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ASSEMBLY**

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FIFTH COMMITTEE  
23rd meeting  
held on  
Monday, 22 October 1979  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRSON (Belgium)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/34/408)

1. Mr. JONAH (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that in his new capacity of Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services he welcomed the opportunity of representing the Secretary-General in the Fifth Committee. He had been with the United Nations for 16 years, and had always striven to contribute to the building of a truly international Secretariat working together with a common purpose for the United Nations. He had always followed the work of the Fifth Committee with keen interest, believing that it performed a vital role in the United Nations system. No comprehensive understanding of the United Nations was possible without consideration of the important documents that came before the Fifth Committee at every session of the General Assembly. His experience in the United Nations Staff Council and in the appointment and promotion machinery for 15 years, as well as his participation in the appeal procedures of the Secretariat, had made the discussions of the Fifth Committee particularly important to him, and in his new capacity he looked forward to fruitful co-operation with all its members.

2. The Secretary-General had spoken, in his report on the work of the Organization (A/34/1), about the strengthening of the international civil service, and the Fifth Committee had a crucial role to play in achieving the goals set by the Secretary-General. At the preceding session the Fifth Committee had had a lengthy discussion on personnel reform measures, and he reaffirmed the Secretary-General's determination to implement fully the Assembly's decisions on all personnel matters. Change was often painful, and it was the nature of any bureaucracy to resist change. That partly explained the great difficulties the Secretary-General had to overcome before achieving the objectives laid down by the Fifth Committee at the thirty-third session. He was proud to assist the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Fifth Committee, in bringing about the personnel reforms that would strengthen the international civil service.

3. The Secretariat had to work in an essentially political atmosphere, but in order to maintain the exclusively international character of its responsibilities it must hold fast to a key element in the Charter - the need to maintain the highest standard of integrity. No matter what the cost, he was resolved not to deviate from that cardinal principle.

4. The Committee had before it the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/34/408). In the annotated agenda (A/34/100/Add.1) it was indicated that there would also be a report on the implementation of the measures and guidelines set out in General Assembly resolution 33/143. The reports called for under that resolution were incorporated

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in the report on the composition of the Secretariat. The report of the Secretary-General listing the staff of the United Nations had been published as an attachment to document A/C.5/34/L.4, and a note had been submitted on the revision of the Staff Rules (A/C.5/34/7). The Committee would shortly have before it a further report on the implementation of the classification system.

5. He did not wish to dwell on matters already covered in the report on the composition of the Secretariat, which indicated the measures taken by the Secretary-General to give effect to the Committee's decisions. He would be glad to give additional information to the Committee on that question as required, and he hoped to comment further at a later stage, after he had heard the members of the Committee speak.

6. In the year ending 30 June 1978 the proportion of appointments of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States had been 15 per cent. In the year ending 30 June 1979 it had increased to 21 per cent. Between his assumption of duties as Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services in April 1979 and the end of September 1979, the proportion of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution had increased to just over 25 per cent. The proportion of appointments of nationals of over-represented Member States had been reduced from 37 per cent in the year ending 30 June 1978 to less than 23 per cent during the period from April to September 1979. The largest proportion of appointments during the same period, amounting to 52 per cent, had been of nationals of Member States within their desirable range. The Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat showed that during the year ending 30 June 1979 nationals of five previously unrepresented Member States had been appointed, namely, Angola, the Ivory Coast, Suriname, Swaziland and the United Arab Emirates. Since 30 June one national of Oman and two of the Comoros had been appointed, thus reducing the number of unrepresented and under-represented Member States by one more in each category. Information was available on recruitment missions undertaken during the preceding year.

