



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Republic)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 102: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 100: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 101: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued)

(a) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room LX-2332.

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

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 102: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(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)

1. Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany) said that agenda item 102 (b) was one which needed to be acted upon with urgency. Although the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/31/9) gave the impression that everything suggested and accepted in the past in the areas of staff structure, recruitment and staff management was diligently pursued, quite a different impression was gained from reading the JIU report (A/31/264).

2. His delegation did not maintain that the procedures suggested by JIU should be followed in all instances; in its view, the task of pre-recruitment training belonged to UNITAR. However, the JIU report confirmed its own impression of personnel administration in the United Nations, for example about the little use of the roster of candidates and the poor follow-up of competitive examinations.

3. Particularly where the areas of job classification, definition or occupational groups and restructuring of the General Services category were concerned, matters seemed to be treated somewhat lightly in the report of the Secretary-General. His delegation was largely in agreement with the Canadian delegation on the question of the approach to job classification and would like to know, for instance, whether the analysis mentioned in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report was complete and what the results were. It was also dissatisfied with the evasive description given in paragraphs 5 to 7 of the report.

4. The situation in Geneva was a particular cause for concern. In paragraph 7 of his report, the Secretary-General pointed to the special circumstances there and mentioned the JIU report on the strike in Geneva (A/31/137), but he remained silent about what had been done to improve the situation. Meanwhile, there was a spate of rumours. The Controller had gone to Geneva in September to study the situation, but the Assembly had not been told about his conclusions. His delegation had learnt that an action committee had been set up in Geneva to combat what was described as the passivity of the Administration, and that there was talk of another strike beginning on 10 November.

5. The Federal Republic of Germany was willing to back up the Secretary-General in any dispute with the staff, but it could not accept attempts to hide matters from the Assembly, nor did it want to stand idly by and later be asked to pay the bill. The representatives of the Secretary-General must therefore indicate clearly how serious the situation really was, what was being done to avoid a conflict, and whether the Administration was ready to deal with that possibility. For example, could one be sure that salaries would not be paid to those who stayed away from work, unlike what had happened on the occasion of the last conflict, when it had not been possible to identify the strikers?

/...

(Mr. Schmidt, Federal Republic of Germany)

6. His delegation had no desire to interfere unnecessarily with personnel administration. If, however, the Geneva situation risked getting out of hand, it must be discussed as quickly as possible before piecemeal and stopgap measures were taken. His delegation was aware that some aspects of the over-all situation in Geneva were scheduled under other items but, as there was no item covering all the aspects and as the situation was serious and urgent, the item now under discussion was sufficiently broad and was therefore as good as any for discussing the problem.
7. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that there was an urgent need to combat pervading cynicism over the role played by the Secretariat and over the future direction of the international civil service, the development of which had to be constantly nurtured by reform and renovation.
8. At the twenty-ninth session, his delegation had warmly welcomed the JIU report (A/8454) and the AMS report (A/C.5/1601/Add.1) on personnel questions, and the reports submitted by the Secretary-General at the thirtieth session and at the current session indicated that some limited progress had been made, in particular with regard to the candidates rosters and the change in the periodic report forms.
9. However, the latest JIU report (A/31/264) showed impatience with the slow pace of implementation of the reforms, and his delegation shared that impatience. It could not, therefore, accept the complacency reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, who stated that a significant beginning had been made to halt and reverse the downward trend and drift in the field of personnel policy and administration (A/C.5/31/9, para. 25). If the implementation of the proposals endorsed by the Assembly had proceeded at full speed with regard, for instance, to the restructuring and job classification of the General Service category, on which the Committee was told that a study in Geneva would start only in early 1977, the strike which had occurred in Geneva in the spring of 1976 might well have been averted.
10. With regard to the competitive selection of personnel about which Japan had some bitter experiences, JIU was entirely correct in stating (A/31/264, para. 21) that it would be totally useless to continue to develop the system if the problem of rapid placement of accepted candidates persisted, that the needs of the substantive departments would have to be determined before the examinations were held, that there was a need for strengthening the existing relationship between the Office of Personnel Services and the substantive departments and that the problem lay not in the system of competitive examinations itself but in the methods of work adopted by the Office of Personnel Services in identifying the needs and in dealing with substantive departments.
11. Despite the clear position taken by JIU and AMS, no change appeared to have been made in the method of filling posts in the Professional category by promoting members of the General Service staff. In his delegation's view, it

/...

