



LIBRARY  
NOV 15 1977  
UN/SA COLLECTION

FIFTH COMMITTEE  
41st meeting  
held on  
Monday, 14 November 1977  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TALIEH (Iran)

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

CONTENTS

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

First reading (continued)

Section 2 - Political and Security Council affairs; peace-keeping activities

Section 3 - Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization

Section 21 - Public information (continued)

Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 103: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY: REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550.

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

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.5/32/SR.41  
17 November 1977  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)  
(A/32/6, A/32/8, A/32/38; A/C.5/32/12 and 13)

First reading (continued)

Section 2 - Political and Security Council affairs; peace-keeping activities

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary-General had requested an appropriation of \$50,559,300 for section 2. The Committee had agreed that an amount of \$8,600 should be deducted from the section for the reclassification of a post from the P-5 to the D-1 level. The Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$3,538,100, so that the total amount on which the Fifth Committee would vote in first reading would be \$47,012,600.
2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of \$3.5 million in the Secretary-General's estimate under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979. The greater part of that reduction - an amount of \$2.9 million - related to special missions. The other reductions recommended were: \$506,300 for UNRWA, \$88,500 for the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, and \$20,700 for policy-making organs.
3. With respect to the reduction for special missions, the Advisory Committee noted that the estimate for established posts in UNTSO included an amount of \$844,600 at 1978-1979 rates for 20 Field Service posts which had been vacant for some time and whose costs had not been included in the revised appropriations for 1976-1977. The Advisory Committee was therefore recommending that they should not be filled until the Secretary-General had reviewed the vacancy situation. Since those posts were still vacant, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the corresponding amount should be deducted from the estimate.
4. With regard to the estimate for the UNTSO military observers' allowance, the Advisory Committee considered that the assumed rate of inflation of 23.6 per cent was unjustified and was recommending that the estimate should be reduced by \$730,800. It was also recommending a reduction of \$695,100 for rent supplements under "Other common staff costs", and had made a similar recommendation with respect to UNMOGIP. The Advisory Committee would study at its 1978 spring session the question of the composition of common staff costs at different duty stations and would take a decision on the subject.
5. The Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of \$100,000 in the estimate of UNTSO furniture and equipment requirements and proposed that a more selective approach to the acquisition of furniture and equipment should be adopted. It had approved the Secretary-General's proposal to establish 18 local-level posts in UNTSO for daily paid workers. It had endorsed a similar request in respect of UNMOGIP.
6. With respect to UNRWA, the Advisory Committee had noted that the vacancy rate was above average and was recommending the application of a 10 per cent turnover deduction to existing UNRWA Professional posts instead of the 5 per cent deduction used in the estimates.

(Mr. Mselle)

7. In addition, the Advisory Committee was recommending some small reductions in the estimates for temporary assistance, consultants, travel, supplies and equipment, and contractual printing work.

Section 3 - Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization

8. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary-General had requested an appropriation of \$8,213,900 for section 3 and that the Committee had agreed to deduct from that sum an amount of \$8,600 corresponding to one reclassification from the P-5 to the D-1 level, pending a final decision on the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning reclassifications. Since the Advisory Committee had recommended no reductions for the section, the Fifth Committee would vote in first reading on an appropriation of \$8,205,300 for that section.

9. An appropriation in the amount of \$8,205,300 under section 3 for the biennium 1978-1979 was approved in first reading without objection.

Section 21 - Public information (continued)

10. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that the dual character of the United Nations as a mechanism for co-ordinating and harmonizing actions among nations, on the one hand, and as an embodiment of the ideals and aspirations of mankind for a more rational and humane society, on the other, imposed a tremendous strain upon the Secretariat officials responsible for public information. The Fifth Committee had over-all review functions with regard to public information activities, with the assistance of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, while expert review and critique were conducted by the Consultative Panel on Public Information. His delegation agreed that the Consultative Panel should be encouraged to formulate concrete recommendations and to meet for a longer period than the present two-day annual sessions.

11. The Fifth Committee was somewhat handicapped in its review of public information resources by the lack of information on the totality of related activities of a number of United Nations offices, such as UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNEP and the regional commissions. Such information should be included in future reports by the Secretary-General.

