



General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
19 April 2007

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 46th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 April 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yousfi (Algeria)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Saha

Contents

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

*Note verbale dated 22 March 2007 from the Office of the President of the
General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee
(continued)*

Agenda item 116: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial
functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Questions deferred for future consideration

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed sixty-
first session of the General Assembly

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.



The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (continued)

Note verbale dated 22 March 2007 from the Office of the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (continued) (A/C.5/61/20)

1. **Ms. McGrath** (Ireland) introduced an oral draft decision (subsequently issued as draft decision A/C.5/61/L.46 on the financing of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women), resulting from the informal consultations that she had coordinated following the withdrawal, at the previous meeting of the Committee, of draft decision A/C.5/61/L.38 on future operations of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (see A/C.5/61/SR.45).

2. **Mr. Rashkow** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of his delegation's position, said that the sudden and unexpected introduction, on the penultimate day of the first part of the resumed sixty-first session, of a draft decision regarding a matter not scheduled for discussion had been contrary to the practice of the Committee. Notably, the absence of an official report from the Secretariat containing well-researched, accurate and complete information on the financial and cash-flow situations of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and the absence of a substantive assessment and recommendation of the Advisory Committee, were entirely inconsistent with Committee procedures.

3. Despite recent reminders from a number of delegations of the need to adhere strictly to established procedures, the Committee had demonstrated its readiness to ignore such procedures completely in order to rescue a voluntarily funded organization whose main supporters had failed to honour their pledges. His delegation hoped that, having acted so rapidly and decisively on the current matter, the Committee would act just as rapidly and decisively on the matter of future reform efforts.

4. Having approved a proposed programme plan and operational budget for 2007 of \$1.525 million on the basis of pledges of only \$325,011 (see document INSTRAW/EB/2006/R.4/Rev. 1), the Executive Board of the Institute should perhaps rethink its priorities on

the basis of the voluntary contributions available. Subventions for the Institute were never intended to become an annual ritual. In the light of its concerns, his delegation felt compelled to dissociate itself from the draft decision before the Committee.

5. **Mr. Woeste** (Germany), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union, said that the withdrawal of the earlier draft decision (A/C.5/61/L.38) had enabled the Committee to return to a course of action compatible with the wishes expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 and to hold informal consultations which had succeeded in achieving a consensus in an atmosphere of friendship and trust.

6. **Mr. Debabeche**, explaining his delegation's position, applauded the success of the Committee's efforts to reach a solution on the matter in question. The Institute was vital, and should continue to operate under the able leadership of its Director, Ms. Moreno.

7. *The draft decision was adopted.*

8. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation wished to reiterate its view that the activities of the Institute must be financed in accordance with its statute, solely by voluntary contributions from Member States, not from the regular budget. Continuous subventions from the regular budget cast doubt on some Member States' commitment to budgetary discipline and to better management of United Nations resources.

9. The current subvention must be considered exceptional and the final measure of its kind. If some Member States called for it to be repeated, his delegation would have no choice but to pursue an alternative solution within the wider context of reform of the Organization, including the phasing-out of the Institute. The Fifth Committee should not continue to take up the issue of the financing of the Institute under the agenda item regarding the programme budget.

10. **Ms. Soni** (Canada), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the CANZ group of countries (Australia, Canada and New Zealand), said that the regular budget of the Organization should not be used as a source of funding for the Institute. While CANZ recognized that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/229 on future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, had decided to provide the Institute with

resources for the biennium 2006-2007, that subvention should be the last. The Committee must be explicit in that regard when it considered the matter at the second part of the resumed sixty-first session.

11. While CANZ acknowledged the extenuating circumstances surrounding the draft decision placed before the Committee, it believed that established working methods should be respected and that the practice of seeking consensus through negotiation should continue. By withdrawing the original draft decision, its sponsors had paved the way for a solution which was compatible with those principles.

12. **Mr. Simancas** (Mexico) said that his delegation welcomed the successful result of the informal consultations on the matter in question. While he did not wish to dwell unduly on the causes of the current situation, he wished to recall that, at the previous session of the General Assembly, the Committee had been unable to proceed as normal with its consideration of the programme budget implications of draft proposals.

13. While the delegations had expressed their views clearly during the informal consultations, they would have further opportunity to discuss the Institute at the second part of the resumed sixty-first session, as the draft decision just adopted requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the financial situation of the Institute for 2007 at that time.

14. **Mr. Hussain** (Pakistan), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the consensus reached on an already difficult issue made yet more difficult by some of the views reiterated at the current meeting. His Group found it difficult to understand the reluctance of some delegations to lend their support to the Institute, a United Nations body whose research and training activities helped to promote a core objective of the organization: gender empowerment and achieving an equal staffing ratio between men and women.

15. The Group had never tried to break with Fifth Committee custom regarding the process of considering budget matters, and in fact actively endeavoured to preserve the integrity of that process. It had explained at length the Institute's impending financial crisis, which left few options for action. Having taken account of the concerns of a number of delegations, the Group had taken the action it considered appropriate and had been relieved to see its

gesture reciprocated with the necessary flexibility. While the Group was not fully comfortable with the compromise which had emerged from the informal consultations on the matter, it understood the time constraints involved.

16. While a more sustainable basis must be found for financing the activities of the Institute, its statute clearly explained how the Institute was related to, and could seek financial support from, the United Nations. The Group was concerned that, taking a view conflicting with its own, some delegations believed that the statute left the Institute with no recourse to financial support. The Group hoped that, once the Committee had received the report of the Secretary-General and the related views of the Advisory Committee, it would be better placed to take a more reasonable, well-argued and well-considered decision that was in the interests of the Institute and enabled it to continue its valuable work. The Group also hoped to find ways to encourage voluntary contributions to the Institute and to ensure that contributions pledged were actually honoured.

17. **Mr. Fermín** (Dominican Republic), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the Rio Group, welcomed the agreement reached on the matter of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and hoped that, once the Committee had received the reports expected at the second part of the resumed sixty-first session, discussions on the Institute would not be protracted.

18. His Group deeply regretted that, for reasons beyond its control, the request of the Institute's Executive Board for documents to be made available during the current session of the General Assembly in all official languages, as relayed in the annex to the note verbale addressed to the Chairman (A/C.5/61/20), had remained unfulfilled. The aim of that request had been to ensure that the Committee could take the necessary action to provide financial support for the biennium 2006-2007, in accordance with the mandate established by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/229.

19. His Group praised the Institute's Director, whose work had made important contributions to gender equality in developed and developing countries alike, as well as its Executive Board, which had demonstrated the significance which the Member States attached to the functions, continuity and stability

of the Institute. The Committee had a responsibility to continue providing that body with a sound financial basis, so that it could properly conduct its research and promotion activities, which were fundamental tools in the advancement of women throughout the world.

Agenda item 116: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Questions deferred for future consideration
(A/C.5/61/L.45)

Draft decision A/C.5/61/L.45: Questions deferred for future consideration

20. *Draft decision A/C.5/61/L.45 was adopted.*

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed sixty-first session of the General Assembly

21. **The Chairman** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.