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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Republic)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977 (continued)

Future trends in computer usage (A/31/255; A/C.5/31/3)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of ACABQ (A/31/255), drew the attention of the Committee to paragraphs 15-33 of the report concerning the New York Computing Centre (NYCC). With respect to electronic data processing (EDP) programmes in Geneva, Vienna, UNEP and the regional economic commissions, he emphasized that the need for discipline and co-ordination which the Advisory Committee had emphasized with respect to NYCC applied to all centres. As for the International Computing Centre (ICC), Geneva, the decision to purchase a computer for ICC was inconsistent with the Secretary-General's view that "it would be inadvisable on economic and technological grounds to purchase a computer for NYCC" (A/31/255, para. 48). In conclusion, he drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 26 of ACABQ's report.

2. Miss MUCK (Austria) said that, in view of the rapidly rising levels of EDP expenditure on and the growing tendency to demand the development of new computer information systems without due regard to budgetary and cost-benefit considerations, she agreed with ACABQ that greater discipline was needed with respect to the use of EDP facilities (A/31/255, para. 15) and that an interdepartmental information systems board should be established (A/31/255, paras. 17-18). She also supported the development of guidelines for the use of EDP, as proposed by the representative of Canada (A/C.5/31/SR.9). With respect to the Secretary-General's request for additional financial resources, she accepted the recommendations of ACABQ as contained in paragraphs 19-23 of its report (A/31/255). However, the time had come to stop looking for stop-gap solutions and to attempt a more comprehensive approach. Accordingly, the Secretariat should examine the possibility of introducing modern programme budgeting techniques which had been applied successfully by several Governments, and in particular the revolving fund technique. If the latter technique was used, the cost of EDP facilities would not appear as a single appropriation on the programme budget, but as a separate item under the appropriation for each programme making use of EDP facilities. Each programme manager would then be able to purchase computer time and other services from the central EDP services and the full cost of the use of such facilities would subsequently be shown as a separate entry under the programmes for which they had been used. Several sections and programmes of the budget included, for information purposes, global figures indicating the total estimated apportioned cost of the use of such facilities, but such data tended to be more of a statistical reporting device and a tool of management. If the revolving fund technique was used, departments providing EDP services would sell those services to user departments, which would then pay for the services by transferring funds allocated to programmes specifically for EDP purposes. The aim was to increase cost-effectiveness by making each programme manager or user department fully accountable for the efficient use of EDP facilities. The

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(Miss Muck, Austria)

Secretary-General should therefore study the feasibility of using the revolving fund technique and should submit a report, together with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly.

3. Mr. TERADA (Japan) said that, although the number of individual tasks of work submitted to the computer had risen by 225 per cent and the total requirement for computer services would, in 1976, exceed the theoretical capacity of the equipment on its existing operating schedule, he had some doubts about the Secretary-General's proposal to replace the existing NYCC computer. Firstly, it was difficult to evaluate the proposal without information on its budgetary and cost-benefit aspects and, secondly, the more frequent use of the computer did not in itself justify the immediate replacement of the computer. Paragraph 16 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/31/3) showed that the operations carried out at NYCC ranged from the very simple to the very complex and further careful studies would have to be made before any decision was taken with respect to the installation of a new computer. In that connexion, he agreed with the proposal of ACABQ concerning the establishment of an interdepartmental information systems board (A/31/255, paras. 17-18) and with the conclusions reached by ACABQ in paragraphs 19 and 21 of its report (A/31/255).

4. As for the International Computing Centre (ICC) at Geneva, it was difficult to understand why the Secretary-General had decided to hire a computer for NYCC when it had been decided to purchase one for ICC. The centres at New York and Geneva had apparently adopted contradictory policies. He supported the recommendations of ACABQ as contained in paragraphs 31, 32, 33 and 48 of its report.

5. His Government attached particular importance to the Inter-organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities (IOB) which, in accordance with its new mandate, should be entrusted with co-ordinating the development of joint or compatible information systems within the United Nations system in order to promote economic and social development.

6. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta) asked why it had been decided to hire a computer at New York but to purchase one at Geneva. The two decisions were apparently inconsistent and he hoped that the Secretariat would provide further information on the basis for its calculations as quickly as possible. He reserved the right to return to the question at a later stage.

7. Mr. BOUAYAD AGHA (Algeria) said that he endorsed the recommendations of ACABQ (A/31/255). However, he could not understand why the Secretary-General had been unable to provide the Fifth Committee with the information on United Nations personnel which had been requested. According to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/31/3), personnel records had been computerized since 1965. He hoped that the information would be submitted.

AGENDA ITEM 102: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/31/154 and Corr.1-2; A/C.5/31/CRP.1) (continued)

8. Mr. SERBANESCU (Romania) said that the question of the equitable geographical

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(Mr. Serbanescu, Romania)

distribution of posts was extremely important from the point of view of both principle and the practical implementation of General Assembly decisions. There was no contradiction between the criteria of efficiency, competence and integrity on the one hand and equitable geographical distribution on the other. Equal weight should be given to both, since both were referred to in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

9. A large number of countries, particularly the developing countries, were underrepresented in the Secretariat, particularly at the decision-making level. Furthermore, the number of posts occupied by nationals from the developing countries had recently decreased. Such was the case with Romania and, despite the number of highly qualified candidates nominated, no Romanian had ever held a post above the P-5 level. As long as the decision-making posts in the Secretariat remained the prerogative of a very small number of countries, it would be difficult to speak of equality. The world had changed dramatically and smaller countries were playing an increasingly important role in international life, but the composition of the Secretariat had failed to reflect those changes. Recruitment methods should therefore be re-examined in order to ensure the adequate representation of all individual Member States, and not just groups of States. It was also important to guarantee the effective rotation of key posts which were normally held by a few countries and to ensure the rational distribution of posts at each level. His delegation would make an active contribution towards the application of those principles.

10. The Secretary-General's report (A/31/154) showed that efforts to ensure an equitable geographical distribution of posts had been inadequate. The principle of equitable geographical distribution should apply to a larger number of posts and should be extended to other bodies and types of activities, so that the actual number of nationals from each country could be correctly calculated. The picture provided by the report was incomplete and misleading. The number of permanent contracts should be further reduced in order to ensure flexibility and to promote the principle of equitable geographical distribution. In that respect, it was significant that more than 80 per cent of the 12,000 staff members had permanent contracts. In calculating the desirable range of posts for the developed countries, less weight should be given to the contribution and somewhat less to the population of those countries and more emphasis should be placed on the fact of membership in the Organization. The Secretary-General must make every effort to ensure the adequate representation of all countries, from the point of view of both the number of posts held and the importance of those posts. The difficulties involved were real but did not justify delays in implementing the decisions of the General Assembly. He was confident that, if all Member States made a sustained effort, the desired objective could be attained.

11. Mr. SEKYEI (Ghana) said that his delegation continued to attach importance to the membership factor and the principle of geographical distribution in the recruitment of staff for the Secretariat. The membership factor should be given greater weight than the contribution factor, since the sovereign equality of a State was not contingent on the amount of its contribution to the United Nations. Moreover, what might be an insignificant amount in relation to the annual budget of some States would represent a substantial percentage of the budget of developing countries. In that connexion, his delegation had not been satisfied by the statement of the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services to the effect

(Mr. Sekyi, Ghana)

that more than half the States with the minimum assessment had at least five of their nationals in posts subject to geographical distribution. It regretted, moreover, that 14 Member States, 10 of which were from the African region, continued to be unrepresented in the Secretariat. In the view of his delegation less weight should be given to the population factor.

12. There was no contradiction between geographical distribution and competence as criteria for the recruitment of staff. The Secretary-General was capable of defusing any pressure which might be brought to bear on him in his recruitment efforts. For example, in spite of all the verbal pressure the Fifth Committee had brought to bear on the Secretary-General at the thirtieth session, the percentage of women in the Secretariat had risen by only 1 per cent since that time.