12. Even though considerable resources were devoted to public information, they were small in comparison with the enormous need for world-wide dissemination of knowledge about international co-operation. There was thus a clear need for a well-conceived strategy and tactics of public information in order not to dissipate resources and to focus on important areas. OPI would continue to be an indispensable tool in that regard.

13. The Japanese delegation expressed its appreciation to CPC for its recommendations on programme orientation and programme monitoring, but it could not completely accept the views of CPC regarding the issue of certain kinds of press releases, the conversion of the United Nations Chronicle from a monthly to a

/...

(Mr. Akashi, Japan)

quarterly publication, and the limitation of radio news. Nor could it agree that a lower priority should be given to short-wave broadcasting, in which there was an enormous interest in some geographical regions such as Latin America and Japan. In that connexion, his delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that one P-3 post should be granted in the Radio and Visual Services Division in order to strengthen the programme for Asia.

14. While Japan agreed with the general principle of decentralization, it felt that that principle had to be harmonized with the requirements of efficiency and the economical use of resources. Thus, while welcoming the establishment of new information centres in Zambia, Lesotho and Portugal, it emphasized that decentralization should not mean indiscriminate establishment of centres everywhere in the world. The Japanese delegation endorsed the ACABQ views on the transfer to the regular budget of four CESI posts financed by voluntary contributions, as recommended by the Secretary-General. The Japanese Government did not subscribe to the view that voluntary contributions should be used only for projects and not to finance staff costs, and paragraph 21.55 of the proposed programme budget (A/32/6, vol. II) was obviously incorrect.

15. Lastly, his delegation was concerned about the low priority given to the Office of Public Information, perhaps due mainly to the vagueness of its mandate, its unquantified impact and the absence of an intergovernmental body exclusively in charge of its programmes and activities. It was to be hoped that OPI would be even more conscious of the need for the most economic and efficient deployment of its limited resources, through periodic comprehensive rotation of staff between Headquarters and the information centres, between information centres themselves and between OPI and substantive departments.

16. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that OPI was a vital organ of the United Nations, which co-ordinated statements by delegations in the various committees and relayed them to correspondents all over the world. The dissemination of information on United Nations activities was extremely important, since the Organization was the only hope of mankind for maintaining international peace and security and avoiding another world conflict with catastrophic results. The problem did not lie with the correspondents, who faithfully reported on the work of the United Nations, but with those in charge of the information media, who served the interests of various groups regardless of any ideology. In the name of freedom of information, the mass communications media - mercenaries of the rich and powerful - placed a filter between news and the public, using for that purpose the weapons of slanting, scissors and silence. Those information media gave out not only facts but also opinions, and it was sometimes very difficult to distinguish between opinions and propaganda. The role of OPI should therefore be expanded, so that it could freely transmit information to all peoples of the world and they would not have to be brainwashed by national information media. It was necessary to overcome petty nationalisms and fully to inform the public about the activities being carried out by the United Nations in such important areas as disarmament, health, demography and development. The budget for information activities should

/...

(Mr. Baroody, Saudi Arabia)

therefore be increased, since a simple redeployment of resources was not enough and it was impossible to rely exclusively on voluntary contributions.

17. Speaking with reference to the discussion in the First Committee of a draft resolution which provided for the preparation of a periodical publication on disarmament, he said that he had proposed the addition of a new operative paragraph recommending that consideration should be given to the possibility of preparing a United Nations film illustrating the devastation, tragedy and suffering of war, which might be shown throughout the world in educational establishments and on television. The project could be financed by a tax levy on arms production in developed countries. Use could be made of existing material in the archives of a number of countries. That proposal would be of greater benefit than the growing number of resolutions which were resuscitated year after year. Although his idea might not begin to bear fruit in the short term, he urged all delegations to discuss the question with their Governments and the Chairman of the Committee to consult the Secretary-General about the possibility of setting up a committee to deal with the proposal and any action that the Secretariat might take to implement it.

18. Mr. ANDERSSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and his own country, said that the Nordic countries were among the small group of States which had made voluntary contributions to the Centre for Economic and Social Information (CESI) in the conviction that its activities were of great importance. However, they had repeatedly stated that they disagreed with the use of extrabudgetary resources to finance basic administrative costs and the publication of the periodical Development Forum and that, unless current practices were changed, they would have difficulty in continuing their contributions to CESI.