7. Although the foregoing statistics showed that the objectives sought had not yet been attained, they were a clear indication of the Secretary-General's determination to pursue his efforts until the composition of the Secretariat met the requirements of the General Assembly. The General Assembly's objectives could be attained only if the guidelines established were closely followed. Those guidelines would determine the recruitment policy of the Organization until the Assembly's objectives were attained or until the Assembly itself decided to review its requests. However, he wished to point out that guidelines were indeed merely lines to be guided by, and although the Secretary-General intended to follow them closely, he did not regard them as a strait-jacket. He saw them, like the desirable ranges established for the representation of Member States, as a yardstick to gauge how well the Secretary-General was doing in response to the General Assembly's requests. Whenever the Secretary-General made an appointment decision, for which he was fully responsible under Article 101, paragraph 1, of the Charter, he must insist on being able to exercise the discretionary powers that were conferred upon him, in his capacity as chief administrative officer of the Organization, by article 97 of the Charter.

(Mr. Jonah)

8. Another matter of concern to the General Assembly was the composition of the staff at the senior levels of the Secretariat, and it had asked the Secretary-General to take further steps to increase the representation of the developing countries at those levels. In addition, the General Assembly had indicated in a number of resolutions its interest in improving sex distribution at those levels.

9. He drew the Committee's attention to table C in the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/34/408, p. 10). That table dealt with the distribution of posts at the senior levels between developing and developed countries, and it showed that the number of nationals of developing countries occupying posts at those levels had been increasing over the past few years and was continuing to do so.

10. The Secretary-General was assessing the measures needed to ensure that that trend would continue. That could best be done through the replacement of retiring staff members who vacated senior and policy-making posts. It had sometimes been found convenient to use posts vacated by nationals of some Member States for the appointment of other nationals of the same Member States to ensure that their representation did not decrease. The Secretary-General believed that in the present circumstances he should not abandon that option entirely. However, mindful of the General Assembly injunction against ascribing nationalities to posts, the Secretary-General intended to proceed in a manner that would ensure that no post was always encumbered by nationals of the same Member State. It could be asserted that the steps taken towards a fair distribution of posts at the senior levels between developing and developed countries were already producing results.

11. He could not say the same about steps to achieve an equitable proportion of men and women in posts at the D-1 level and above. Despite the Secretary-General's efforts and the co-operation of a number of Governments and institutions, few women candidates with the high qualifications and wide experience required for posts at those levels had been identified and appointed during the year ending 30 June 1979. The conclusion must be that further efforts must be made, and he would ask Governments to strive harder to find suitable women candidates to recommend to the Secretary-General. However, he was pleased to report the appointments of two women at the Assistant Secretary-General level, one from a developed country and the other from a developing country. Each had had a distinguished career, one inside and one outside the United Nations.

12. In 1978 the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure that movement of staff from the General Service category to the Professional category should be limited and such recruitment should be conducted exclusively through competitive methods of selection. The Secretary-General, in his report in 1978 on the implementation on personnel policy reforms (A/C.5/33/2), had informed the Assembly that discussions were taking place on a draft text outlining the Secretary-General's policy. Those discussions had been taking place in the Joint Advisory Committee since April 1978. The question of a competitive examination for the passage of General Service staff members to the Professional category had also been dealt with by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report to the General Assembly in 1978

on the implementation of those reforms (A/33/228). The seeds of the idea had been sown in 1971 in a major report of the JIU on personnel problems in the United Nations (A/8454). The Secretary-General had indicated, in a report to the Assembly in 1976, that the possibility was then being studied of holding separate competitive examinations for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category, a measure that had long been used for language staff.

13. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 33/143, specifically requesting that movement from the General Service category to the Professional level should be limited and such recruitment should be conducted exclusively through competitive methods of selection, intensive consultations had been taking place with staff representatives, who on one occasion had taken the matter up at a general meeting of the staff at Headquarters. The consultations had taken into account many comments by the staff at offices away from Headquarters. They had resulted in the administrative bulletin and instruction referred to in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report (A/34/408).

