading results because supernumerary posts were converted into established posts.

37. Comparisons between the budgets for one biennium and the next should be made in real terms. If the total of the current budget proposals (\$993 million net) was compared with that of the budget for the biennium 1970-1971 (341 million net), it might look at first sight as though expenses had increased two and a half times. However, when inflation and changes in currency values were taken into account, the increase was much smaller. In Swiss francs, for example, the amount of the budget for 1970-1971 had been 1,470 million, at the rate of exchange of 4.3 Swiss francs to the dollar. The figure of \$993 million for the biennium 1980-1981 was the equivalent of approximately 1,718 million Swiss francs at the exchange rate of 1.73 Swiss francs to the dollar, which was an increase of 16.5 per cent. Expressed in terms of gold, the results were even more striking, since there was actually a decrease in the budget: from 8.5 million ounces of gold in 1970-1971 to 2.5 million ounces of gold for 1980-1981.

38. It was to be regretted that there had been no progress on the United Nations short-term deficit and his delegation urged Member States to exert every effort to solve the problem, especially now that the Secretary-General had submitted an austerity budget.

39. With regard to obsolete programmes and programmes of marginal utility, he said that the replies received by the Budget Division from the programme administrators showed wide differences in their interpretation of the Secretary-General's directives. It was absolutely essential, therefore, to adopt a uniform methodology.

40. In conclusion, his delegation proposed informally that the methods for examining requests for the establishment of new posts submitted by the Secretary-General should be strengthened and improved, as they were at present very defective.

41. When the Secretary-General requested the establishment of a new post, he provided a brief job description. However, the Fifth Committee had no job descriptions for the other posts in the department in question, and it was therefore difficult for it to determine whether the establishment of the new post was justified. Instead, requests were accepted or rejected on the basis of case-by-case considerations.

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(Mr. Kemal, Pakistan)

42. Nor did the Secretary-General himself have a detailed and complete record of the job descriptions of all the posts in the United Nations. His delegation considered that it was absolutely necessary to remedy that state of affairs as soon as possible.

AGENDA ITEM 96: FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS, AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (continued) (A/C.5/34/L.3 and L.6/Rev.1)

A/C.5/34/L.6/Rev.1

43. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) said that as a result of the meetings held by a small drafting group to revise the draft originally submitted by Canada (A/C.5/34/L.6), he was in a position to submit a new text which he hoped could be adopted by consensus, since all the delegations concerned, with one exception had taken part in the group's meetings. The text as now presented had no preamble and was a draft decision.

44. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the verb "Note" in the French text was perhaps not wholly satisfactory. In addition, it would be appropriate to indicate throughout the draft that the views requested should be submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

45. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the Moroccan representative's observation on the language of the draft decision, said that although he had no objection to the use of "Note", the decision could be left to the Secretariat. On the other matter, the representative of Morocco should approach the sponsor.

46. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) said that it had been the drafting group's view that the matter should be brought up again at the thirty-sixth session but that clearly the reports of the Board of Auditors and of the Panel of External Auditors should be ready in time for the Secretary-General to prepare his report. Therefore they had not indicated any date. However, to clear up the ambiguity pointed out by the Moroccan representative, he would agree to the addition at the end of subparagraph (a) of the draft decision of the words "to the thirty-sixth session".

47. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the draft decision in document A/C.5/34/L.6/Rev.1 as amended.

48. The draft decision in document A/C.5/34/L.6/Rev.1 as amended, was adopted.

49. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation did not object to the adoption by consensus of the draft decision, but that since the Canadian delegation had not accepted his delegation's amendment deleting the words "Both" and "and the Panel of External Auditors" from subparagraph (a), he would have abstained if the draft decision had been put to a vote, since it was not clear what role the Panel of External Auditors would play in evaluating the activities of the Board of Auditors.

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50. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) noted that it was the first time that any suggestion had been made for revising either the internal or the external audit at the United Nations, although the need had been felt for many years. Because it was a dynamic discipline, subject to constant changes, the auditing of accounts should be constantly reviewed. He hoped that the persons responsible for making the comments called for in the draft decision just adopted would bear in mind any suggestions and recommendations made to them by delegations.

51. The CHAIRMAN declared the consideration of the item concluded.

AGENDA ITEM 103: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (continued) (A/34/11 and Add.1; A/C.5/34/L.7)

52. The CHAIRMAN, introducing draft resolution A/C.5/34/L.7, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: Report of the Committee on Contributions", said that the document had been drafted on the basis of informal consultations.