19. The Nordic countries welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal - which had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee - to transfer five posts to the regular budget and the present efforts to make Development Forum financially self-supporting over the next few years. Those developments opened up the possibility of applying future voluntary contributions to actual project costs, although that did not mean that future voluntary contributions were guaranteed. Unless administrative costs were transferred to the regular budget, resources for specific economic and social information projects would continue to be limited.

20. The Nordic countries were gratified by the efforts aimed at rationalizing the activities of CESI, thereby making a reduction of personnel possible.

21. Mr. NAUDY (France) said that, to date, the Fifth Committee's competence with respect to the Office of Public Information (OPI) had covered not only the budgetary and administrative aspects of OPI activities but also substantive questions. The Committee was therefore well aware of the difficulties which OPI faced in achieving its aims satisfactorily. The demands placed on OPI, whose sphere of action was extremely ill-defined, were becoming increasingly onerous; it was therefore necessary to determine the terms of reference of OPI more precisely

/...

(Mr. Naudy, France)

and to set priorities. His delegation considered that the existing institutional framework was adequate but that it should be strengthened in accordance with the recommendations in the report of CPC (A/32/38, paras. 8-10). It concurred in the opinion of ACABQ on the need for an over-all analysis of OPI activities. Such an analysis would be of great benefit during the consideration of the report on the activities of OPI which the Secretary-General was to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session in accordance with Assembly resolution 3535 (XXX).

22. The basic problem of the terms of reference and priorities of OPI could be solved through a better use of the existing machinery, with the assistance during the initial stage of the Consultative Panel on Public Information, which should help OPI to prepare the report in question. The report, which should reflect the results of the evaluation exercise, should be submitted to CPC and ACABQ before it was considered by the General Assembly.

23. Other difficulties stemmed from the risk of duplication and overlapping, owing to the proliferation of information bodies within the system. The Joint United Nations Information Committee could play an extremely useful role in that regard, provided that care was taken to ensure that co-ordination efforts did not result in the creation of a cumbersome mechanism. In his delegation's opinion, the estimates for information activities connected with special conferences were too high.

24. In general, his delegation endorsed the recommendation of ACABQ and CPC on the budget estimates for OPI, although it had some reservations. It had noted that a decision must be taken on the impact of the CPC recommendations on the public information programme - in which ACABQ had recommended reductions - and that document A/C.5/32/26 had not yet been considered by the Fifth Committee. The second difficulty related to the transfer to the regular budget of five CESI posts currently charged to extrabudgetary resources. His delegation's position on transfers of that kind was well known. In the present case, however, it considered that there were mitigating circumstances. OPI had taken steps to eliminate superfluous posts and to redeploy its resources. His delegation welcomed the project to make the monthly magazine Development Forum - to which the Government of France had contributed - self-sustaining. It noted that CPC had acknowledged the usefulness of the work performed by CESI and the need to place greater emphasis on economic and social information.

25. The third difficulty was the unwillingness of ACABQ to endorse the request for two additional posts for the Press and Publications Division because of inadequate information submitted in justification of the request. His delegation found the arguments advanced adequate and supported the Chad delegation's request for the restoration of those two posts. He paid tribute to the high-quality work performed by the French-language unit and emphasized its importance to French-speaking countries. His delegation would like to see an increase in the resources available to the French group, by means of either the establishment of new posts or the redeployment of existing posts; in the latter case, the posts redeployed should be filled by language specialists.

/...

26. Mr. PALMA (Peru) said that the work performed by the information centres was extremely important. In a report submitted at the thirty-first session the Secretary-General had stated his intention of strengthening the services which information centres provided to Member States. Yet the resources made available to information centres appeared to dwindle every year and were currently at a minimum level. The situation was particularly poor in the information centres in Latin America. He thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information for explaining the action that was being or would shortly be taken in order to increase information material, particularly in centres which served the major language regions, and to redress such situations as the almost total lack of Spanish-language materials, especially with respect to United Nations activities in such areas as the new international economic order, the maintenance of peace and disarmament, and with respect to the positions of the Latin American countries on those and many other issues.

