



COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TALIEH (Iran)

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

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Distr. GENERAL

A/C.5/32/SR.51

5 December 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 and Add.11, A/32/38; A/C.5/32/12 and 13)

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee in document A/C.1/32/L.12 concerning agenda item 33 (A/C.5/32/54 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in document A/C.5/32/54 the Secretary-General had indicated that the publication and distribution of the report on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures would cost \$85,500. However, the Advisory Committee had been informed that an error had been made in the calculations and that the correct figure was \$59,000 (A/C.5/32/54/Corr.1). The Advisory Committee suggested that that amount should be covered by resources available for printing and publication costs. If any problem arose in that respect, the Secretary-General could bring it up in the context of the final performance report on the 1978-1979 programme budget.

2. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.12, printing costs estimated at \$59,000 would be absorbed within the existing appropriations for the biennium 1978-1979.

3. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution B submitted by the Third Committee in document A/C.3/32/L.31 concerning agenda item 77 (A/C.5/32/52)

4. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/32/52 and had been given additional information by the representatives of the Secretary-General. With respect to the amount of \$31,800 requested for consultants, the Advisory Committee had noted that the figures of \$3,875 and \$4,075 per work-month in 1978 and 1979, respectively, did not correspond to the information given to the Advisory Committee, namely, that there would be 40 consultants who would work for one week and receive fees of \$800 each per week. The Advisory Committee had also been informed that the consultants would prepare material on 40 subitems in connexion with the report which the Secretary-General would submit on the subject. The Advisory Committee had noted that the programme would be implemented under the direction of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which had eight Professional staff members, including the Director. The Advisory Committee did not see the need for the entire amount requested, since the Secretariat certainly had competent personnel to assist in the preparation of the report. It was therefore recommending that the amount should be reduced from \$31,800 to \$20,000.

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5. The amount of \$40,900 for the attendance of experts at the regional preparatory meetings was acceptable to the Advisory Committee.
6. With respect to the servicing of the regional preparatory meetings by staff from Headquarters, the Advisory Committee noted that the regional preparatory meetings for Africa and Latin America would be held in localities where there were United Nations offices and was therefore recommending that only one Professional staff member should be sent to those preparatory meetings. However, the Committee agreed that two Professional staff members be sent to the preparatory meeting for Asia and the Pacific. Accordingly, it was recommending an appropriation of \$8,300 instead of the \$12,000 requested.
7. The Secretary-General estimated at \$105,100 the cost of servicing the regional preparatory meetings. The Advisory Committee accepted that provisional figure and recommended that the Secretary-General should be asked to report on that matter within the context of the over-all calendar of conferences for 1978, indicating how much of that amount could be absorbed within available resources and what additional resources would be required.
8. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that the Philippine Government was prepared to defray the additional costs incurred for the preparatory meeting for Asia and the Pacific. His delegation was glad to note that the Advisory Committee supported the allocation of \$40,900 to cover the attendance of experts, particularly from less developed countries, and hoped that conference servicing for that meeting would be provided by the staff of ESCAP, which had its headquarters at Bangkok.
9. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation was unfortunately unable to support the Advisory Committee's recommendations, for two reasons. In the first place, the Advisory Committee had not gone far enough in limiting expenditure on consultants. The second, and even more important, reason was that, in the opinion of the USSR delegation, the cost of holding the meetings could easily have been absorbed within the appropriations for section 23.
10. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution B in document A/C.3/32/L.31, an additional appropriation of \$69,200 would be required under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979.
11. The Chairman's suggestion was adopted by 59 votes to 9, with 1 abstention.
12. The CHAIRMAN said that conference servicing costs not exceeding \$105,100 would be dealt with in the consolidated statement to be submitted later to the General Assembly.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted in paragraph 34 of document A/32/29 concerning agenda item 48 (A/C.5/32/55)

13. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and

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(Mr. Mselle)

Budgetary Questions) said that document A/C.5/32/55 contained estimates of \$173,700 for conference servicing costs of sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and \$256,100 for similar costs relating to the meeting of the littoral and hinterland States. The Advisory Committee had heard explanations from the representatives of the Secretary-General on the difference between those estimates and the figures submitted at the preceding session and believed that the amounts requested could be absorbed within available resources. If the Advisory Committee's recommendation presented any difficulties, the Secretary-General would be able to revert to it in the final performance report on the budget.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution in paragraph 34 of document A/32/29, conference servicing costs estimated at \$429,800 would be absorbed within the appropriations for the biennium 1978-1979.