13. With regard to the efficiency of the Secretariat, his delegation endorsed the position outlined by the United States representative at the sixth meeting of the Committee. Efficiency, integrity and competence in the Secretariat, however, must be harmonized with equitable geographical distribution. The virtues of efficiency, integrity and competence and the principle of geographical distribution were not mutually exclusive, and the latter virtues were not possessed only by the nationals of certain regions.

14. His delegation regretted the fact that 28 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights not one of the 17 Under-Secretaries-General and only one of 20 Assistant Secretaries-General was a woman. In the view of his delegation, sufficient efforts had not been made to increase the number of women employed in the Secretariat.

15. Mr. CARBONELL (Colombia) said that, notwithstanding the criticism expressed by some delegations in the debate, his Government considered that the Secretary-General was making a commendable effort to increase the recruitment of women. He was confident that priority would be given to recruiting women from developing countries, bearing in mind the fundamental requirement that all candidates should meet the standards laid down by the United Nations Charter. In addition, every effort should be made to promote more women who were already employed in the Secretariat.

16. The principle of geographical distribution was sound but the philosophy underlying Article 101 of the Charter required that the nationals of all countries without exception should meet the highest standards of efficiency and competence. All departments in the Secretariat, especially the Office of Personnel Services, must translate the spirit of that Article into practice by ensuring that there was broad participation by the qualified nationals of all Member States, who should be selected on the basis of competence.

17. His delegation was concerned about the pressures placed on the Secretary-General to recruit persons who in many cases were not of the required calibre. Its position in that regard was different from that of some delegations which would like to see institutionalized the practice whereby applications for Secretariat posts were transmitted through Governments. Such a practice would diminish the Secretary-General's autonomy in applying the criterion of efficiency and would prejudice the rights of political freedom of persons who would like to work for the

(Mr. Carbonell, Colombia)

United Nations but whose political philosophy differed from that of their Governments. Moreover, the staff members of the United Nations should dedicate their efforts to the international community and should not therefore be subject to any political pressures from their Governments. His delegation firmly believed that the Secretary-General should be able to select his staff without undue interference by Governments through their delegations.

18. The practice of recruiting high-level experts or advisers from among retired staff members caused his delegation some concern since it reduced the number of openings for young people and their input of fresh ideas. At the same time, the Secretary-General's autonomy to recruit the staff he deemed most suitable should be preserved. His delegation, together with other delegations which shared that line of thinking, would be prepared to sponsor a draft resolution aimed at restricting the practice of employing retired United Nations staff members.

AGENDA ITEM 102 (b): OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/31/264 and Corr.1; A/C.5/31/4, A/C.5/31/9)

19. The CHAIRMAN explained that the report of the Secretary-General on the JIU report on personnel problems in the United Nations and on the major recommendations of AMS appeared in document A/C.5/31/9 and a report by JIU on the implementation of the personnel policy reforms approved by the General Assembly in 1974 appeared in document A/31/264 and Corr.1. Document A/C.5/31/4 contained a note by the Secretary-General on amendments to the Staff Rules.

20. Mr. GHERAB (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that document A/C.5/31/9 was being submitted in response to the General Assembly's request at the twenty-ninth session for a progress report on the programme for implementing those recommendations of JIU and AMS which had been accepted by the Secretary-General.

21. A broad range of needed reforms affecting career management, job classification, promotion, delegation of authority, and recruitment of staff were being introduced into the personnel programme. The actions taken and planned were interrelated in that changes in any one component of the system had an impact on all other components. Moreover, consultations with the staff on proposed changes in each of the areas was an essential part of the system and was required under the Staff Regulations.

22. Progress in the reforms had not been as rapid as was desirable; understandably, the pace of change in an international environment was likely to be somewhat slower than in a national civil service.

23. The foundations for reform had now been laid and the progress made had been evaluated by JIU. Although the Secretary-General shared the view of JIU that the reforms should be substantially implemented in 1977 and 1978, he believed that the development of the necessary programmes might be more difficult and require more consultation than was envisaged in document A/31/264, and that it would take a further period of time before the full effect of the reforms was felt throughout the Organization.

