



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SEKYE (Ghana)

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 106: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued)

General Service staff of the United Nations and Geneva-based specialized agencies
(continued) (A/32/327, A/33/7, paras. 43-47, A/33/129)

1. Mr. WEBB (Director, Division of Personnel Administration), replying to points raised during the discussion of the item, said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/32/327) had already been submitted to the International Civil Service Commission; the General Assembly might, however, wish to ask the Secretary-General to submit the report to the Commission on a formal basis.
2. The United States Civil Service was currently used as the comparator civil service for the purpose of establishing appropriate salary scales for members of the Professional category at the United Nations. It was only recently that ICSC had begun to formulate comparisons on the basis of such factors as working hours. The United Nations was not consistent in the application of fixed working hours, preferring rather to follow local practices while setting the same working week for all categories of staff. Headquarters was at present the only duty station where a working week of less than 40 hours was in effect. The shorter week was intended in part to take account of the time spent commuting to and from work in New York; but it was also important to note that Professional staff members were frequently called upon to work beyond the end of the normal working day, and under existing arrangements they were not entitled to any additional payment or time off in lieu for such extra duty.
3. No information had been provided on the number of people taking and passing language examinations within the United Nations because with the existing computer system it was not possible to encode such information for all the nearly 5,000 staff members involved. Statistics compiled by hand, however, indicated that in the fall term of 1976 just under 70 per cent of all the staff members who had registered for language courses had taken the end-of-term examinations. Of those who had dropped out, some had never attended any classes after registering, while others had found the courses too demanding or had been too busy with their other responsibilities. The drop-out rate in the fall term was always higher owing to the demands the General Assembly made on staff members. The over-all completion rate for language courses was around 75 per cent. The average pass rate for the language proficiency examination since 1974 had been just under 67 per cent.
4. Replying to the contention that the examinations for admission to clerical posts at Headquarters showed a distinct cultural bias, he said that the examinations would in future exclude all general knowledge questions, concentrating simply on the skills necessary for an efficient discharge of duties. The new examination was being tried out on a number of staff members whose performance was a matter of record.

AGENDA ITEM 110: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(A/33/176, A/C.5/33/CRP.1 and 2)
- (b) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(A/33/228, A/C.5/33/2)

AGENDA ITEM 106: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued) (A/33/105)

Women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system
(continued) (A/33/105)

5. Mr. AL SHARAFI (Yemen) affirmed the need for observance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the composition of Secretariat and in the recruitment of staff. The qualities of competence, efficiency and integrity were to be found in developing countries, and for such countries implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution guaranteed the opportunity for their nationals to participate in the work of the Organization. It was deplorable, therefore, that some States, including his own, which had been Members of the Organization since the 1940s were still under-represented or even unrepresented.

6. Women played a preponderant and responsible role in developing countries and should hold important positions in the Secretariat also. Similarly, young people, the hope of the future, must be allowed to contribute more to the work of the United Nations. His delegation supported holding examinations for recruitment from unrepresented and under-represented countries.

7. Mr. BELEYI (Togo) said that the principle of equitable geographical distribution as set out in Article 101 of the Charter must be scrupulously respected and applied. It was only fair, therefore, to give priority to recruiting staff from Member States which were under-represented or unrepresented at the higher levels of the Secretariat. In view of Africa's increasing political importance, that continent's poor representation must be urgently remedied. His own country still had no women working in the Secretariat.

8. Serious efforts must be made to increase the number of women employed at the higher levels by giving greater priority to recruiting women with the necessary qualifications and abilities. Arrangements concerning maternity leave and part-time work should also be made more flexible, in order to make posts more accessible to women. Merit should be the criterion governing the appointment of all women to the Professional category.

9. In his delegation's view, a clear and rigorous definition of posts was urgently needed to put an end to the disparities in treatment between General Service staff at Headquarters and those at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The use of the candidates' roster must be encouraged, and priority must be given to candidates from under-represented and unrepresented developing countries, and to young and female applicants. Vacant posts should be widely advertised, and recruitment missions should be sent to the countries concerned.