15. It was so decided.

First reading (continued)

Section 17 - Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator
(A/C.5/32/49)

16. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee at its spring session had considered the provision of \$400,000 for emergency relief assistance included under section 17. For the reasons outlined in paragraph 17.14 of its first report (A/32/8), the Advisory Committee had recommended that the amount of \$400,000 should be deleted from the estimates pending the submission of the Secretary-General's report on the financing of emergency relief assistance and technical co-operation activities. In the report in document A/C.5/32/49, the Secretary-General stated that very few voluntary contributions had been received and that, in order to provide assistance to Governments in connexion with natural disasters, it had been necessary to rely on the \$400,000 appropriation under the regular budget for 1976-1977. In paragraph 9 of his report, the Secretary-General stated that, owing to the actual situation of the emergency assistance subaccount, it had been necessary for him to reiterate his initial request for \$400,000 under section 17. The Advisory Committee had discussed the report in question and had no objection to the approval of the Secretary-General's initial request.

17. Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, said that, when they had sponsored General Assembly resolution 31/173, the Nordic countries had understood that the substantial portion of programme activities which were to be transferred to the regular budget would amount to roughly 50 per cent. The target of 34 per cent set by the Secretary-General was half way between 25 and 50 per cent. The delegations of the Nordic countries were anxious that resolution 31/173 should be implemented and considered it essential that the target be met, as far as the core programme activities were concerned.

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(Mr. Amneus, Sweden)

18. With regard to the objections which had been voiced against the Secretary-General's estimates, the transfer of posts could not be separated from the transfer of the costs which normally went with such posts. The Advisory Committee's arguments (A/32/8, para. 17.6) concerning the P-2 post were logical, but the delegations of the Nordic countries believed that the transfer of that post could be justified since its functions were not only substantive but also included administrative backstopping.

19. With respect to the principle that posts financed from extrabudgetary funds should not be transferred to the regular budget, the delegations of the Nordic countries considered that the General Assembly would be wise to follow its own path rather than a principle which had not been legitimized as guiding the decisions of the Assembly. Furthermore, that principle would not apply in the case in question; at the time when it had been decided to strengthen the trust fund in 1974, it had been anticipated that the method of financing would be reviewed at the thirty-first session in the light of the experience acquired between 1974 and 1976.

20. Nor did the delegations of the Nordic countries accept the argument that the transfer of a substantial portion of the core programme activities to the regular budget would be incompatible with the recommendations in resolution 31/93. The General Assembly's decision regarding the average growth rate would not affect the programme of UNDR0; the Fifth Committee should fully implement the mandate given by the Assembly itself, and a transfer limited to some 28 per cent did not meet the requirements of that mandate.

21. With all due respect for the opinions of the Advisory Committee and of various delegations, the Nordic countries suggested that the recommendations in paragraphs 17.6 to 17.11 and 17.13 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/32/8) should not be endorsed. The provision of \$400,000 for emergency relief assistance should be maintained so long as there was no reasonable guarantee that the activities could be financed by funds from voluntary sources.

22. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the Swedish representative and considered that emergency assistance was one of the United Nations activities enjoying widest support among the peoples of the world. The \$400,000 used by UNDR0 was a very small amount, but it was often the first assistance which arrived and it played a symbolic role. Since the figure had been reduced, his delegation urged that the appropriation be maintained in the regular budget until voluntary contributions were forthcoming which would enable it to be removed.

23. Mr. ZVONKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that there was no doubt that assistance to countries which were the victims of natural disasters was one of the most humanitarian tasks of the United Nations and that his delegation had studied carefully the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee. It was unfortunately unable to support the approach adopted

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(Mr. Zvonko, Byelorussian SSR)

by the Secretary-General with regard to the financing of emergency assistance activities. It was noted in the Secretary-General's report that the appropriations requested for the forthcoming biennium were 63 per cent higher than the appropriations for 1976-1977; that large increase was related to the transfer to the regular budget of staff previously financed from extrabudgetary funds. The Byelorussian delegation regretted the lack of information on the transfer of 10 posts to the regular budget and considered that the reasons for transferring 34 per cent of administrative activities were inadequate.