27. There were also signs of overlapping; there was certainly room for some rationalization, which would, moreover, generate a higher-quality product. He suggested that OPI might produce Spanish-language material at Headquarters for immediate distribution by information centres in some 20 countries, thereby obviating the need for each to prepare the same material. The benefits in savings, accuracy and speed to be derived from the central production of materials would justify the strengthening of the Headquarters units. His delegation was prepared to support any initiative on those lines.

28. The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information had stated that international issues like disarmament, science and technology required better-informed and more sensitive coverage than the traditional issues. In his delegation's opinion, that concern could be met if OPI were to take full account of the growing consensus among Member States on matters which were conducive to the establishment of a practical international economic framework for conciliation and harmony between man and his environment and between men. In that regard, clear preference must be given to suitable treatment of the new international economic order. It was regrettable that OPI was not giving sufficient attention to the process of establishing the new order, especially the demands and proposals which the developing countries had made in that context.

29. Mr. GOONERATNE (Sri Lanka) referred to the proposed changes in the level of certain posts in the top echelon of the Secretariat (A/C.5/31/95), including the reclassification of the post of Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Public Information, to the level of Under-Secretary-General and noted that the Advisory Committee had raised no objection to that proposal. While he was most grateful to the head of OPI and appreciated the work done by the Office, he wished to draw attention to the fact that there did not appear to be any consistent criteria for the reclassification of posts in the top echelon of the Secretariat and that the proposals in document A/C.5/31/95 applied only to "certain posts". It was thus impossible to get a full picture of the reclassification of posts in the top echelon. The Committee was being presented with "a series of ad hoc decisions", as the report of the Advisory Committee put it (A/32/8, para. 72). Such a policy could only lead to a distortion of the grade structure, create confusion in the

/...

(Mr. Gooneratne, Sri Lanka)

administrative structure and cause problems of morale in the top echelon of the Secretariat. His delegation believed that, in future, when recommendations for reclassification of posts in the top echelon were submitted, the Fifth Committee should at the same time be made aware of the policy framework within which the recommendations were being submitted.

30. Mr. APALDO (Togo) expressed appreciation for the work done by the Advisory Committee in the area under consideration but wondered whether its recommendations were based simply on a desire to save money and not on a wish to atrophy some sectors of the administrative services of the United Nations. Some areas of the United Nations were very sensitive and the Advisory Committee should show a certain amount of political responsibility in dealing with them. The Office of Public Information, which did very important work, was one such case. Accordingly, in view of the disparity between the number of staff in the English-language and French-language press sections, his delegation was surprised that the Advisory Committee was not recommending approval of a P-3 post and a General Service post in the Press and Publications Division in order to expand the French-language programme, because the Administrative Management Service had not yet considered the proposed reorganization plan. It was also surprised that the Advisory Committee was rejecting the request for a P-3 post in the External Relations Division in order to provide material to information centres in non-English-speaking areas. The creation of such a post was especially justified by the fact that the incumbent would gather information in Arabic, French and Spanish, each of which languages was common to many centres; that procedure would increase efficiency and reduce translation costs. His delegation therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should restore all those posts.

Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat (continued) (A/C.5/31/8; A/C.5/32/17; A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1, L.17)

31. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that Ghana, Jamaica and Panama had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1 and that all the sponsors, after studying the amendments proposed by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/32/L.17) and holding informal consultations on the subject, had agreed to the changes, which had been incorporated in the revised text. In paragraph 2, the word "general" had been added before the word "direction", because the sponsors wished to endorse the general direction of the reform in nomenclature and not necessarily each of the titles proposed by the Secretary-General, and the words "and the views expressed in the Fifth Committee" had been added at the end of the paragraph. In the English version of paragraphs 2 and 3, the sponsors had agreed to replace the word "implementation" by the word "application". Contrary to the proposals contained in the Soviet amendment, whereby the General Assembly would endorse the nomenclature at levels 1 and 2 and would postpone consideration of the nomenclature at levels 3 to 6 until a later stage, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1 did not wish to endorse all the actual details of the extensive nomenclature proposed in the Secretary-General's report. It was the task of the General Assembly to establish the principles and methods for reforming the nomenclature so that the Secretary-General could undertake the reform within that framework. The General Assembly must

/...