10. His delegation favoured recruitment on the basis of competitive selection in the case of young professionals with a suitable degree and the necessary qualifications. A number of new posts and posts becoming vacant through retirement should be set aside in order to guarantee the successful candidate's employment.

11. Staff rotation should serve the interests of the Organization and not be simply a means to promotion. Promotion should be based on an assessment of the merits of the staff member concerned.

12. United Nations staff must possess the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. His delegation unreservedly supported the recommendations made by JIU in document A/33/228.

13. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that if the objectives of the United Nations Charter were to be attained, the countries of the third world and the least developed countries must be given adequate opportunities to play their part in the United Nations system. Since the problems faced by the world community sprang from the woes of the third world, it was only natural that the issues could be best understood and analysed by those directly affected.

14. Current personnel policy in the United Nations, which treated the least developed countries and those of the third world on the same footing as the developed countries, could be improved upon. The countries of the third world should receive preferential treatment and should have greater scope to place their qualified citizens in international civil service posts throughout the United Nations system. It was to be hoped that the issues of regular competitive examinations on a regional basis and adherence to the principle of equitable geographical distribution could be interpreted so as to accommodate the third world countries, and especially the least developed countries, on a preferential basis.

15. His delegation was gratified to note the attention accorded in the Committee to the recruitment of women. It believed that all Members, especially the developing countries, should make efforts to encourage the employment of women in professional occupations and at all levels of their national administrations, thereby making available a greater stock of candidates to work within the United Nations. It favoured the employment of women in the Professional category and the strict observance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution when recruiting candidates from amongst those who were successful in competitive examinations at the national level.

16. The United Nations must be a model of equity, fair play and good conscience. It must have machinery to evaluate the performance of its staff. Similarly, some means should be evolved to check arbitrariness in recruitment and disparities in the composition of the Secretariat in order to bring about better co-operation and understanding between Member States.

17. Mr. THEODORACOPOULOS (Greece) expressed disappointment that no substantial progress had been made in improving the representation of unrepresented and under-represented States, as the current situation conflicted with the provisions of

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Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. In his delegation's view, the competent departments of the Secretariat should draw up a new programme to ensure the recruitment of nationals from such countries. In that context, he agreed with JIU recommendations Nos. 2, 4 and 5 in document A/33/228, and emphasized the importance of adopting measures to increase recruitment from under-represented countries and of women and young people, as outlined in recommendation No. 3 of the same report.

18. It was regrettable also that no real progress had been made as far as recruiting women to the Secretariat was concerned. The parallel drawn by some delegations with the women's campaign for equal rights was a fair one: women should have the right to participate on an equal basis with men in the work of the United Nations Secretariat.

19. His delegation supported recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 in document A/33/105. It could not, however, accept recommendation 8 in that report, since the procedure proposed ran counter to the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

20. Mr. JOHNSON (Ecuador) said that, after endless discussions and directives, there were still no substantial results in the recruitment of women to senior posts in the Secretariat. Ecuador could not agree with recommendation 8 in Inspector Sohm's report (A/33/105) that for a trial period the appointment of women should be considered without regard to geographical distribution. It was not true that geographical distribution was an obstacle to the recruitment of more women. The principle of equitable geographical distribution could not be dropped; all countries should be represented on the Secretariat staff and participate in its work. That principle was clearly laid down in various General Assembly resolutions. He was very surprised to see that some countries which had more than their share of women nationals in Professional posts in the Secretariat should be pressing the Secretary-General for still more posts. It appeared that in such cases the persons recruited often did not fully meet the recruitment requirements. Such practices could only increase the existing imbalance, which had prevailed for too long. The recent recruitment missions had not solved the problem, since the recruitment of women graduates and young professional people was still inadequate. There were still people in the Secretariat in the Professional category who did not have the required qualifications. In promotion there should be strict rules, strictly observed, aimed at correcting the present imbalance and providing more posts for women. He hoped that additional steps would be taken to recruit young candidates, especially from developing countries.