24. Disregarding General Assembly resolution 31/93, the Secretary-General was proposing a real growth rate 20 times higher than the average growth rate of 2.2 per cent recommended by CPC. The Byelorussian delegation would like to know what was the explanation for that attitude towards the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, and it would not be able to support the appropriation requested for section 17. If the posts in question were included in the regular budget, the Byelorussian SSR would be obliged to consider withholding the corresponding part of its contribution.

25. Mr. CROM (Netherlands) said that his Government greatly valued the role played by UNDRO in co-ordinating multilateral assistance in cases of natural disaster. That work, as well as the prevention of and preparedness for natural disasters, needed to be strengthened further.

26. With regard to the transfer of a substantial portion of core programme administrative activities to the regular budget, he urged that paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 31/173 should be implemented. The target of 34 per cent set by the Secretary-General represented a modest step. For that reason, and taking into account the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/32/49), the Netherlands delegation could not entirely endorse the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. In that connexion, it would like the Controller to provide information on the proposed transfer of a P-2 post (A/32/8, para. 17.6).

27. The amount of \$400,000 should continue to be included in the regular budget for emergency relief assistance. In that connexion, he welcomed the announcement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that that Committee would endorse that measure.

28. Mr. TERADA (Japan) said that table 17.1 of the proposed programme budget (A/32/6, vol. II) showed an increase of 63.7 per cent in the additional requirements estimated for UNDRO, which amounted to a real growth rate of 50.9 per cent; that increase was attributable to the transfer to the regular budget of 34 per cent of core programme administrative activities, in accordance with resolution 31/173. In the opinion of the Japanese delegation, that situation contradicted the recommendations made by the General Assembly in resolution 31/93 and was contrary to the average rate of growth recommended by CPC by virtue of that resolution. It seemed that UNDRO tended to adopt the easy solution of transferring to the regular budget, sometimes without justification, activities formerly financed from extrabudgetary resources.

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(Mr. Terada, Japan)

29. The recommendations in paragraph 17.6 of the Advisory Committee's report were too generous. In particular, he noted with regret the Secretary-General's proposal that two D-1 posts should be transferred to the regular budget, since that would add a considerable financial burden to the budget.

30. His delegation supported the proposal by the Advisory Committee (para. 17.9) that the estimate for travel under the regular budget should be maintained at the 1976-1977 level and that the Secretary-General's estimate should therefore be reduced. In addition, the Japanese delegation did not understand the reasons for the proposal that the costs of general temporary assistance should be transferred to the regular budget and therefore could not support that proposal.

31. With regard to the request that resources for consultants in the programme of disaster prevention and preparedness should be transferred from the trust fund to the regular budget, and the appropriation of \$400,000 for emergency relief assistance, the Japanese delegation concurred in the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 17.11 and 17.14 of its report.

32. Mr. NAUDY (France) reiterated that his country attached great importance to UNDR0 and had already demonstrated that fact by making voluntary contributions to the Office. He wished to point out, however, that his delegation had some reservations regarding the method of financing expenses, and particularly regarding the transfer to the regular budget of expenses formerly financed with extrabudgetary resources.

33. He had listened with interest to the statements of other representatives in which attention had been drawn to the contradiction existing between the appropriations being recommended and General Assembly resolution 31/93. For that reason, he could not support the proposed restoration of the sum of \$400,000 and was even less able to support the Swedish proposal that estimates which had been reduced by the Advisory Committee itself should be reinstated.

34. Mr. ELDON (United Kingdom) recalled that at the thirty-first session the United Kingdom had sponsored a draft resolution relating to UNDR0, and he thought that the General Assembly should assume responsibility for the additional costs of the Office. The provision of \$400,000 for emergency relief assistance to Governments in connexion with natural disasters would not cause any special problems for the United Kingdom delegation.

35. The transfer to the regular budget of posts previously financed from extrabudgetary resources must be included in the consideration of the proposed programme budget. His delegation therefore welcomed the proposals for reduction in paragraphs 17.6 to 17.11 and 17.13 of the Advisory Committee's report which in his view were based on sound administrative principles. He trusted that the Fifth Committee would maintain those reductions but he did not wish to imply any lack of support for UNDR0.