(Mr. Akashi, Japan)

was vital to reserve the junior Professional grade in the main for qualified young applicants from universities. At the same time, it was urgent to restructure the Office of General Services by introducing additional grades. Furthermore, as many staff members as possible should be recruited at the junior level; that would have a salutary impact on the morale of the staff, improve promotion prospects, make the Secretariat more innovative and alleviate the burden of personnel costs on the regular budget.

12. In view of the importance of a comprehensive assignment system, including a scheme for rotation between duty stations, it was inexplicable that there had been so much delay in developing a system of assignment planning; in that connexion, he was astonished to learn that, according to paragraph 28 of the JIU report (A/31/264), there was no specialist in career classification in the Office of Personnel Services.

13. It was his delegation's impression that there were also some defects in the management sector. They manifested themselves, for example, in delays in the handling of correspondence. The letters sent by his delegation to senior officials of the Office of Personnel Services on 8 September and 13 September 1976 had not yet been answered, or even acknowledged. His delegation was also still waiting for an official reply to its request for clarification made at the thirtieth session with respect to the requirement of the knowledge of a second official language for promotion (A/C.5/SR.1765).

14. In view of the foregoing, it was encouraging to note that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) intended to undertake studies with respect to recruitment, career prospects, staff training, staff evaluation and the development of common staff regulations. ICSC also stated in its report that as much attention must be paid to the area of management as to the area of salaries and that greater economies could probably be realized through improved management than through action in the area of salaries (A/31/30, paras. 26 and 47).

15. Specifically, in connexion with the plan of reform recommended by JIU in paragraph 33 of its report, his delegation supported the measures suggested for 1977 in subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), (e), (f), (g), (h), (j) and (k) and reserved its position with regard to subparagraphs (d) and (i). It also accepted the measures recommended for completion by the end of 1978, except for those mentioned in subparagraph (f).

16. In conclusion, he hoped that radical changes would soon be made in personnel management and personnel policy, since the world community and the international civil servants deserved better policy and management than were now in force.

17. Mr. CLAVE (Philippines) said that he had taken note of the arrangements which, according to the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/31/9), had been made to meet the modernization crisis referred to by JIU in its report on personnel questions.

/...

(Mr. Clave, Philippines)

18. The definition of occupational groups recommended by JIU should be made for Professional and General Service staff together and should be applied not only in the original assignment of personnel but also in promotions. Furthermore, General Service staff members should be allowed to take competitive examinations. Those who passed the examinations could be included in the list of candidates and taken into consideration if no other qualified candidates were available to fill specific vacancies. In that connexion, it would be unfair to limit promotion prospects for General Service staff members merely because their countries were overrepresented.
19. The new procedure followed in evaluating the performance of staff members was a step in the right direction, since the staff member's own participation would, inter alia, promote greater co-operation and constructive dialogue between him and his superiors. His delegation also supported the Secretary-General's proposal to establish Appointment and Promotion Committees at various duty stations to collaborate with the Appointment and Promotion Board at Headquarters; that would be particularly desirable in the regional economic commissions.
20. Although length of service should be taken into account as a criterion in deciding promotions, it could not be the only criterion; accordingly, JIU and AMS were correct in the views they expressed concerning the promotion to the Professional category of General Service staff members with long service. He hoped that the General Assembly at its thirty-second session would have before it a report on the work of the career planning committees for the various occupational groups.
21. In conclusion, he said that, in the interest of the international community, the Secretariat must have an effective career planning system based primarily on the principles of Article 101 of the Charter.
22. Mr. GHERAB (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that he wished to reply to the speakers who had asked how the JIU report on the implementation of personnel policy reforms (A/31/264) - which presented a point of view quite different from that expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/31/9) - was to be interpreted and whether the recommendations on the action to be completed during 1977 and 1978 should be approved in the form in which they had been submitted, and, if so, what would be their financial implications.
23. In his earlier statement he had said that the Inspector, Mr. Bertrand, speaking from the standpoint of the Unit, had given a qualified appraisal on the progress achieved and had recommended priority goals for the next two years. He (Mr. Gherab) had stated further that the Secretary-General himself had expressed the view that the reforms should be substantially implemented within the next two years and had stressed that it was his prerogative to determine the work programme, subject to the directives which the General Assembly might give it.
24. He wished to emphasize that with his active support JIU had prepared its initial report on personnel problems and that the Office of Personnel Services had