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24. Some of the suggestions for action put forward in document A/31/264 would be of assistance in deciding upon the steps to be taken during 1977 and 1978. However, the Secretary-General, in exercising his responsibility as chief administrative officer under article 97 of the Charter must reserve the right to establish priorities and select the ways in which the Assembly's decisions would be implemented, subject to any further directives the Assembly might wish to give.

25. Mr. HAHN (Canada) said that his delegation had taken note of the problems encountered in the efforts to restructure the General Service category, as described in paragraphs 5 and 6 of document A/C.5/31/9. It was encouraging to note, however, that there was a large measure of agreement on a new seven-level structure, including specific recommendations, standards and guidelines for use in administering the new system.

26. A sound job classification structure was essential for good employee relations and equitable salary levels. In the light of the Secretary-General's comments in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/31/9 and the JIU report on the strike at the United Nations office at Geneva (A/31/137), his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to undertake a job-classification study of the General Service category in Geneva and urged that the study be completed as soon as possible.

27. Delays in the adoption of the job-classification systems were potentially detrimental to staff relationships. At the same time, the introduction of the systems by the Secretary-General must be effected in consultation with the International Civil Service Commission. Consultations with the staff, while essential, should not be allowed to delay their adoption indefinitely. The Secretary-General was empowered under the Staff Regulations to make appropriate provision for the classification of posts according to the nature of the duties and responsibilities required and as JIU had observed, there was no valid legal reason for further delaying a decision on that important question. As a matter of principle, his delegation believed that the job classification and the salary level should reflect first and foremost the responsibilities of a post rather than the length of service or qualifications of its incumbent. Another factor requiring that the question of reclassification be examined urgently was the present necessity of including technical personnel in the General Service category owing to the problems involved in making valid outside comparisons.

28. In view of the importance of the issue, his delegation would welcome the Secretary-General's comments on the possibility of introducing the new classification systems for General Service staff jobs in both Geneva and New York by the beginning of the thirty-second session and whether that measure would entail any significant financial implications. It would also like to see a time-table for the classification of existing posts, indicating when the classification system would become operational. If those comments were positive, his delegation would be glad to urge the Assembly to take whatever action was necessary to ensure that the new systems were established by September 1977.

29. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) drew attention to the comments made in paragraph 32 of document A/31/264 and asked the Secretariat to inform the Committee of its reaction to the plan proposed by JIU in paragraph 33 of the same report.

30. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta) said that his delegation would welcome more information on the financial, administrative and other implications of the suggestions made by JIU. It would also like to know whether the Secretariat felt that the criticisms voiced by JIU concerning the implementation of the personnel policy reforms were justified. He noted in particular that paragraph 33.A (k) of document A/31/264 seemed to imply that the Office of Personnel Services lacked the necessary specialists to implement the reform.

31. Mr. BOUAYAD AGHA (Algeria) said it must be recognized that the Office of Personnel Services had supplied Inspector Bertrand with all the necessary information for producing a very frank report. The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services undoubtedly had his reasons for not defending more vigorously the Secretary-General's policies in the face of the forthright comments made by JIU. The issue was of the greatest importance, and his delegation intended to submit a draft resolution that sought a happy medium between the position taken by the Secretariat and that taken by JIU.

AGENDA ITEM 96: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (A/31/75 and Corr.1-2, A/31/75/Add.2, A/31/227, A/31/233) (continued)

32. Mr. VIEIRA (Brazil) said that the higher priority given recently to the agenda item on administrative and budgetary co-ordination clearly reflected the importance the Fifth Committee attributed to the work of the Advisory Committee in that field. That, in turn, was a reflection of the growing concern of Member States with the need to establish a more rational framework for the activities of the system.

33. His delegation noted with concern that the increase in the expenditure of the United Nations system in the last two years had been due to inflation and currency fluctuations, leaving a very small margin for real growth. The rapid increase in expenditure was therefore the result of factors entirely outside the control of programme-formulating bodies and was not a result of a chaotic and irresponsible proliferation of programmes, as was often implied by some delegations which constantly advocated the introduction of greater discipline in the programme-formulation process.