21. Ecuador welcomed some of the proposals in the JIU report by Inspector Bertrand (A/33/228), particularly recommendation No. 4, which advocated that in the Professional category a link should be established between rotation between duty stations and promotion possibilities, and recommendation No. 5, which suggested that the use of competitive selection methods should be developed for young Professional staff. Those recommendations, if they commanded the support of all Member States, should help to establish a sound administrative career.

22. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal) said that the desire of all Member States to be represented adequately in the Secretariat attested to their confidence in the

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(Mr. Khatri, Nepal)

Organization and the importance they attached to its work. It was regrettable, therefore, that a sizable number of States were either unrepresented or under-represented. While maintenance of the highest standards of efficiency, integrity and competence was essential to an effective international civil service, the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be strictly applied. His delegation fully shared the view that qualified candidates were not to be found in a few countries only.

23. Another disquieting aspect of the personnel situation was the decrease in the number of women in the Secretariat, a development that was highlighted by the JIU report on women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system (A/33/105). The explanation that the imbalance in the number of males and females employed in the Secretariat was largely the result of a dearth of qualified female candidates was not entirely satisfactory. Countries which had qualified women, including his own, were not adequately represented in the United Nations or other organizations of the system. His delegation would unreservedly support any effort to improve the proportion of women employed in the system.

24. He noted with satisfaction that considerable progress had been made in implementing the personnel policy reforms approved by the Assembly and that the reforms would be substantially carried out by the end of the year. The planned introduction of competitive examinations for passage from the General Service to the Professional category would be a positive step. His delegation endorsed the proposals of JIU on the movement of Professional staff between duty stations (A/33/228, recommendation No. 4), which was in keeping with the aim of an international civil service that was familiar with the broad range of problems besetting the international community.

25. The effectiveness of the United Nations depended not only on the political will of Member States to solve international problems within the framework of the Organization but also on the efficiency and objectivity with which the decisions of intergovernmental bodies were implemented by the international civil service. It was therefore essential to carry out personnel reforms with the utmost care and fairness. As the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report on the work of the Organization, far more attention should be paid to identifying factors which hindered the attainment of high productivity and the maintenance of high standards by the Secretariat, as well as to ensuring suitable career development for all staff (cf. A/33/1, part XI).

26. Mr. LUVUEZO-BIZUELE (Zaire) said that the long list of speakers on item 110 showed the great importance attached to the subject of personnel questions, particularly in terms of its relationship to the universality of the United Nations. In the debate there had been broad agreement on the need for the largest possible degree of geographical representation, the desirability of a balance between men and women on the Secretariat staff, and recruitment for senior posts on the basis of competitive examinations.

27. He wished to confine his comments to the composition of the Secretariat, and to deal first with the imbalance in the representation of Member States in the Secretariat. It was unacceptable that most of the under-represented countries

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should be African countries. Table 9 in the annex to the Secretary-General's report (A/33/176) showed that out of 23 countries that were not represented on the Secretariat, 11 were African, which meant that 50 per cent of the unrepresented countries came from only one of the five continents. Africa was also penalized in terms of the level of posts, since the same table showed that most of the officials of African countries occupied posts in the P-1 to P-5 range. That trend was all too likely to continue as long as the practice of reserving certain posts at the senior level for particular countries was maintained. It should also be noted that Africans who did obtain senior posts found that those posts were deprived of their real substance.

28. As to the representation of women, the situation of women in general and of African women in particular was far from satisfactory. He warmly welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to take steps to ensure a more equitable balance between men and women officials in the Secretariat before the end of the Second United Nations Development Decade.

29. His delegation considered that at present the recruitment of Secretariat staff was discriminatory, and supported all efforts to ensure a better geographical distribution among the staff and more effective recruitment. He welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to organize in 1979 a regional competitive examination for the nationals of African countries which were unrepresented.

