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UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Even FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1983, the General Assembly decided to include in its agenda the item entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission". At its 4th plenary meeting, on the same day, the Assembly decided to allocate the item to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Committee had before it the ninth annual report of the International Civil Service Commission. <sup>1/</sup> Chapters II and VIII, section F, dealing respectively with a special index for pensioners, and retirement policy and the mandatory age of retirement, were considered in conjunction with agenda item 118, entitled, "United Nations pension system: report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board".

3. The Fifth Committee considered this item at its 28th, 31st, 33rd, 38th, 41st, 42nd, 49th, 50th, 61st, 62nd, and 65th and 67th meetings, on 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 18 and 29 November and 12 to 15 December. Comments made in the course of the discussion of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (see A/C.5/38/SR.28, 31, 33, 38, 41, 42, 49, 50, 61, 62, and 65-67).

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<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/38/30 and Add.1).

## II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

4. At the 61st meeting, on 12 December, the representative of Canada introduced a draft resolution (A/C.5/38/L.17), sponsored by Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and Venezuela.

5. At the 62nd meeting, on 12 December, the representative of Morocco introduced an amendment (A/C.5/38/L.23) to draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17, consisting of the addition of a new section reading as follows:

"Decides to amend article 6, paragraph 2, of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission to read:

"2. No member of the Commission may participate in the deliberations of any organ of the organizations on any matter within the competence of the Commission unless the Commission has requested him or her to do so as its representative. Nor shall a member of the Commission serve as an official or consultant of any such organization during his or her term of office."

6. Also at the 62nd meeting, the representative of the United States of America introduced the following amendments (A/C.5/38/L.20) to draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17.

(a) Add following new paragraph 1 to section II, and renumber other paragraphs accordingly:

"1. Regrets that the Commission was unable to make corrections in the current post-adjustment classification at certain duty stations in spite of the fact that the post adjustments were found to be higher than those which the results of the new cost-of-living survey could justify."

(b) Add following new subparagraph (e) to section III, paragraph 3:

"(e) Requests the Commission to conduct a study of the education grant, the purpose of which is to facilitate a child's reassimilation in the staff member's home country, and to report on the results of the study to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session."

(c) Add new section IX as follows:

"Invites the Executive Heads of the United Nations system to make a greater use of their authority to extend appointments beyond the normal age of retirement in cases where such extensions are in the interest of the Organization."

7. At the 65th meeting, on 14 December, the representative of the United States of America revised his amendments by replacing the word "Regrets" in the first amendment with the word "Concerned" and by replacing the word "is" in the second draft amendment with the word "was". At the same time, he withdrew the third amendment.

8. At the 66th meeting, on 15 December, the representative of Morocco withdrew his amendment (A/C.5/38/L.23) in favour of the following separate draft decision submitted by the representative of Egypt:

"The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to consult with the organizations members of the common system of the United Nations on the proposal in document A/C.5/38/L.23 [annexed] and to report on the results of those consultations to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session."

9. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed to amend the draft decision submitted by Egypt by inserting the following words after the words "United Nations":

", and the International Civil Service Commission, bringing to their attention, inter alia, the discussions in the Fifth Committee,".

### III. DECISIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

10. At its 65th meeting, on 14 December, the Committee adopted the first amendment in document A/C.5/38/L.20 (see para. 6 (a)), as orally revised, by 32 votes to 21, with 32 abstentions.

11. The Committee then adopted the second amendment in document A/C.5/38/L.20 (see para. 6 (b)), as orally revised, by 63 votes to 13, with 15 abstentions.

12. At its 66th meeting, on 15 December, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/38/L.17, as amended, by 91 votes to 9, with 5 abstentions (see para. 17).

13. Statements in explanation of vote were made by the representatives of Bolivia, Cuba, Ethiopia, the German Democratic Republic and Mexico. The representatives of Pakistan and Venezuela explained their position in consequence of the adoption of the amendments in document A/C.5/38/L.20.

14. At the 67th meeting, on 15 December, the Committee adopted, by 37 votes to 10, with 14 abstentions, the amendment proposed by the representative of the United States of America (see para. 9) to the draft decision submitted by Egypt.

15. The Committee then adopted the draft decision submitted by Egypt, as amended, by 24 votes to 6, with 37 abstentions (see para. 18).

16. The representatives of the Bahamas, Mexico and Morocco explained their position.

### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

17. 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 with appreciation the annual report of the International Civil Service Commission, 2/

Reaffirming the central role of the Commission within the common system in the development of a single unified international civil service through the application of common personnel standards and arrangements,

Reaffirming the importance of respect for these common standards and arrangements by all organizations members of the common system,

I

1. Urges all organizations concerned to implement the decisions of the International Civil Service Commission and to act positively on the recommendations of the Commission in accordance with its statute;

2. Urges the executive heads of organizations concerned, after consultation with the Commission, to report to their respective governing bodies such decisions or proposals as would modify the recommendations of the Commission;

3. Calls upon all organizations of the common system to bring to the attention of the Commission all matters relating to salaries, allowances, benefits and other conditions of employment so as to ensure their uniform application throughout the common system;

4. Reaffirms the principles embodied in the statute of the Commission as approved in General Assembly resolution 3357 (XXIX), in particular article 6 thereof, and requests Governments, secretariats and staff associations to co-operate in this regard;

5. Approves the development of the special index for pensioners as recommended by the Commission in paragraph 15 (a) of its report;

6. Takes note of the current status of the margin between the remuneration of the United States federal civil service and that of the United Nations system;