34. His delegation noted with satisfaction the shift in emphasis from meetings, publications and documentation to technical co-operation activities in FAO and WHO. Unlike the United Nations, which carried out most of its work in conference rooms, the specialized agencies were assistance-oriented and should therefore devote the bulk of their resources to programmes of technical co-operation, without sacrificing truly essential meetings and publications. WHO had also taken a number of commendable measures in the area of personnel policies, in particular with regard to increasing the use of local technical and administrative resources available in developing countries.

35. The practice of ILO of meeting unbudgeted expenses in a given financial

(Mr. Vieira, Brazil)

period by way of advances from the Working Capital Fund and of reimbursing the Fund by way of assessments on Member States in the following financial period rendered its budgets virtually meaningless as indicators of expenditures to be incurred in a given budget period. That practice seemed to depart from the most elementary principles of sound budgeting and he therefore sought clarification from the representative of ILO in that regard. His delegation also requested an explanation of the disturbing phenomenon of grade creep to which ACABQ had drawn the Committee's attention.

36. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the appropriate organs of the agencies should consider the establishment of policies for the rotation of staff between Headquarters and the field.

37. His delegation welcomed the categorical assurances that Environment Fund resources would no longer be used for projects within the competence of individual agencies without proper prior consultation (A/31/227, para. 7). It was also pleased that the arrangements established for co-ordination between UNEP and the agencies were working satisfactorily as far as the Environmental Co-ordination Board and the "focal points" were concerned. With regard to the liaison officers and regional representatives, his delegation was looking forward to the results of the more detailed review promised by the Advisory Committee.

38. Owing to the nature of UNEP's mandate, co-ordination with the other organizations of the system was a major concern. Close co-operation and co-ordination should not, however, lead to undue interference by UNEP in the areas of the agencies' responsibility. As suggested by the Advisory Committee (A/31/227, para. 31), the Governing Council of UNEP must be kept fully informed of the extent of programme co-ordination between UNEP and other parts of the system, as well as of actions being taken by the specialized agencies in specific fields. His delegation welcomed the assurance given by the UNEP secretariat that in future efforts would be made to avoid errors of omission such as those mentioned in paragraphs 32 and 33 of the Advisory Committee's report.

39. The Advisory Committee had raised a number of important questions regarding the current financial situation of the Environment Fund and the way in which it might affect the rest of the system. UNEP must, as suggested by the Advisory Committee, be mindful that the agencies had their own budgetary constraints and priorities. The need to avoid upsetting those priorities was particularly acute whenever programmes of special interest to developing countries were involved. His delegation had consistently maintained that resources devoted to environmental activities should be additional to those available for activities directly related to economic and social development.

40. The important contribution which ACABQ could make towards enhancing the efficiency of services and the proper use of funds throughout the United Nations system should be taken into account when the Committee considered the question of the machinery established for purposes of administrative and budgetary control, investigation and co-ordination and before a decision was taken on the continuation of any part of that machinery. Duplication of any kind was counter to the very purpose for which that machinery had been established.

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41. Mr. MATSEIKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said he hoped the Fifth Committee would be more successful at the current session than it had been in the past in adopting measures to improve administrative and budgetary co-ordination and the machinery necessary for such co-ordination. Inadequate co-ordination was responsible for unnecessary increases in the budget of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and a dissipation of resources which resulted in inefficiency. As the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/31/233) indicated, total expenditures by the United Nations system, excluding those on peace-keeping operations financed outside the regular budget, had risen by nearly 45 per cent within two years. That alarming increase had, of course, been greatly exacerbated by inflation and currency fluctuations. In that connexion, his delegation favoured the approach recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 2150 (XXI) to the effect that increased expenditures caused by rising prices and other factors should be covered as far as possible by economy measures, review of programme priorities and a redistribution of resources. Unfortunately, the document submitted by the Secretary-General (A/31/75) contained no information as to how that resolution was being implemented, nor did the report of the Advisory Committee (A/31/233). Instead, the mistaken practice persisted of meeting such increases by raising the contributions of Member States, including those which were not in the least responsible for the capitalist scourges of inflation and currency fluctuations.