30. Mr. ABANKWA (Ghana) said that in an address at a luncheon given by the United Nations Correspondents Association last September, the Secretary-General had expressed some thoughts about the mood of the United Nations. He had said that there was a tendency for that mood to be described as either optimistic or pessimistic, but had added that optimism and pessimism were not relevant qualities for the Organization: realism, commitment and determination to make progress were far more to the point.

31. The Ghanaian delegation considered that realism in examining the question of personnel in the United Nations Secretariat could only lead to the conclusion that there was over-representation of developed countries linked with the concept of so-called large contributions. It was evident that the developed countries were determined to perpetuate the situation by such means as inheritance of posts and the promotion of older General Service staff into the lower grades of the Professional category. It might be said that Ghana was over-represented, but its so-called over-representation could hardly be likened to that of a developed country paying a large contribution which had the power and determination to perpetuate the present situation. How many developing Member States had the ability to keep any post in the Secretariat as its sole preserve? What developing Member State could inherit posts at the very top level of the Secretariat and at the same time insist on recruitment of its young nationals at lower levels through examinations which might be conducted solely for the nationals of that particular Member State? Ghana might be over-represented but, just as the late President of the Republic of Ghana had said on the eve of independence that Ghana's independence would be meaningless unless it was linked with the total liberation of the African continent, so Ghana considered today that its representation in the United Nations system would be meaningless unless it was linked with the equitable representation of all developing nations. It was always being claimed that the programmes of the United Nations were designed to help the developing countries to develop. That should be borne in mind by those Member States which, having a head-start /...

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advantage in the distribution of posts in the Secretariat, and the determination to maintain the status quo, exerted pressure on the Secretary-General to increase their own advantage.

32. Several speakers had complained that the measures pursued in the Fifth Committee throughout the years to achieve balanced representation in the Secretariat had not produced the expected results. The reason was simple. The determination to achieve those objectives had not matched the determination of those whose advantage lay in maintaining the status quo.

33. Another reason for the lack of progress was the confusion created by legislative guidance. Over the years General Assembly resolutions had dealt with various aspects of the composition of the Secretariat and with policies to guide the Secretary-General in the selection of staff. As stated in paragraph 2 of document A/33/176, those policies were not always consistent and had received varying emphasis over the years. Consequently the Secretary-General had elected to exercise his discretion, as indicated in paragraph 3 of the same report, but without sufficient regard for the realities of the situation. The Organization, accordingly, must redefine its objectives and give clear-cut directives.

34. With respect to discrimination against women, he wished to say that in his country there had never been any such discrimination in employment. In fact, most women in Ghana worked for themselves and had substantial economic power. Accordingly, Ghana's views on the employment of women in the Secretariat were similar to those put forward by Trinidad and Tobago and many other countries. Ghana considered the idea of targets proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit as not only unnecessarily rigid but also as a ready excuse for over-represented Member States to exert undue pressure on the Secretary-General to pursue a policy that would be disadvantageous to the great majority of Member States. Ghana supported the full participation and equitable representation of women at all levels in the United Nations system but it did not believe that that could be achieved by a system which sought to rob Peter to pay Paul.

35. Another possible source of confusion in the General Assembly's guidance to the Secretary-General was the over-emphasis on youth. Ghana had said at the previous session that it was concerned to see developing countries duly represented, especially at the decision-making levels in the Secretariat, but whether that representation could be achieved through the employment of younger or older people was beside the point. Ghana recognized that emphasis on youth, like emphasis on the employment of women, could very well work against the legitimate aspirations of all Member States to be represented in the Secretariat.

36. As to the inheritance of posts at the senior level in the Secretariat, his delegation would have been happier if the Secretary-General had qualified his statement in paragraph 11 of document A/33/170 when he said that "whenever a post at this level becomes vacant, the task of the Secretary-General is often made more difficult by the fact that the Member States whose nationals vacate the post nearly always offer another of its nationals at the same level as successor in the post"; surely that was not true of all Member States. At the present session the

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many should persuade the few to join them in ensuring that that practice was discontinued once and for all. Ghana was anxiously awaiting the statistics requested by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on the nationalities of persons who had vacated and filled posts at the D-1 level and above for the past ten years.