(Mr. Akashi, Japan)

limit itself to endorsing the general direction of the reform and reserve the right to reconsider the question at its next session. For those reasons, his delegation could not accept the amendments proposed by the Soviet Union and regretted that it would have to vote against them if they were put to a vote.

32. The report of the Advisory Committee (A/32/8/Add.5, para. 7) indicated that, given the diversity of the Secretariat, a certain degree of flexibility must be allowed in applying the proposed nomenclature guidelines and that an organizational unit should not be classified at a given level on the basis of size alone. The report also indicated that the proposals would have no financial implications and that they did not equate the position of officer in charge of an organizational unit with a particular grade (para. 11). His delegation thought that that should be enough to dispel any fears of unjustified reclassifications. The sponsors of the revised draft resolution did not want it to be weakened; it was already sufficiently moderate and balanced and represented a common denominator of the views of many delegations. Accordingly, the sponsors suggested that it should be adopted by consensus.

33. Mr. JOHNSON (Ecuador) said that the task of revising the nomenclature required balanced reflection and that the best way of ensuring moderation was to ask the Secretary-General to submit a broad outline of his proposals to the next session. He hoped that the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Japan would be adopted unanimously without delay.

34. Mr. VARGAS SABORIO (Costa Rica) announced that his delegation had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1 and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

35. Mr. FALL (Senegal) asked the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management which of the offices listed in the annex to the report in document A/C.5/32/17 would be headed by Under-Secretaries-General and which would be headed by Assistant Secretaries-General, and what criteria would be used to make that choice.

36. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, the Office of Financial Services, the Office of Personnel Services and the Office of General Services would be headed by Assistant Secretaries-General. The criteria for deciding whether an Office was to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General or an Assistant Secretary-General were determined by the Secretary-General himself, according to the importance attached to the Office in question, its size and other factors. The decision was then reviewed by the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee and finally the General Assembly itself.

37. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Japan and said that the Fifth Committee should limit itself to the action proposed in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1. As a result, he would have to vote against the amendments proposed by the Soviet Union, if they were put to a vote.

/...

38. Mr. FOKINE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the representative of Japan for his clarifications and for accepting a part of the amendment proposed by the Soviet delegation, but pointed out that the changes incorporated in the revised text did not alter the original text substantially.

39. In the view of his delegation, the reform of the nomenclature was important for the functioning of the Secretariat; the purpose of the amendment which had been submitted was not to reduce the role of the Secretary-General but to make clear the primacy of the General Assembly over both the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. Although paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution merely endorsed the general direction of the reform, if the reform was implemented, the General Assembly would not be able to criticize the measures taken by the Secretary-General but would be confined to ensuring compliance with those measures.

40. His delegation supported the reform with respect to levels 1 and 2, but thought that work on the other levels had not been completed and that the Committee should wait another year and re-examine the Secretary-General's recommendations on those levels. Accordingly, his delegation insisted on its amendments to the draft resolution.

41. Mr. GAMBOA (Venezuela) said that the revised draft resolution was logical and coherent and that, in any case, the Secretary-General, in applying the measures provided for, would take into account the observations made by the Advisory Committee and the views expressed in the Fifth Committee. He would vote against the amendments in document A/C.5/32/L.17.

42. After a procedural discussion in which the Chairman, Mr. Hart (Australia) and Mr. Garrido (Philippines) took part, it was decided to put the amendments in document A/C.5/32/L.17 to a vote.

43. The amendments in document A/C.5/32/L.17 were rejected by 34 votes to 22, with 41 abstentions.

44. Mr. OLAITAN (Nigeria), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1 on the understanding that the Secretary-General's proposals would not have financial implications and that the implementation of those proposals would not involve the establishment of any new posts or the reclassification of existing ones.

45. Draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1, as orally amended, was adopted by 82 votes to 13, with 5 abstentions.

46. Mr. HART (Australia) said that it would be appropriate to consider the use of the various titles at each level of the new nomenclature in order to eliminate duplication and make the titles more precise. In addition, the process of reforming nomenclature, rationalizing the use of the many terms that existed and trying to standardize their application should be extended to the United Nations system as a whole.