42. Unfortunately, the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee had provided no clear picture of the situation with respect to co-ordination or any real guidelines for improving it. The report of the Advisory Committee (A/31/233) contained virtually nothing about co-ordination and the elimination of duplication in the work of the various agencies. In fact, its only reference to co-ordination was in connexion with the rotation of professional staff between Headquarters, the regions and the field (paras. 185-193), which was useful, but of limited value.

43. His delegation approved, however, the Advisory Committee's approach to co-ordination questions in the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme. Its report (A/31/227) analysed the mutual relations between UNEP and other subdivisions within the United Nations system and produced recommendations. It correctly pointed to UNEP's central role within the United Nations system not only in the matter of co-ordination but also in gaining understanding of environmental problems on a global level and using the achievements of science and technology to facilitate government decision-making.

44. The report described the intersecretariat machinery for co-ordination in the field of the environment, but his delegation felt that the Advisory Committee and rightly cautioned against the allocation of too many resources to formal co-ordination. It indicated that UNEP still had a great deal to do to establish close co-operation with other parts of the United Nations system. UNEP had to exercise its overview responsibilities without duplicating the activity of agencies many of which had preceded the establishment of UNEP, and specialized agencies had to recognize the need for prior consultations with UNEP on the environmental aspects of their respective sectoral programmes.

(Mr. Matseiko, Ukrainian SSR)

45. His delegation welcomed the fact that considerable attention had been devoted in the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (A/31/38) to the co-ordination of programmes and it particularly welcomed the useful recommendations contained in paragraphs 23 to 34. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had rightly noted the inadequate co-ordination between UNIDO and the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations and had properly stressed that the preparations for the forthcoming United Nations Water Conference and the United Nations Conference on Desertification should be closely co-ordinated by the responsible secretariats. The Committee's concern about possible duplication of the future activities of the World Tourism Organization with those planned by the regional commissions was also fully warranted. The Committee was also right to stress the importance of improving the machinery of the United Nations and of its system for administrative and budgetary control, investigation and co-ordination. It was the CPC's task to review the Secretary-General's proposal for the development of experimental modifications in the existing procedures and techniques of the Secretariat, with a view to achieving effective internal evaluation. That essential task of internal evaluation could be performed adequately by CPC with additional support from the Joint Inspection Unit.

46. Mrs. DERRE (France), referring to the report of the Secretary-General in document A/31/75, said that the multiplicity and diversity of the bodies and organs established for purposes of administrative and budgetary control, investigation and co-ordination were all the more striking when compared with the results obtained by such bodies in the field of co-ordination. The Secretary-General had attempted in that report to give some idea of the cost of the bodies in question but the lack of a uniform presentation for the various bodies considered rendered comparison difficult. Her delegation wished to receive clarification regarding the marked differences in the expenditures for administrative and budgetary control in the various specialized agencies. It also wished to receive an explanation for the considerable variations in the cost of professional man-days within the various specialized agencies.

47. The legislative bodies of the specialized agencies should seriously review the question of internal evaluation and ACC could study the question of the establishment of an analagous system of control in the specialized agencies, taking into account the specific character of each agency.

48. With regard to the Advisory Committee's report contained in document A/31/233, her delegation regretted the lack of a common denominator in the budgets of the specialized agencies. The budget cycles of the various agencies differed, their budget practices were different and they even used different rates of inflation and exchange rates for the same country. There was, moreover, no uniform rule governing the use of working capital funds. Her delegation could not approve the practice of full budgeting which seemed to be in general use in all the agencies. The General Assembly should urge the agencies concerned to take steps to remedy the lack of budget uniformity in the United Nations system.

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(Mrs. Derre, France)

49. Her delegation was concerned with the rapid growth of the regular budgets of the specialized agencies and did not believe that inflation and currency fluctuations were the only factors responsible for that situation. At a time when many Member States, both developing and industrial, were forced to practise budgetary austerity, the executive directors of the specialized agencies should be made aware of the need for economy in their own budgets. They should, therefore, carefully scrutinize their agencies' programmes with a view to eliminating those which were obsolete or of marginal usefulness so that efforts could be concentrated on programmes which were of most benefit to the developing countries. They should, moreover, take steps to ensure optimum use of existing staff resources in order to avoid the need for additional staff. In addition, the promotion of staff members to excessively high levels in relation to their actual responsibility must be discontinued. Her delegation stressed that the biennial budgets of the specialized agencies were binding once adopted and could not be revised or increased except where there were truly compelling circumstances to do so.