37. At the thirty-second session Ghana's attention had been drawn to a decision of the Staff Council at the United Nations Geneva Office concerning discrimination against nationals of developing countries in the recruitment of General Service staff in Geneva. He was fully aware that the recruitment of General Service staff in the Secretariat in either New York or Geneva was not based on the same principle as that of the Professional staff, but he hoped that those responsible in Geneva for recruiting General Service staff realized that they worked on behalf of an international organization, and would not make the mistake of thinking that, because the Geneva Office was referred to as the European Office of the United Nations, only Europeans should be engaged as General Service staff. The Ghanaian delegation would continue to monitor the situation.

38. Ghana was rather disappointed with chapter V of the Secretary-General's report (A/33/176), dealing with the Panel to investigate allegations of discriminatory treatment. There was no mention of what might well be the basic problem of the Panel, namely lack of time, and also the possible conflict that there might be for Panel members between the demands of their functions on the panel and their career development. He hoped that the Panel would be given the necessary encouragement and resources to carry out its work.

39. Mr. EL AYADHI (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the members of the Group of 77, said that there had been many complaints during the debate by developing countries about their under-representation at the higher levels of the Secretariat, and the tables in the Secretary-General's report (A/33/176) fully bore out those complaints. The existing composition of the Secretariat did not accurately reflect either the present membership of the Organization or the principles of the Charter. The figures for both men and women demonstrated that the developing countries were under-represented; for example, of all the women in D-2 posts, only one was from a developing country.

40. He did not know how far the Office of Personnel Services was responsible for that situation, but the authority of the Office should be increased so that it was protected from the pressures and manoeuvres referred to in some of the documents and by a number of delegations. Such manoeuvring did not result in sound management, and prevented the Secretary-General from undertaking the selection of senior officials on the basis laid down in the Charter and in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. All advice and suggestions given by the Office of Personnel Services to the Secretary-General should be in line with those principles and with the policies laid down by the General Assembly. The developing countries had no wish to interfere in the functions of the Secretariat, but unless there was some progress in the reform of those practices there should be serious consideration of an intergovernmental machinery to ensure that the General Assembly's decisions were respected and to help the Secretary-General to see that they were.

41. One particularly disturbing practice was the inheritance of senior posts. If that continued there would never be an African, a Latin American or an Asian in

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(Mr. El Ayaoui, Tunisia)

a senior post, since all those posts were held by nationals of developed countries. According to table 13 in the annex to document A/33/176, for example, there were only five Africans in D-2 posts in the Secretariat, whereas at the same grade there were 14 officials from Eastern Europe and 22 from Western Europe.

42. At a time when the North-South dialogue was being re-opened by general consent, the Tunisian delegation wished to deplore, on behalf of the Group of 77, the inequitable distribution of real responsibility in the Secretariat. It hoped that the Working Group on Personnel Questions would soon be able to put forward bold and constructive proposals to remedy all the existing imbalances. Members of the Group of 77 would themselves be submitting appropriate resolutions on the subject, with a view to achieving action on certain measures which deserved to be given the highest priority.

43. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services would make a statement the following week in order to reply to questions raised by delegations in the course of the debate and, in particular, to the questions asked by the representative of Austria at the 12th meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 109: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued)

(e) UNITED NATIONS ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (A/33/125 and A/C.5/33/26)

44. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Francisco Forteza of Uruguay and Mr. Endré Ustor of Hungary, members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal whose terms of office would expire on 31 December 1978, had been nominated for reappointment by their respective Governments.

45. Rule 92 of the rules of procedure required that all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, in accordance with the precedent established by the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee, the secret ballot could be dispensed with if there was no contest. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided that, since there were two candidates for two vacancies, the secret ballot could be dispensed with.

46. It was so decided.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to recommend Mr. Forteza and Mr. Ustor for appointment to the United Nations Administrative Tribunal for a three-year term beginning 1 January 1979.

48. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Establishment of an information services unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (continued) (A/33/7/Add.2, A/C.5/33/4, A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.2)

49. Mrs. MOSSBERG (Sweden) said that the third paragraph of the draft decision in document A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.2 had been revised to take into account the suggestions made by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic at the preceding meeting (A/C.5/33/SR.19, para. 32).

50. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that the revised draft decision took into account the comments made by all delegations, and he suggested that it should be adopted by consensus.

51. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) asked whether the Director of the Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Service (EDPIS) intended to reply to questions raised during the debate.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that the statement made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination at the preceding meeting (A/C.5/SR.33, paras. 27-31) had been prepared after consultation with the Director of EDPIS and had the latter's full approval. It did not seem necessary, therefore, for the Director of EDPIS to make a separate statement.

53. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that it would nevertheless be useful to have confirmation from the Director of EDPIS himself that the necessary co-ordination would be ensured.

54. Mr. SLAUGHTER (Director, Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Service) said that EDPIS and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (IESA) had begun discussions on co-ordination between the Information Services Unit (ISU) and other units responsible for information systems. A technical working party had already met and had agreed on a draft format for the entry of data which would be fully compatible with the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS). He therefore fully endorsed the statement which had been made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination at the preceding meeting.

55. Mr. KOTHARI (India) said that, while supporting the draft decision, his delegation wished to stress the importance of providing assistance to the many developing countries who lacked the technical infrastructure to take full advantage of ISU.

56. The CHAIRMAN said he would take it, if there was no objection, that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision in document A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.2 by consensus.

57. It was so decided.

58. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had not objected to the adoption of the draft decision on the understanding that the cost of maintaining ISU in future would not be transferred to the regular budget of the United Nations. A final decision on ISU, even within the framework of extrabudgetary resources, must be preceded by a consideration of the matter by the competent intergovernmental bodies and ACABQ.

59. Mr. KUYAMA (Japan) said his delegation had joined in the consensus on the draft decision. The question of co-ordination, however, should be the responsibility of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, and in that connexion he endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago at the preceding meeting (A/C.5/33/SR.19, para. 14).

Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations (continued) (A/C.5/33/L.6)

60. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.6.

61. Draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.6 was adopted by consensus.

62. Mr. PICO DE COAÑA (Spain) said that in his statement at the 18th meeting the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had not replied to a question asked by his delegation regarding the use of experts and consultants. The question did not, however, relate in any way to the draft resolution which had just been adopted and which his delegation fully supported. He nevertheless wished to know whether there was any possibility of receiving an answer at the current meeting.

63. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) suggested that the best course would be for the representative of Spain, and any other representatives who wished to receive supplementary information, to contact the Office of Personnel Services directly.

Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat (A/C.5/33/6)

64. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the Secretary-General's report on organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat (A/C.5/33/6) gave an account of the progress achieved to date in implementing the nomenclature proposals made in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session (A/C.5/32/17). The Secretary-General had established an interdepartmental working group to consider how best to apply the nomenclature proposals to the organizational elements listed in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/33/6. The recommendations of the working group dealt with organizational elements at level 1. Not all the proposals made by the working group had been approved by the Secretary-General and the elements in respect of which a final decision on the working group's recommendations had been deferred were indicated in paragraph 13 of the current report. Paragraph 17 indicated that the process of applying the new organizational nomenclature had

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(Mr. Davidson)

proved to be difficult and time-consuming and, for that reason the Secretary-General had decided to use a degree of flexibility in applying his nomenclature proposals, in line with the view expressed by ACABQ at the thirty-second session (A/32/8/Add.6, para. 7). Care should be taken to ensure that undue emphasis was not placed on the number of the staff in an organizational element or on the rank of the head of the element, at the expense of other considerations.

65. The Secretary-General had indicated, in paragraph 7 of his current report, that he would submit a further report at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, by which time he hoped to have completed the exercise. ACABQ hoped that it would be possible for the Secretary-General to indicate in that report the total impact of the application of the new nomenclature to the entire Secretariat.

66. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that the Secretary-General's report took important steps towards meeting the need, emphasized by the General Assembly at the thirty-second session, for a logical and coherent organizational nomenclature in the interest of a more rational and functional hierarchical structure. His delegation was appreciative of the work so far accomplished and expressed the hope that the final report of the Secretary-General would contain recommendations on all the areas that remained to be reviewed.

67. A rational organizational nomenclature should clarify the lines of authority and responsibility, should identify any overlapping or duplication and any top-heavy areas or officials at inflated grades and, by introducing greater organizational discipline, should make it more difficult to claim unjustified expansion of Secretariat units. His delegation was prepared to endorse the main thrust of the Secretary-General's report, subject to a few observations. It believed, as it had stated on 3 November 1977 (A/C.5/32/SR.34, para. 44) that the essential criteria in determining the designation of a given unit should be its position in the total structure of the Secretariat and, in particular, its relationship to the Secretary-General and to other parts of the Secretariat, and its degree of responsibility. It therefore saw some danger in an exclusive reliance on numerical criteria in determining the nomenclature to be used and believed that a distinction should be made between administrative and substantive units in respect of the weight to be given to the unit's size. However, the recognition of the qualitative element should not be considered as a licence to depart excessively from criteria based on quantitative elements.

68. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the use of the term 'centre' had been greatly reduced and looked forward to its further limitation. Although it would have preferred the term "branch" to be uniformly applied at level 4, it was prepared, with some reluctance, to accept the use of the term "service" to designate organizational elements at the same level. It was somewhat concerned about the parallel use at level 6 of the use of a number of special designations such as "laboratory", "platoon", "plant", etc., and was uneasy at the designation of "library" at level 6 as well as at level 3.

69. He was confident that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and

(Mr. Akashi, Japan)

Management, together with the Administrative Management Service, would persist in their serious efforts towards further rationalization of the structure of the Secretariat, in which task nomenclature was unquestionably an effective instrument. He noted that ultimately the Secretary-General alone was responsible to the General Assembly for the administrative management of the Secretariat, it was up to him, therefore, to apply the principles and methodology of organizational nomenclature to specific cases within the framework established by the General Assembly.

70. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) expressed the hope that the Under-Secretary-General would bear in mind some of the opinions expressed in the Committee, which might prove of help in the preparation of next year's report. His delegation fully endorsed the idea that it was important to establish a logical and rational nomenclature to avoid confusion and to make the structure of the Secretariat more comprehensible. It was important that rationality and functionality should govern the work of the Secretariat in the interests of the membership and of the important causes pursued by the United Nations. He considered, however, that the matter was ancillary to the truly important question of what the various offices were actually doing. If excessive importance were attached to the names of the different sections of the Secretariat, rivalry between offices might be created, which might eventually cause heads of units to attempt to acquire more staff and equipment. That would ultimately increase administrative costs and diminish the attention paid to the essential function of the departments, which was to assist, in a streamlined and smooth-working manner, the development of third world countries and the promotion of peace and social progress everywhere. He was dismayed at the number of different labels listed in paragraph 3 of the report and asked whether such a variety of names was really so necessary or important. He suggested that it would be simpler to adopt one name to apply throughout. Since many other organizational elements had not yet been decided and since the Secretary-General was to submit a final report, he expressed the hope that account would be taken of his suggestion for a uniform nomenclature. Although the work involved was difficult and time-consuming, the intricacies of the problem should not be allowed to cloud the real issue, which was not what the various units were called but what they did.

71. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) welcomed the Secretary-General's report and noted with satisfaction the work done by the interdepartmental working group and the Administrative Management Service. He noted that the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had still to be reviewed and expressed the hope that they would be given appropriate attention, since by their respective mandates they played an important role in the international economic order. He looked forward to the recommendations of the working group, to the final decision on the divisions listed in paragraph 13 of the report and to the recommendations on the offices which had still to be reviewed. He asked the Chairman of ACABQ to indicate the criteria applied by the Secretary-General when exercising flexibility and expressed the hope that the Secretary-General's final report would specify the administrative and financial implications of the organizational nomenclature.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.