Section 22 Administration, management and general services

36. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had studied the initial estimates

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(Mr. Mselle)

submitted by the Secretary-General and had recommended a reduction of \$2,024,300 under section 22 (A/32/8, para. 22.101). That figure was the net result of the reductions recommended in the estimates for the Office of General Services at Headquarters and the General Services Division at Geneva (some \$2,400,000 for the two), the Office of Personnel Services at Headquarters and Staff Training Activities (\$417,900) and other lesser reductions in the estimates for the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service and the Office of Financial Services, reductions that were partly offset by a recommended increase of \$844,400 for United Nations Participation in Jointly Financed Administrative Activities. When considering the Secretary-General's proposals, the Advisory Committee had had at its disposal the revised estimates for the secretariat of CCAQ and the Joint Inspection Unit, and had been able to include its recommendations on those bodies in its first report. A different procedure had been followed with respect to the estimates for ICSC (A/32/8/Add.11). The Advisory Committee endorsed the revised estimates for ICSC, as well as the proposal to increase the honoraria of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman at the current session; a sum of \$54,000 had been recommended in that respect. It should be pointed out that that sum did not include the special allowance paid to the Chairman.

37. The Secretary-General had requested 91 posts, nine of them at the professional level. Most of the requests, particularly those related to Geneva, involved the conversion of temporary assistance posts to established posts. The Advisory Committee had recommended that 54 posts should be approved and in each case had attempted to explain why the remaining posts should not be granted. Other reductions had also been recommended in connexion with costs related to such items as travel, temporary assistance, consultants, etc.

38. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 22.15 and 22.16 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/32/8) which concerned the Office of Personnel Services at Headquarters. With respect to the two G-4 and one G-5 temporary assistance posts requested for the United Nations International School, the Advisory Committee considered that there was no authority for that proposal and recommended that the amount requested should be deleted from the estimates.

39. In paragraph 22.32 of its report, the Advisory Committee indicated that the cost of the diplomatic pouch service in 1976 had been nearly \$2 million and that the corresponding cost to the United Nations had been \$574,000. In view of the rapid increase, the Advisory Committee thought that the pouch service should be reviewed and recommended that the Secretary-General reflect the results of such a review in the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981.

40. In paragraph 22.55 of its report, the Advisory Committee referred to the Secretary-General's proposal that, effective 1 January 1978, the Internal Audit Service and the Administrative Management Service should be combined into a single Internal Audit and Management Improvement Service. The Advisory Committee was of the opinion that the maintenance of an adequate and capable management improvement service, as intended by General Assembly resolution 31/94 C, would require an

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arrangement somewhat different from that proposed by the Secretary-General. In particular, ACABQ was concerned that the concept of a small independent corps of qualified experts might become more difficult to sustain within the larger context of the proposed new service. With respect to the Secretary-General's mandate concerning a continuing management improvement programme, the Advisory Committee had received the Secretary-General's report on the matter but had still not had enough time to study it.

41. In view of the additional information submitted to the Advisory Committee on staff training activities, it was recommending in paragraph 22.72 of its report that the Secretary-General evaluate those activities with a view to streamlining them and ensuring that they best met the needs of the organization as defined by the General Assembly.

42. Mr. BRYNTSEV (Joint Inspection Unit) said that the Inspectors had regrettably been obliged to propose a considerable increase in the real growth of resources for the Joint Inspection Unit. The increase was due entirely to decisions of the General Assembly in 1976, particularly the decision to add three new Inspectors to the JIU and to introduce the function of evaluation.

43. With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Inspectors viewed with some concern the recommendation that the P-3 post for a research officer be eliminated, particularly since the JIU had only a few research officers. However, the Inspectors would not oppose the recommendation. They would try to distribute the duties of the proposed post among other posts and to compensate by advancing the date of appointment of a new post provided in the proposed programme budget for 1979. The necessary funds would be found from savings to be made during 1978.

44. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that his delegation was not sure of the meaning of paragraph 22.55 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/32/8) and asked whether the proposed Internal Audit and Management Improvement Service would start operating at the beginning of 1978.

45. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the increase of 15.5 per cent over the revised appropriations for 1976-1977 was excessive and could not really be justified. Almost 50 per cent of the increase was due to inflation and to the fact that 83 new posts were asked for, including 10 Professional posts. The reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in that respect were insufficient. His delegation disagreed on principle with the Secretary-General's intention to increase the manning table on the basis, not of principles of modern management and the rational use of resources, but of an arbitrary determination of the staffing level required. In that connexion, he repeated his disagreement with the principle of requesting the maximum appropriations. It should be borne in mind that General Assembly decisions required that the expenditures to which he referred should be absorbed by the more rational use of resources. He repeated his request for full information on the methods used in the United Nations system to compensate for inflation. He hoped that he could have the information before the end of the session. For all those reasons he could not support the appropriations requested for section 22 and would vote against approval.