47. Mr. FALL (Senegal), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1, because that text represented a compromise and because it wisely referred to the general direction of reform in nomenclature proposed by the Secretary-General. However, his delegation had voted against the amendment submitted by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/32/L.17), since under paragraph 2 as drafted in that amendment the nomenclature proposed by the Secretary-General would be endorsed without change; his delegation was not completely satisfied with that nomenclature, which suffered from certain shortcomings.

48. Mr. FOKINE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the reasons why his delegation had voted against draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.15/Rev.1 were well known. It was true that the revised draft resolution represented a compromise, but the nature of that compromise was a matter for concern to his delegation. Rule 128 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provided that the Chairman should not permit the proposer of a proposal or of an amendment to explain his vote on his own proposal or amendment.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY: REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS (A/32/3 (chap. VII, sect. A), A/32/315)

49. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on agenda item 103 (A/32/315), said that it was similar to the report submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, when the Advisory Committee had introduced the practice of showing in table A the net regular budgets of the organizations in the United Nations system of staff assessment, overhead costs reimbursed by UNDP, and trust funds. The Advisory Committee was well aware that there was room for improvements in the presentation of that information and would continue to give the matter its attention, bearing in mind any recommendations which CCAQ might make. In 1976 the organizations in the United Nations system had spent \$2,299 million, compared with \$2,165 million in 1975. In its report, the Advisory Committee indicated that the regular budgets of all the organizations taken together had grown more rapidly than extrabudgetary resources. It was nevertheless estimated that in 1978 the net expenditures of the specialized agencies would be 10.7 per cent lower than in 1977. The reduction was attributable to, on the one hand, the restrictive policies adopted by the specialized agencies, which had enabled them to achieve savings in the preparation and implementation of the budgets and, on the other, to the relative stability of exchange rates during the preparation and consideration of the estimates.

50. Table C showed the contributions made by the assessed budgets of the organizations to technical co-operation activities. The trend towards the growth of those contributions, to which attention had been drawn the previous year, was continuing and, according to the information available, in 1978 the organizations in the United Nations system would spend one dollar of every five in the regular budgets on technical assistance programmes.

/...

(Mr. Mselle)

51. One section of the report under consideration dealt with liaison offices (paras. 194-213). The arrangements referred to in paragraph 203 related in particular to the Fifth Committee; although arrangements had not yet been put into practice, WHO and FAO had agreed to assist each other in the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee concluded that a number of specialized agencies were taking steps to rationalize their liaison services. The Advisory Committee believed that those efforts should be continued, particularly in view of the high cost of maintaining the liaison offices. It attached particular importance to the practice of pooling the resources of two or more specialized agencies in order to obviate the need for enlarging liaison offices. Another practice which deserved careful consideration was the practice of seconding to liaison offices additional staff during periods of peak activity.

52. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that for the past year he had been uncertain as to the number of staff members employed in the United Nations system as a whole. As of 31 December 1976, the Pension Fund had had approximately 43,000 members, and the Chairman of ICSC had confirmed that the Commission's activities covered approximately 50,000 people. On the other hand, paragraph 11 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/32/315) indicated that there were only 39,412 staff members, although it also stated that that figure did not represent the totality of the staff employed by all the organizations in the United Nations system. He therefore asked that a table should be provided in due course in order to give a better idea of the approximate number of staff members in the system.

53. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the point made by the representative of Belgium, said that the information supplied in paragraphs 10 and 11 of document A/32/315 did not refer to the number of posts but to all staff in service on 31 December 1976; the latter number, for a variety of reasons, was likely to be smaller.

54. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) insisted that, if the Pension Fund had 43,000 members, that meant that all those members were working in the United Nations system.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

55. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee should postpone its consideration of agenda item 109, Report of the International Civil Service Commission, until 22 November so that it would know the position of the heads of Geneva-based organizations with respect to the new salary scale for the General Service category in Geneva. In the meantime, the Committee would consider the sections of the budget related to the regional commissions and then sections 11B, 24 and 26 and income sections 2 and 3.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.