7. Requests the Commission to complete, in close consultation with the United States authorities concerned, the study of the equivalency between the

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2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/38/30/Add.1).

higher grade levels of the United Nations system and the Senior Executive Service of the United States federal civil service and report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session;

8. Notes the progress made to date concerning the comparison of total compensation based on non-expatriate benefits applicable on both sides, and requests the Commission to inform the General Assembly, on an annual basis, of the margin between the remuneration of the United Nations employees and those of the United States federal civil service on this total compensation basis;

## II

1. Concerned that the International Civil Service Commission was unable to make corrections in the current post adjustment classification at certain duty stations in spite of the fact that the post adjustments were found to be higher than those which the results of the new cost-of-living survey could justify;

2. Notes the efforts by the Commission to improve the post-adjustment system and requests the Commission in this regard to expedite, in particular, the application of the revised methodology for cost-of-living measurement, called for in General Assembly resolution 34/165 of 17 December 1979, in order to improve the mechanism for adjusting United Nations remuneration to reflect more accurately the differences in cost of living at various duty stations;

3. Calls upon the executive heads of organizations and staff of the United Nations common system to co-operate fully with the Commission in the application of the post-adjustment system;

4. Notes the introduction by the Commission, with effect from 1 April 1983, of a rental subsidy scheme for staff in the Professional and higher categories at Headquarters and other duty stations not previously covered by a subsidy scheme;

5. Requests the Commission to monitor this rental subsidy scheme with a view to ensuring both its equity and its effectiveness;

## III

1. Recalls its resolution 2480 B (XXIII) of 29 December 1968 on the language incentives in the United Nations;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session a report on the status of the linguistic skills of United Nations staff, including the effects of the language incentive programme, and to propose, if necessary, further measures to improve the present situation;

3. Decides that:

(a) The education grant for eligible staff members should be set at a level of 75 per cent of the cost of attendance at an educational institution in respect of expenses up to a maximum of \$6,000 per year, with a maximum reimbursement of \$4,500 per child per year;

(b) The reimbursement rate for disabled children shall be set at 100 per cent of a maximum of \$6,000 for expenses at an educational institution;

(c) The limit of allowable boarding costs within the overall maximum allowable expenditure of \$6,000 shall be raised to \$1,500 per year;

(d) Provision should be made to use a currency floor for this grant, using exchange rates effective 1 March 1983, to ensure the maintenance of equitable reimbursement of education costs among duty stations;

(e) Requests the International Civil Service Commission to conduct a study of the education grant, the purpose of which was to facilitate a child's reassimilation in the staff member's home country, and to report on the results of the study to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

#### IV

1. Takes note of the decision of the International Civil Service Commission to modify, with effect from 1 September 1983, the non-resident's allowance provisions to make the allowance payable for a fixed duration of five years at designated duty stations and to make it non-pensionable, subject to the protection of acquired rights as set out in paragraph 63 of the report of the Commission;

2. Requests the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board to review article 54 (a) of the regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund in the light of the Commission's decision and to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session;

3. Decides that, in the meantime, the modified non-resident's allowance will not be pensionable;

#### V

1. Requests the International Civil Service Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of after-service health care coverage with particular attention to locally-recruited field staff;

2. Approves the Commission's recommendation that the present non-contributory system of death-grant benefits be continued inasmuch as it provides benefits in the most cost-effective manner;

#### VI

1. Recalls section IV of its resolution 37/126 of 17 December 1982 and reaffirms its support for the overall approach envisaged by the Commission which aims at the development of policies for an integrated personnel management system, based on human resources planning, to assist organizations in achieving their programme objectives in an efficient manner, while providing improved conditions for career development;

2. Welcomes the decision taken by the Commission to establish job classification standards under article 13 of its statute for locally-recruited staff in field offices where several of the organizations employ staff in common areas of work;

3. Expresses its satisfaction that job classification standards have been developed for the General Service and related categories in New York, and requests the organizations concerned to co-ordinate their implementation of these standards in order to utilize fully the opportunities they provide for improved job design, recruitment, career planning and training;

4. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to develop a common approach to skills inventories on an inter-organizational basis;

5. Recommends that the organizations normally dispense with the requirement for a probationary appointment as a prerequisite for a career appointment following a period of five years' satisfactory service on fixed-term contracts;

6. Further requests the Commission to pursue its mandate under article 14 of its statute, in consultation with organizations and staff, with regard to the development of common training, recruitment and promotion policies for the organizations and to report thereon to the General Assembly as each phase of its studies is completed;

#### VII

Notes the progress made to date by the International Civil Service Commission in its review of conditions of service in the field and requests the Commission to keep the General Assembly informed of further developments in its review;

#### VIII

Requests the Commission to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session on the question of longevity and merit steps in the various grade levels.

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18. The Fifth Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

#### Statute of the International Civil Service Commission

The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to consult with the organizations members of the common system of the United Nations and the International Civil Service Commission, bringing to their attention, inter alia, the discussions in the Fifth Committee, on the proposal in document A/C.5/38/L.23, annexed to the present decision, and to report on the results of those consultations to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

ANNEX

(Document A/C.5/38/L.23)

MOROCCO: draft decision

The General Assembly decides to amend article 6, paragraph 2 of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission 3/ to read:

"2. No member of the Commission may participate in the deliberations of any organ of the organizations on any matter within the competence of the Commission unless the Commission has requested him or her to do so as its representative; nor shall a member of the Commission serve as an official or consultant of any such organization during his or her term of office."

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3/ General Assembly resolution 3357 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974, annex.