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46. Mr. ANDRIANKIRIJA (Madagascar) inquired, with reference to paragraph 22.10 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/32/8) whether the Organization's accounts were closed every year, every two years or every three years. He also inquired whether the fact that the Secretary-General's revised estimates for the Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Service were not yet available affected the study of section 22 as a whole. Finally, he said that the reduction proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 22.71 of its report (A/32/8) in connexion with the external studies programme was not justified. The expenditure was for training of staff in one of the regional commissions. In his view the matter should be looked at bearing in mind that the Secretary-General's request would mean an increase of only \$4,000 over the revised appropriations for the current year.

Section 26 - Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance of premises (A/C.5/32/32 and 56)

47. Mr. DEBATIN (Assistant Secretary-General, Controller) said that the Secretary-General intended to submit revised figures for major maintenance work in connexion with the residence of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

48. Mr. KLESTIL (Austria) said that construction of the various buildings of the Donaupark Centre in Vienna was progressing according to schedule. The office towers would be completed by the end of 1978 while the Conference Centre and the common services towers would be ready for occupancy in the summer of 1979, by which time the whole complex would be ready. Consequently, IAEA, UNIDO and the units which, under General Assembly resolution 31/194 were to be located in Vienna, could move into the Centre. The Austrian Government which had assumed a heavy financial burden in building the Donaupark Centre for the United Nations expected that the General Assembly at its thirty-third session would decide, as foreseen in General Assembly resolution 31/194, to implement the phased plan of action which would guarantee the optimum and rational use of the centre.

49. Mr. ZVONKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the form of presentation of the documentation on section 26 was somewhat inconvenient since in addition to the information in the proposed programme budget (A/32/6) and the report of the Advisory Committee (A/32/8) there were separate reports on construction at Nairobi, Geneva and Headquarters which affected and in some cases contradicted the information originally given by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee. Such fragmentation and last-minute changes, and the consequent revision of requests for appropriations showed that the documentation for the section had been badly prepared.

50. His delegation did not agree with the inclusion, in the requests for appropriations under section 26, of amounts to offset the effects of inflation and currency fluctuation. That was an unsound and inequitable procedure since neither the Byelorussian SSR nor the other socialist countries were responsible for inflation which was inherent in market economy countries. In particular, he felt

(Mr. Zvonko, Byelorussian SSR)

that no account had been taken of decisions of United Nations organs, including the General Assembly, that such costs were to be absorbed by means of savings, reallocation of resources, and other internal measures. That was another feature which showed that section 28 had not been well-prepared. That was also shown by the absence of any justification for the real growth referred to by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 26.1 of its report (A/32/8) and the mistakes in the figures. The revised requests subsequently presented exceeded the original request by some \$800,000. However, the new request was not supported and, as was shown by paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/32/56) was only approximate. For those reasons his delegation could not support the approval of the appropriations requested for section 26.

51. An appropriation in the amount of \$29,407,900 under section 26 for the biennium 1978-1979 was approved in first reading by 77 votes to 7.

United Nations accommodation at Nairobi (continued) (A/32/8/Add.10, A/C.5/32/19/Add.1)

52. Mr. DURAND (Budget Division) replying to the questions raised by the Belgian representative at the 49th meeting (A/C.5/32/SR.49, paras. 34 and 35) said that the space available at the present time was 8,375 m² which would be used as shown in paragraph 12 of document A/C.5/32/19.

53. The theoretical requirement for offices and special use areas, would amount, at 12 m² per head, to 6,223 m² as against 5,575 m² at present available, giving a deficit of 648 m². An additional 618 m² would be required during the sessions of the Governing Council of UNEP for senior staff and extra language staff.

54. It was estimated that the additional space requirement in 1978-1979 would be 258 m² and that the increase over the period 1980-1985 would be 851 m², so that by 1985 UNEP would require a total of 7,950 m².

55. The other organizations requiring space in the new premises (UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR and the Information Centre) would have a total of 314 staff in Nairobi by 1985, who would require 4,558 m² of space. Thus, the total space requirement in 1985 would be 12,508 m².

56. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that the project for the construction of United Nations accommodation in Nairobi was one of the largest undertaken by the United Nations and was comparable in size to the expansion of Headquarters accommodation in New York for which the Advisory Committee had recommended reductions of about \$12.5 million in its report on the item (A/32/8/Add.1). In view of the searching evaluation by the Advisory Committee his delegation had been able to support whole-heartedly its recommendations regarding Headquarters accommodation.