14. He wished to reply to a question raised by the representative of Morocco with regard to the language in which the examination might be taken, a question that had troubled many staff members after the publication of the relevant administrative circulars. According to resolution 2, adopted at the first session of the General Assembly, the working languages of the Secretariat were English and French. The General Assembly, in its resolution 2480 (XXIII) had required ability to use one of the two languages as a minimum requirement at the time of recruitment to posts subject to geographical distribution. It should also be noted that all staff members seeking movement from the General Service category to the Professional level were subject to, and should be ready to accept, reassignment to any office or activity under staff regulation 1.2. Accordingly, it would be inappropriate for the Secretary-General to promote to any geographical post staff members who did not have adequate knowledge of either French or English. The core paper must therefore be taken in one of those languages. However, specialized papers for designated posts in the secretariats of organs such as the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) could be taken in Spanish or Arabic, by analogy with the special arrangements indicated in resolution 2480 (XXIII). He also intended to recommend to the Central Examination Board that at least part of the oral interview of candidates who took papers in Spanish or Arabic should be conducted in those languages.

15. Another matter of the greatest importance to the Secretary-General was staff-management relations. On two occasions the work of the General Assembly at its thirty-third session had been affected by action of staff members in support of their grievances. The latter occasion had resulted in the withholding of their salaries in application of paragraph 10 of annex I to the Staff Regulations which stated: "No salary shall be paid to staff members in respect of periods of unauthorized absence from work, unless such absence was caused by reasons beyond their control or duly certified medical reasons." The staff concerned had returned to work as a result of an agreement according to which a distinguished former President of the International Court of Justice

(Mr. Jonah)

had been invited by the Secretary-General to investigate their grievances. The investigator's report was currently the subject of intensive consultations between the staff and the Administration. He wished to report that the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, in its Judgement No. 249, had recently upheld the Secretary-General's decision to withhold salaries in that case in application of the relevant provision of the Staff Regulations.

16. In order to seek ways of resolving the continuing difficulties in staff-management relations, he had called a meeting at Headquarters in June of representatives of the staff and the Administration, both from Headquarters and from offices away from Headquarters. Out of that meeting had come the suggestion that a small group of representatives of the staff and the Administration of all offices should meet twice a year on the question, and that the first meeting would take place in New York before the end of 1979.

17. Referring to the interest expressed in 1978 by staff representatives in being allowed some form of access to the Fifth Committee, he said that both the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA) and the representatives of the staff of the United Nations as a whole were interested in obtaining such access when appropriate. The Secretary-General might put before the Committee proposals received on that question, together with his comments.

18. In conclusion he returned to the Secretary-General's comment, in his annual report (A/34/1), that the evolution of an effective international civil service was essential to the future usefulness of the United Nations in all its diverse fields of activity. He assured the Committee that he himself was wholly dedicated to that task, while fully aware of all the difficulties that attended it. He hoped for and was confident of the Committee's co-operation in achieving the goal that they all desired.

19. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) requested further information on the manner in which resolutions relating to personnel questions had been implemented up to now. He noted that document A/34/408 made no mention of the Panel established a few years previously to investigate allegations of discriminatory treatment in the Secretariat. If the Panel had not been able to function, it would be desirable to know why. Furthermore, the document contained very little information on the application of provisions relating to the inheritance of posts and extensions beyond the statutory age of retirement. On that latter subject, the Secretary-General indicated in his report that exceptions had been requested for groups of staff members in posts not subject to geographical distribution, even before the Committee had been informed about the implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 33/143.

20. The arrangements for the selection of candidates for Professional posts by competitive examination seemed to be causing a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the General Service staff concerned. The purpose of the procedure had been to ensure equality of opportunity for all staff members while maintaining acceptable professional standards. It had obviously not been

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(Mr. Thomas, Trinidad and Tobago)

the intention of the Fifth Committee to create difficulties, and it would be desirable to obtain further information on the objections felt by the staff concerned, so that the problem could be studied and the necessary decisions could be taken to eliminate the causes of dissatisfaction before the examination, which was to be held in the second half of November.