50. With regard to the Advisory Committee's report on co-ordination between UNEP and the specialized agencies and IAEA (A/31/227), she indicated that her delegation would soon set forth its position on UNEP in the Second Committee. Her delegation was concerned with UNEP's financial practices and methods of budgetary control. It would be useful, therefore, to submit ACABQ's report to CPC for that body's consideration of the question of co-ordination between UNEP and the specialized agencies in 1977.

51. Mr. KARAMA (Sierra Leone) said that the increase in the volume and the complexity of the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies had resulted in the creation of a gigantic bureaucratic machine and that consequently it had been necessary to establish bodies to perform the tasks of co-ordination, supervision and control. His delegation was concerned that to a great extent the responsibilities assigned to the bodies which had been established were not clearly defined and that there seemed to be some instances of overlapping. His delegation therefore urged the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to eliminate overlapping wherever it existed. It welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to establish and maintain organs of co-ordination and information between the Secretariat and the specialized agencies and hoped that he would intensify his efforts in that direction.

52. JIU had clearly demonstrated its usefulness, and its status and functions, therefore, needed to be spelt out clearly in the light of its experience over the years. Accordingly, his delegation fully endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals contained in document A/31/75/Add.1. JIU should also be instructed to serve as an ombudsman to investigate complaints relating to personnel questions and to report its findings to the General Assembly. Finally, his delegation fully endorsed the principle of collective responsibility of the members of JIU. Any attempt by the inspectors to state their views individually would undermine the effectiveness of JIU.

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53. Mrs. MEAGHER (World Health Organization), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman and referring to the questions asked by the representative of the Philippines at the 14th meeting, said that the first World Health Assembly had adopted a resolution in 1948 deciding to utilize the United Nations scale of assessments. Accordingly, since that time, WHO had always assessed its member States on the basis of the scale adopted by the United Nations. Any variations from that scale of assessments resulted solely from adjustments to take account of differences in membership between the two organizations.

54. With regard to WHO's extrabudgetary resources and the proportion of total expenditure they accounted for, she drew attention to the table in the report of ACABQ (A/31/233, p. 51), which listed the various sources of extrabudgetary funds made available to WHO. The funds recovered from UNDP for programme support costs of activities financed by UNDP and from other extrabudgetary funds were credited to the Special Account for Servicing Costs and were used to help finance the regular budget. WHO's extrabudgetary resources were only slightly less than its regular budget.

55. WHO's programme budget did not reflect as separate items overhead costs or expert costs. However, WHO was participating actively in the CCAQ Task Force on the Harmonization of Programme Budgets and would of course take full account of decisions reached by that body in an effort to achieve system-wide harmonization.

56. Mr. VARKADOS (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, indicated in response to the question asked by the representative of the Philippines at the preceding meeting, that the chief functions of the UNESCO General Inspectorate were: (1) to assist the Director-General in the supervision and appraisal of programme implementation; (2) to carry out inspections of services and projects in the field; (3) to participate in the periodic and systematic appraisal of programme implementation activities at headquarters; (4) to follow up the implementation of measures taken pursuant to recommendations resulting from its appraisals and inspections; (5) to maintain relations with the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit; (6) to develop, in conjunction with the relevant departments and the Office of Personnel, measurements for evaluating staff productivity and an appropriate distribution of the workload; and (7) to conduct studies on work methods and procedures with a view to promoting better management and the rational functioning of the Secretariat.

57. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland), supported by Mr. RHODIUS (Netherlands), observed that no representative of the Office for Interagency Affairs and Co-ordination had been present during the Committee's discussion of agenda item 96 and suggested that the presence of a representative of that Office would be useful at future meetings devoted to that item.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestion of the representative of Poland would be brought to the attention of the appropriate Secretariat officials.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.