57. Unfortunately, the report of the Advisory Commission on the Nairobi project (A/32/8/Add.10) was not at all of the same calibre. It did not study the question

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(Mr. Cunningham, United States)

of proper ownership and management of the proposed buildings, which was important in view of the different precedents with regard to buildings occupied by the United Nations, its various programmes and the specialized agencies in different parts of the world. Nor did the report deal with the long-term management implications which might arise from entrusting supervision of the construction to the United Nations Environment Programme. His delegation questioned whether UNEP should involve itself in real estate and building management activities.

58. The Advisory Committee, which accepted the Secretary-General's proposal that the entire cost of the construction in Nairobi should be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, had not studied alternative methods for financing the project. In that context, it should be remembered that the Governments of Austria, Canada, France, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States had provided various forms of financial assistance for the construction of facilities for the United Nations and the specialized agencies in those countries. The Advisory Committee must have been aware of those precedents and it was surprising that there was not even the slightest reference to them in its report. That did not mean that his delegation believed that the Government of Kenya had been deficient in hospitality towards the various United Nations programmes situated in Nairobi or that it felt that previous decisions with regard to the location of those programmes in Nairobi should be changed.

59. On the other hand, the Advisory Committee had not correctly assessed the need to construct new facilities in Nairobi and seemed to have accepted the Secretary-General's recommendations automatically. Furthermore, its report did not show that it had attempted to determine whether the costs of construction could be recovered in 15 years, as proposed by the Secretary-General. There seemed to be ample ground for questioning that assumption, especially in view of the fact that the Secretary-General had stated that the basic costs for maintenance and services would be higher than was ordinarily the case in Kenya, that a minimum inflation rate of 10 per cent was anticipated during the period of construction and that tenants would be offered concessional rental rates.

60. The Advisory Committee had also not dealt with the question whether it was really necessary to construct not only office space for UNEP but also facilities for various services. Although the existing UNEP building in Nairobi was called temporary, it actually was of a high standard and could be utilized for a number of years.

61. The Advisory Committee should also have provided full information on projected final costs and projected operating expenses, whereas it had provided merely a summary of the Secretary-General's calculations without analysing those statements in any satisfactory fashion.

62. For all of the above reasons, his delegation could not support the Advisory Committee's report and would vote against the appropriation which it recommended, if the appropriation was put to a vote. Furthermore, his delegation considered it

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(Mr. Cunningham, United States)

vital that the deficiencies of the report should be remedied and therefore proposed that the Fifth Committee should send the report back to the Advisory Committee for a review in the proper form and that consideration of the matter of United Nations accommodation in Nairobi should be deferred to the thirty-third session in expectation of the Advisory Committee's new report.

63. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had reached the conclusion that the appropriations requested for the construction of United Nations facilities in Nairobi were entirely without justification. His delegation was surprised that a proposal had been submitted to the General Assembly to construct UNEP facilities with financing from the regular budget of the United Nations; such proposals ran counter to the General Assembly's decision in section II, paragraph 3, of resolution 2997 (XXVII).

64. The Advisory Committee had not studied carefully to what extent it was necessary to construct the proposed facilities. The currently available office space in Nairobi was perfectly sufficient to accommodate existing UNEP staff and even new staff members who might be added in the future, although there was no justification for an increase in staff. Furthermore, it was said that part of the new facilities would be rented by the United Nations to other bodies, but that was not an activity in which the Organization should engage.

65. When it had been decided that UNEP should have its headquarters in Nairobi, account had been taken of the fact that the city had a conference centre and it was therefore surprising that the host Government could not now guarantee that the conference centre facilities would be available to UNEP after 1982 at the times and for the periods desired (A/32/8/Add.10, para. 22). His delegation hoped that in the future the needs of UNEP in Nairobi could be met as they had been up to the present time. For all those reasons, his delegation would vote against the appropriation for the construction of facilities in Nairobi and agreed with the view that the matter should be reconsidered by the Advisory Committee.

66. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) said that his delegation supported the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and proposed that they should form the basis of the Fifth Committee's consideration of the question of United Nations accommodation in Nairobi.