21. Mr. AYADHI (Tunisia) asked the Chairman to convey the Committee's congratulations to Mr. Jonah on the occasion of his promotion to the post of Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services and to assure him of the Committee's full co-operation in the attainment of the objectives which had not yet been achieved.

22. The CHAIRMAN observed that the Committee's decisions themselves would reveal the importance it attached to a sound personnel policy and the support which it wished to afford to the policy-makers concerned.

23. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) congratulated Mr. Jonah on his appointment and assured him of his delegation's whole-hearted co-operation. He thanked Mr. Gherab for his efforts to organize the Secretariat under difficult conditions.

24. With regard to the composition of the Secretariat, he would prefer it if the Secretary-General submitted information not as percentages but in the form of comparative tables, so that the Committee could see to what extent the developing countries were represented in the Secretariat and establish which States in fact controlled the United Nations. The concept of desirable ranges was outdated and, should no longer govern the recruitment of staff; the representation of States should not be governed by their wealth.

25. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) assured the Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management and the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services that his delegation would collaborate closely with them; he hoped that they, for their part, would actively co-operate with the Committee. His delegation wished to request clarification with regard to the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/34/408). Firstly, had it been absolutely necessary to appoint nationals of over-represented States to more than 30 per cent of the vacant posts between 30 June 1978 and 30 June 1979 and had the Office of Personnel Services attempted to find candidates among nationals of under-represented or unrepresented States? Secondly, was it general practice in the United Nations Secretariat, when numerous vacancies occurred at the P-4 and higher levels, i.e., at the level of head of section, service or division, to seek to fill those vacancies by promotion or internal transfer rather than by means of competitive selection? Thirdly, in view of the number of unrepresented or under-represented States, how could the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services explain that 20 posts subject to geographical distribution were filled by nationals of a State which was not a member of the United Nations, as could be seen from table 10 of document A/34/408?

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AGENDA ITEM 98: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981 (continued)  
(A/34/6 and Add.1, A/34/7)

First reading (continued)

Section 1. Over-all policy-making, direction and co-ordination (continued)

Section 2. Political and Security Council affairs; peace-keeping activities  
(continued)

Section 3. Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization (continued)

26. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), answering the question raised concerning section 1 by the representative of Belgium, who had asked why the Unit for Special Economic Assistance Programmes had not been made part of the Economic Commission for Africa, pointed out that, on the one hand, the economic assistance programmes for African countries had been established by General Assembly and Security Council resolutions to deal with urgent economic situations which had arisen as the result of serious political events - which gave the programmes a political character - and that, on the other hand, under the terms of those resolutions, the Secretary-General had been asked to mobilize resources on a world-wide basis. It was therefore preferable, from a political and a practical point of view, to have the programmes administered by an office directly under the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the programmes often drew on the services of the regional economic commissions.

27. Replying to a question raised by the representative of the Philippines concerning section 2, he said that the resources for the Group of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development had been included in the requirements for the Centre for Disarmament under the heading of ad hoc expert groups (para. 2.44 of the proposed programme budget).

28. With regard to the United Nations Supply Depot in Pisa and the questions raised by the representative of Belgium, he said that the value of its stock amounted to \$800,000 and the annual rate of depreciation of equipment was set at 4 to 5 per cent. Since stock normally turned over in less than a year, annual turnover at the Depot amounted to approximately \$10 million. The Depot, whose functions were described in paragraph 2.105 of the proposed programme budget, served as a warehouse for equipment for peace-keeping and disaster relief operations. It also supplied United Nations information centres and served as a procurement centre for equipment purchased in Europe for United Nations Headquarters and UNDP. As the representative of Italy had said, the Depot in Pisa had been chosen for those purposes because it had the necessary equipment, was situated near an airport and had easy access to other forms of transport, in particular shipping, which was of practical value as far as missions in the Middle East and Africa were concerned.