AGENDA ITEM 102: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (continued) (A/34/32)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/34/3/Add.37 and 38; A/34/528)

53. Mrs. DERRE (France) said that the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/34/32) was more concise and therefore much better than the previous year's report. However, chapter III, Calendar of Conferences, paragraphs 12 to 45, could have been further shortened by omitting details of no real interest. With regard to chapter IV, Management of Conference Resources, she said that her delegation had participated in the work of the Committee on Conferences and was therefore well aware that the system for the allocation of conference resources was a delicate matter. It was stated in paragraph 53 (e) that the Secretary-General should be requested to submit to the appropriate bodies a study on the feasibility of integrating conference servicing costs with individual programme budgets. Some deliberative bodies tended to make rather hasty decisions on the holding of additional meetings, without thinking of costs and the availability of resources, and expecting Conference Services somehow to remedy the situation. Matters had, however, reached a critical point, as both time and resources were proving insufficient for the number of meetings being held. The Economic and Social Council had decided at its summer session to reduce each of its sessions by one week, but had not yet taken any further steps in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197 on restructuring, which called for the Council to assume to the maximum extent possible direct responsibility for performing the functions of its subsidiary bodies.

54. The large number of meetings naturally entailed an increase in documentation. It was regrettable that the Committee on Conferences had not been able to make a more detailed study of the cause of delays in the submission of documents. The matter should therefore be raised in the Fifth Committee.

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(Mrs. Derre, France)

55. In general, her delegation approved the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences.

56. Mr. NAGGAGA (Uganda) said that he wished to thank the Committee on Conferences for taking account of his delegation's suggestion that a single document should be issued containing both the report of the Committee and the calendar of conferences.

57. In its report (A/34/32), the Committee on Conferences stated that each United Nations body should in so far as possible meet at its established headquarters, with the exceptions listed in paragraph 31 (e) of the report.

58. In general, his delegation subscribed to that view. Nevertheless, it had certain reservations with regard to some of the exceptions listed in paragraph 31 (e). For example, he did not see why the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law or the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be held alternately in New York and Geneva.

59. With regard to the invitations extended by Governments and specialized agencies to United Nations bodies to hold meetings away from their headquarters, his delegation agreed that they should be accepted only when there were distinct advantages to be gained. He hoped that, before accepting such invitations, the Committee on Conferences would scrutinize them carefully, as the impression was sometimes gained that invitations were issued and accepted in a completely haphazard manner.

60. The United Nations had often been accused of holding too many meetings too frequently. His delegation was therefore gratified that the Committee had studied the question of adequate intervals between sessions of the same body. In his view, the issue should also have been taken up in connexion with sessions of related bodies. Any measures taken along those lines would benefit the smaller countries, which usually had only one delegation to cover meetings of related bodies and would be hard pressed if there was not a sufficient interval between one meeting and the next.

61. With regard to the proliferation of conferences, he was glad that the Committee had tackled the problem and wished to reiterate his delegation's view that conferences did not necessarily solve the crucial problems of the contemporary world. Moreover, some Member States at times used them as a delaying tactic to avoid solving those problems. However, his delegation was also aware that an arbitrary reduction of the number of conferences could jeopardize chances of solving world problems, especially in the areas of the New International Economic Order, decolonization and human rights. He therefore could not subscribe to the "quota system" of allocating conference resources, and had strong reservations regarding the feasibility of integrating conference servicing within the individual programme budgets, which would carry with it the risk of frustrating new initiatives on the part of intergovernmental organs.

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(Mr. Naggaga, Uganda)

62. The Fifth Committee and the Committee on Conferences should desist from any actions which might be interpreted as infringing the mandates of other intergovernmental organs. Instead, they should try to make those organs aware of the limitations in conference servicing, and recommend a reduction in the length of conferences.

63. His delegation had no objection to the Committee on Conferences considering conferences on activities having lower priority with a view to eliminating them or shortening their duration.

64. The CHAIRMAN said that the list of speakers on agenda item 102 (Pattern of Conferences: report of the Committee on Conferences) would be closed that day, as decided at the beginning of the week.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

65. Mr. DUQUE (Secretary of the Committee) said that during the week from 15 to 21 October the Committee could consider in first reading section 1 of the Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1980-1981, with the exception of part A, item 6, on the World Food Council, and part B, item 7. With regard to the former, the relevant revised estimates would be submitted upon the conclusion of negotiations between the United Nations and FAO on the hire of premises occupied by WFC in Rome. Regarding part B, item 7, in the same section, when ECWA was transferred to Baghdad space should be provided for the Office of the Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon, which was presently located in the ECWA premises. That would entail the submission of supplementary estimates in connexion with the hire of premises. The Committee would also deal with sections 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.