67. It should be remembered that the decision to establish UNEP headquarters in Nairobi had been based on the indisputable need to decentralize United Nations activities to the developing countries. He therefore felt that it was unfair to refer to the financial assistance which some developed countries might have provided for the establishment of United Nations facilities, since it was known that Kenya did not have comparable financial means. The suggestion that Kenya should provide similar financial assistance amounted to saying that in the future no other headquarters of United Nations bodies would be established in developing countries. His delegation could not accept that position and felt that it was imperative that the United Nations should finance the establishment of important bodies in developing countries.

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(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

68. It was an honour for Kenya to have been chosen to be the headquarters of UNEP and it had always fulfilled its obligations as a host country. Furthermore, it had contributed 6 million Kenyan shillings and had donated the land on which the new facilities would be constructed. It was to be hoped, therefore, that the international community would not forget the gesture which the Government of Kenya had made for its benefit.

69. Miss FORCIGNANO (Italy), referring to the statement made by the representative of the United States with regard to the contribution provided by various host countries to various United Nations organizations, reminded the Committee that Italy charged FAO only \$1 a year in rent for the FAO premises and that it was ready to bear the entire cost of establishing the provisional headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

70. M. PIRSON (Belgium) expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kenya for its generous proposal to donate 40 hectares of land for the construction of United Nations facilities in Nairobi. He wished merely to ask some technical questions in connexion with the Advisory Committee's report (A/32/8/Add.10). He observed that the United Nations employed a total of about 550 persons in Nairobi. Of that number, UNEP employed some 330 persons, of whom only about 100 held posts financed under the regular budget of the United Nations. Those figures did not seem to justify the financing of the construction from the regular budget of the United Nations.

71. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee would give due attention to the information in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/32/8/Add.10) and wished to know what assurances could be provided in that connexion. His delegation had still not taken a final position on the matter but wished to place its reservations on record.

72. Mr. GUERREIRO (Brazil) agreed with the statement made by the representative of Kenya and said that attention should be focused on the Secretary-General's proposals and the Advisory Committee's recommendations. If all the countries which were host to an international organization were required to provide the same services, it would not be possible to establish the headquarters of any organization in a developing country. Furthermore, Kenya had stated that it was ready to provide land for the construction of the facilities.

73. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) expressed surprise at some of the statements made concerning the matter under consideration. He noted that the Secretary-General had indicated that the existing facilities in Nairobi were insufficient for the needs of the United Nations; he hoped that the Fifth Committee, when it took a decision, would make provision for future needs. The question whether United Nations financing of the construction of facilities in Nairobi was justified should not be over-stressed and account should be taken of the fact that developing countries, because of their handicap, could not provide many resources. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the rental arrangements for non-utilized space would provide an element representing retroactive participation in part of the construction costs.

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74. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to postpone further consideration of the matter to a subsequent meeting.

75. It was so decided.

Technological innovations in the publications and documentation of the United Nations (continued) (A/32/8/Add.12; A/C.5/32/11; A/C.5/32/L.20 and L.22)

76. Mr. SHARMA (Nepal), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20 on behalf of the delegations of Canada, Nepal and Pakistan, announced that Nigeria, Singapore, and Trinidad and Tobago had joined the sponsors and that some changes had been made in the text. In paragraph 4, the sponsors had deleted, in the second line, the words "through the Committee on Conferences" and, at the end of the paragraph, the words "always bearing in mind the need for cost-effective approach".

77. The sponsors were pleased that the Advisory Committee was in agreement with the Secretary-General's proposals and they concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the subject. They believed that a cautious and step-by-step approach must be adopted. They therefore requested the studies mentioned in paragraph 3 (a) and (b). It was to be hoped that, when submitting his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, the Secretary-General would also include information on progress made in the implementation of the measures already approved and other recommendations that might be necessary in that regard.

78. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was pleased to withdraw its proposed amendments (A/C.5/32/L.22) to draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20, in view of the fact that the sponsors had deleted the reference to the Committee on Conferences in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution. Thus, the Fifth Committee, with the advice of the Advisory Committee, would continue to be responsible for consideration of the budget as provided in rule 157 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

79. His delegation drew attention to the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 7 (b) of its report (A/32/8/Add.12). All budgetary decisions must be based on estimates. On the basis of the best available assumptions, a balance-sheet must be drawn up of the cost and benefits and the cash flows must be discounted at the appropriate rate to arrive at the net financial balance. It was to be hoped that the Secretariat would provide that information at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly and that the Advisory Committee would check the assumptions of the appraisal as well as the calculations. It would then be possible to determine whether the different component elements of the project were viable and, after taking account of the unquantifiable benefits, whether the components should be maintained or discontinued. His delegation supported draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20 on the understanding that the comments which he had just made concerning the cost-benefit analysis were implicit in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

80. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported the technological innovations in the publications and documentation of the United Nations on the understanding that they were intended to reduce expenses under

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(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

that heading. At the same time, his delegation had to draw attention to a lack of logic in the Advisory Committee's report (A/32/8/Add.12); on the one hand, it indicated that the innovations should make it possible to achieve economies and, on the other, it recommended the appropriation of additional funds. In his delegation's opinion, those funds should be obtained from the considerable resources provided under section 23 of the proposed programme budget. Furthermore, the savings resulting from those innovations should be sufficient to pay for their introduction. It would be illogical to introduce technological innovations in order to achieve economies and then to incur an increase in costs. In general, his delegation was in agreement with draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20.

81. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that, while his delegation was in agreement with the Advisory Committee's recommendations, it would like the Secretariat to explain what long-term benefits, specifically within a period of five years, would be obtained from the introduction of the proposed innovations.

82. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that, according to the proposed time-table, the project would be gradually implemented over a period longer than the biennium under consideration. As the project progressed, more precise data on the financial aspects would be made available to the Advisory Committee. For the time being, an outline had been presented of the project's implementation during the next biennium, although technical, organizational and management data for a longer period were available. An effort had been made to reduce the amount of appropriations requested as much as possible. However, it should be pointed out that economies could not be achieved before investments were made.

83. It was his understanding that paragraph 3 (a) of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20 concerned the publication of the full official records, both verbatim and summary, of the plenary sessions of the General Assembly and the meetings of the Main Committees. The desire to achieve economies had led the Fifth Committee to decide two years previously to discontinue the previous system of issuing summary records in two forms. The new computerized text-processing system would eliminate the need for those two forms. To deal with a correction submitted by a delegation, for example, it would merely be necessary to retrieve from the computer data bank the original version of the record which it was desired to correct. The final version of the record would then be produced by computer. That would presumably make it possible to continue to achieve the economies resulting from the Committee's earlier decision to issue records in one form only.

84. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation understood perfectly well that in order to achieve economies it was first necessary to make investments. However, it also understood that the Secretary-General should find the necessary resources to initiate the introduction of the technological innovations from the sum of nearly \$140 million already approved in first reading by the Committee for section 23 of the budget.

85. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, if at any time the full official record of sessions of the

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(Mr. Mselle)

General Assembly referred to in paragraph 3 (a) of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20 was published in the form just outlined by the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments, there would presumably be financial implications. It was his understanding that those financial implications would be submitted to the Fifth Committee when the Secretary-General recommended that the existing system should be replaced by the computerized system.

86. Mr. MOHMOUD (Nigeria) said that his delegation, which had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20, supported the initiative taken by the Secretary-General to apply electronic text-processing techniques at all stages of the preparation of United Nations documents. While it was convinced that the proposed innovations would make it possible to improve the system of preparing documents, it considered it important that, as requested in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20, the Secretary-General should report to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session on progress achieved in the implementation of the proposed measures.

87. Mr. STUART (United Kingdom) said that his delegation would support the appropriation of additional funds recommended by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/32/8/Add.12) in view of the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the technological innovations project should be introduced cautiously and on a step-by-step basis. Once the Fifth Committee had before it a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of the proposed innovations, it would be able to determine the savings which such innovations would permit during the biennium 1978-1979 and, if appropriate, to reduce the appropriations for the biennium.

88. An additional appropriation of \$314,700 under section 23A for the biennium 1978-1979 was approved by 69 votes to 10.

89. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/32/L.20, as amended.

90. It was so decided.

91. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) invited interested delegations to observe the operation of the first machines that were being used in the Secretariat and which formed part of the plan of technological innovations for the publications and documentation of the United Nations.

AGENDA ITEM 107: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued)

(d) INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE: CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/32/104; A/C.5/32/27)

92. Mr. DEBATIN (Assistant Secretary-General, Controller) said that the Secretary-General was pleased that, owing to the new appointments, the membership of the Investments Committee reflected a satisfactory geographical distribution and included a member from the African region.

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93. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that the Fifth Committee recommended that the General Assembly should confirm the appointments of Mr. Hamzah Merghani, Mr. David Montagu and Mr. Yves Oltramare as members of the Investments Committee for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 1978.

94. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.