29. In reply to the representative of Pakistan, who had asked, with regard to section 3, whether it was justifiable in the light of the most recent information to reduce the amount for travel costs of representatives of the United Nations Council for Namibia by \$65,000 (para. 3.28), he said that out of the appropriation

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(Mr. Begin)

of \$1,044,500 in the programme budget for 1970-1979, \$391,400 had been spent by 31 May 1979, and it was expected that \$101,000 would suffice to meet needs from 1 June to the end of the year. Since it seemed that the amount allocated to travel costs in the programme budget of 1970-1979 was high in comparison to needs, the amount requested under that heading for 1980-1981 could be reduced.

30. In reply to a question raised by the representative of the Philippines, he said that the activities of the United Nations Fund for Namibia were described in document A/AC.131/L.114, dated 8 October 1979; a report on the 1978 activities of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa could be found in document A/33/313 and a similar report for 1979 would be issued in two weeks' time.

31. Concerning the International Anti-Apartheid Year, he said that the \$300,000 allocated for special projects under General Assembly resolution 32/105 had enabled the Special Committee against Apartheid to hold a special meeting at Atlanta, Georgia, from 15 to 26 January 1979 and another meeting in Jamaica from 21 to 25 May 1979, and, in addition, had made it possible to organize a World Conference of Youth and Students on apartheid in Paris from 19 to 22 February 1979, a seminar on nuclear collaboration with South Africa in London on 24 and 25 February 1979, and a seminar on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa, which would be held in London in November 1979. Further information on the subject could be found in the report of the Special Committee against Apartheid (A/33/22, vol. I).

#### Section 18. United Nations Environment Programme (continued)

32. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) replying to the request of the representative of the Philippines for information on the duration and frequency of the meetings of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, said that two 10-day sessions, were scheduled for the biennium 1980-1981 (para. 18.24 of the proposed programme budget); in conformity with General Assembly resolution 31/140, the sessions would be held at Vienna, the site of the Committee's secretariat, as was shown in the draft calendar of conferences and meetings in the annex to the report of the Committee on Conferences (A/34/32). UNIDO would absorb part of the costs of the sessions, to the amount of \$312,400, as was shown in table 18.5.

33. The representative of Yugoslavia had asked a question about the rates of real growth in table 18.3: he had pointed out that a growth rate of 12.1 per cent was shown under the heading "Regional representation and liaison", while the proposed growth rate for environment activities was 2.3 per cent. Taking into account the negative growth rate of 1.2 per cent envisaged for section 18 as a whole, the proposed changes simply reflected the redistribution of resources among programmes and not the allocation of new resources. As could be seen from paragraphs 18.35 and 18.36, the relative rates of growth did not reflect relative priorities among programmes; the adjustments amounted to regrouping appropriations previously allocated to substantive activities but properly belonging to general administration. It should be noted, however, that regional offices and liaison offices did sometimes carry out substantive activities, and that caused difficulty in separating the two functions.

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(Mr. Begin)

34. A number of similar questions had been asked by the representatives of Yugoslavia, Belgium, Barbados and Turkey with regard to the relative rates of growth in the resources of the Environment Fund allocated to operational and administrative activities respectively. Under General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), that issue came within the competence of the Governing Council of UNEP, and the report of the Governing Council on the work of its seventh session (A/34/25) described the discussions among member States of the Council on the question. The Council, in decision 7/14 F (para. 12), had requested the Executive Director to express his views to the Governing Council at its eighth session (in 1980) on the subject of the optimum proportion of the administrative costs which should be charged to the Fund, so that the Council could make observations on the basis of that report.

35. In reply to questions asked by the representative of Belgium about the "representation allowance" listed in table 18.7, he said that the amounts in question were not representation costs reimbursed to certain officials. The purpose of the proposed allowance was to enable the Executive Director and the President of the Governing Council of UNEP to meet certain expenditures on hospitality, to organize official receptions, for example, at the end of the Governing Council's session. In any event, the funds were managed by the administrative staff of the Programme, and not by the officials concerned.

36. Replying to a question from one delegation on the criteria for distinguishing between regular budget posts and those funded from extrabudgetary sources in tables 18.4 and 18.12, he pointed out that the whole matter was under discussion and that the Advisory Committee was pursuing it, as its Chairman said in his opening statement on 3 October 1979 (A/C.5/34/13). In the proposed programme budget no provision was made for changing the figures included in the budget for the previous biennium. The guidelines used had been the proposals contained in the relevant paragraphs of document A/C.5/31/39, entitled "Establishment of a rationale for the allocation of expenses between the regular budget and the Fund of UNEP". The same criteria were applied to all posts.

37. Replying to a delegation which had noted the presence in section 18 of subprogramme 7, on natural disasters, he said that in decision 8 (II) the Governing Council of UNEP had requested the Executive Director to prepare a programme in co-operation with UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. In order to prevent duplication, the bodies concerned were carrying on a fruitful dialogue. UNEP was concerned only with the purely environmental aspects of the question, as reported in the medium-term plan (A/33/6/Rev.1, chap. XIV). An interagency memorandum had established the division of responsibilities between the three agencies concerned. The memorandum provided the basis for their joint action and also served as a framework for the collaboration of UNDP, WHO and WHO.

38. With regard to the common services of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Governing Council of UNEP had, at its seventh session, thought that it would be useful for the Secretariat to draw up a report on the utilization of the premises at Gigiri by various United Nations bodies. It

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(Mr. Begin)

had asked the Executive Director to transmit to the Secretary-General the recommendation that a joint report should be drawn up on common services which might be established (decision 7/14 F of the Governing Council, para. 9). The Executive Director had duly informed the Secretary-General of that recommendation. A co-ordinator had been appointed to draw up a report, which would be submitted to the General Assembly at the thirty-fifth session. It would provide the Secretariat with guidelines for preparing the proposed programme budget for 1982-1983. The problem was mentioned in paragraph 19.41 of the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981 (A/34/6), but he felt bound to state that it was impossible, as matters stood, to contemplate the total integration of UNEP and Habitat services, since their offices were eight kilometres apart. When they shared the same premises, i.e. in 1982, the integration of their administrative services would become possible.

39. The CHAIRMAN said that he was concerned about the issue of extrabudgetary and regular budget resources and, in particular, about the number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources outside the control of the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee, as it stated in paragraph 59 of its report (A/34/7), intended to revert to that question. It had also been reported that the Governing Council of UNEP was to consider the question of the optimum allocation of expenses between the Fund and the regular budget. For the forthcoming biennium operational and administrative costs would increase by 30 per cent. In the case of UNEP, as with many other sections of the budget, there might shortly be proposals that posts previously funded from extrabudgetary resources should be charged to the regular budget. It was therefore most appropriate for the Advisory Committee to examine the matter thoroughly, and not merely from the point of view of senior-level posts.

40. Mr. BUNC (Yugoslavia) fully supported the Chairman's statement. It was highly irregular to finance certain posts from extrabudgetary resources and subsequently have them included in the regular budget. It should not be forgotten that the sole purpose of extrabudgetary resources was to finance worth-while projects in developing countries.

41. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked what relationship there was between major sections of the budget: since the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had been transferred to Vienna, it would be useful to know the budgetary value of the support it received from UNIDO. Furthermore, it was high time for UNEP and Habitat to have their offices in the same premises; that would automatically dispose of the problem of common costs.

42. Mr. MARTLI (Haiti) said that he was disturbed by the increase of 30 per cent in the costs for operational and administrative personnel, since that would create budgetary problems for the 1980-1981 biennium. It was therefore important to check that exaggerated trend at once.

43. Mr. EL-HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), referring to paragraph 18.6 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/34/7), said that the reduction of \$29,800 in the conference servicing costs shown in table 18.6 in the proposed budget would seriously impede the work of certain Member States. Many countries had no permanent missions or embassies in Nairobi; the documents of the Governing Council therefore

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(Mr. El-Fouderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

had to be sent to them by air. His delegation proposed that the Committee should ignore the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee and approve the appropriation of \$179,800 requested by the Secretary-General for conference servicing costs.

44. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) asked when and in what form the report on the use of common services at Nairobi, to which the Director of the Budget Division had referred, would be issued and how it would be taken into account in the context of section 10.

45. Mr. RUDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that the report would not necessarily be issued during the thirty-fourth session. The administrations of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), recently installed at Nairobi, and of UNEP were in the process of determining how best to administer their common services. The appropriations requested by the Secretary-General to cover those services were adequate in the light of the information available. There was no doubt that organization of the common services could be improved. A report and proposals on the subject would then be submitted to the Committee.

46. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) said that it was regrettable that when the budgets of UNEP and Habitat were under consideration, members of the Committee could not obtain a clear picture of the services shared by those bodies. Moreover, bodies such as UNDP and the World Bank, which had offices at Nairobi, could benefit from those common services. It was necessary to take advantage of the experience gained at Geneva and Vienna by dealing with problems of that kind at as early a stage as possible. He asked, for example, whether the Committee could be told exactly which services at Nairobi would be shared by more than one organization. Bodies other than UNEP and Habitat would have to be consulted. It would be desirable for the Secretary-General to bring the Committee up to date on that question at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

47. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) supported the statement made by the representative of Canada and added that lessons should also be drawn from the experience gained by other specialized agencies.

48. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) said that the report that the Secretary-General was to draw up on services provided by the United Nations to activities funded from extrabudgetary resources, as the Advisory Committee indicated in paragraph 59 of its report (A/34/7), was due to be issued in mid-October, according to the documentation list in document A/C.5/34/L.1/Add.1.

49. Mr. RUDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) confirmed that the report in question would be issued in the very near future. The report would deal largely with the inclusion in the regular budget of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources, a procedure about which the representative of Yugoslavia, among others, had voiced concern. He pointed out that, in the final analysis, only the General Assembly had the power to authorize such measures. Whatever the outcome of the deliberations of the Governing Council of UNEP, any decision would require the approval of the Committee.

50. Mr. OKIYO (Kenya) said that he was anxious that the promised report should be issued quickly, because as soon as the Committee had seen it it would be able to establish a general policy that could be applied to the system as a whole.

51. His delegation supported the proposal of the representative of Libya that the Committee should not agree to the reduction in conference servicing costs recommended by the Advisory Committee. While it was true that Member States that had a mission or an embassy at Nairobi had direct access to UNEP documents, others had to have documents sent to them. To reduce an appropriation intended, among other things, for shipping documents by air mail could easily result in those concerned not receiving the documents in time.

52. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that he understood that the appropriation requested for the distribution of documents of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme did not represent a real increase, because table 18.6 of the proposed programme budget for the 1980-1981 biennium indicated that the appropriation made provision for anticipated inflation in 1980-1981. Implementation of the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would therefore result in negative growth. He requested confirmation of that point and asked what the current position was with regard to the distribution and dispatch of documents to missions and Governments and what the actual expenditure for that purpose had been during the 1978-1979 biennium.

53. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) observed that the Advisory Committee had recommended only a small reduction in the appropriation for sending documents of the UNEP Governing Council to Member States; the basic issue was to find a more economical method of distributing that documentation. His delegation was therefore of the view that it was too early to reject the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee inasmuch as the Secretariat had not yet reported on whether the reduction might mean that certain Member States would not receive UNEP documentation in time. It was also necessary for the documentation to be produced in time to be considered by Governments. His delegation felt, that, in any event it was impossible to know whether the funds requested were going to be adequate and that the Committee would have to wait until practical experience had been gained in the matter and the view of the Secretariat had been heard.

54. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division), replying to questions asked by the representative of Pakistan, said that he could not for the moment cite the exact amount of expenditure on distribution of UNEP Governing Council documentation in 1978-1979, in fact, the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General did not represent a real increase. The position with regard to the shipping of documentation was that, for a number of countries that had no representation in Nairobi, documentation was sent by air and, for Member States that had representation in Nairobi documentation was sent either to their permanent missions at Nairobi or to their Governments, also by air mail. In reply to the question asked by the representative of the United States, he said that the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee was something of a challenge and that, in any event, if the Committee approved that reduction, UNEP might need to be imaginative but it would still perform its work to the satisfaction of all States.

55. Mr. ZINIEL (Ghana) observed that the Committee did not know exactly what amount was needed for the distribution of the documentation of the UNEP Governing Council, since reconsideration of the question had been requested; he was inclined to agree with the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Kenya that it was still too early to take a decision to reduce the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General, and he therefore supported their proposal that the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee should be rejected.

56. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was astonished that other delegations were opposed to the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee. Unlike the Fifth Committee, the Advisory Committee had sufficient time to scrutinize the Secretary-General's estimates. Its decisions, taken after careful consideration, were all the more valid. He noted the statement by the Director, Budget Division that the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee, if approved by the Fifth Committee, would not prevent UNEP from distributing documents to Member States. Such a reduction would be in line with the economy measures advocated by Member States. Given the difficulty of foreseeing what the situation would be like in practice, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to reduce by \$39,800 the Secretary-General's estimates for distributing UNEP's Governing Council documents.

57. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) said that in the context of the budget as a whole, the recommended reduction was small, but it raised the principle of limiting the amount of documents issued within the United Nations system.

58. The Advisory Committee had noted that all the Governing Council's documents were sent to Governments by air and that a "more economical means of distributing the documentation in question" needed to be found. That amounted to reducing the amount of documents sent both to Governments and their respective missions in Nairobi. If the Secretariat anticipated any difficulties over the matter, any decision would have to be postponed until precise figures were available. Nevertheless, his delegation approved of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

59. Mr. OUATTARA (Ivory Coast) thought that the Fifth Committee was not sufficiently informed to reject the Advisory Committee's recommendation, particularly since it was unaware of the amount of expenditure committed for 1978-1979. If financial problems arose, the Secretary-General could always request additional appropriations at the end of the first year of the biennium. His delegation therefore supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

60. Mr. BEGIN (Director, Budget Division) said that the appropriations for the distribution of documents for the 1978-1979 financial year amounted to \$138,300, and that expenditure committed on 31 August 1979 was \$115,240, a reduction approximately 80 per cent of the former level.

61. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America) said that his delegation, even after hearing the figures quoted by the Director, Budget Division, still thought the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee justified. No budget could be absolutely precise as to the amount to be earmarked for any particular programme, and his delegation did not believe that the proposed reduction would prejudice any Government. His delegation would therefore support the Advisory Committee's recommendation and would vote against any proposal to restore the initial estimate.

62. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) agreed with the Soviet delegation on the Advisory Committee's competence. The proposed reduction was minimal, yet the distribution of documents was an important matter, particularly for countries which were not represented at Nairobi. His delegation thus intended to vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation, on the understanding that, if necessary, the Secretary-General could always request a further appropriation at a later date.

63. Mr. AGOSSOU (Benin) said that logically any reduction in the estimates should be postponed until a more economical means of distributing the documents had been found. The proposed reduction could be approved only if it was absolutely certain that the distribution of documents would not suffer.

64. Mr. MAROTO (Spain) stated that the proposed reduction amounted to 28.4 per cent of the initial estimate. His delegation thought that it was possible to find a more economical means of distributing UNEP's Governing Council documents. He agreed with those delegations in favour of the proposed reduction. Although the sum involved was minimal, it raised a question of principle.

65. Mr. RUEDAS (Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Services) said that it was impossible to determine precisely the size of appropriation required in practice, but the Secretariat submitted the best possible forecasts. If the Committee decided to reduce the estimate, the Secretary-General would make every effort to implement the whole of UNEP's programme within the limits of the resources made available. If the appropriation proved inadequate, he could appropriate surplus resources from another subprogramme.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.