/...

(Mr. Gherab)

co-operated continuously with the Inspector, to whom it had given detailed information, particularly in June 1976. Therefore, Mr. Bertrand's report (A/31/264) surprised him. They were in agreement, it was true, with regard to the goals to be achieved and he himself was concerned at the pace of implementation if the reforms were being implemented, but he felt that the problems which had accumulated over the past 30 years were not susceptible of such simple and speedy solutions as Mr. Bertrand seemed to suggest in his report, a document which, while it was very useful, contained certain statements which needed to be examined.

25. Mr. Bertrand indicated that it was possible that implementation of the reforms approved in 1974 would not be finished 10 or 15 years later. In arriving at that conclusion he had based himself on a single passage (para. 14) of the report of the Secretary-General in which it was stated that it would not be possible to make progress with respect to one question until progress had been made with respect to others. Yet in that same paragraph the Secretary-General stated that it was expected that that phase of the work would be completed during the course of 1977, which was not a very distant date, and in the letter which he (Mr. Gherab) had written to Mr. Bertrand in June 1976 he had stated that the working group had fixed May 1977 as the date on which it intended to submit its report. The Secretary-General firmly intended to hold to that date and was sure that during 1977 and 1978 the career planning committees would be set up. Consequently, it did not appear to be justified to broaden the scope of that particular statement in order to describe the Secretary-General's attitude.

26. With respect to a similar criticism made by the Inspector with regard to the restructuring of the General Service category in New York, it should be borne in mind that under the Charter the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, was responsible for the proper functioning of the Secretariat. He was well aware that at two important duty stations, Rome and Geneva, the organizations applying the common United Nations system had had serious difficulties with their staffs on the question of General Service salaries. The Secretary-General considered that if he had tried to implement a major reform such as the restructuring of the General Service category at Headquarters without at least the acquiescence of the staff, there would have been a direct confrontation which would have been contrary to the interests of the Organization. In his view, the immediate cause of the present difficulties was the lack of a satisfactory foundation on which to base the Organization's policy with regard to General Service salaries at the various duty stations. As stated in paragraph 6 of his report, the Secretary-General therefore proposed to transmit to ICSC the reports of the Chairman of the working group on the restructuring of the General Service category at Headquarters. Moreover, the General Assembly had now entrusted that problem to ICSC, which intended to begin studying it in the following year. The Secretary-General considered it much better to contribute his experience to ICSC in New York than to provoke a confrontation in that sphere.

27. That did not mean that the Secretary-General considered the staff to have any overriding power of decision in the matter, either statutorily or otherwise.

/...

(Mr. Gherab)

Under the staff regulations, the Secretary-General had an obligation to consult the staff and, as indicated by the Inspector, the staff for its part had the right to formulate proposals. After all, as the representative of Canada had said, the right to be consulted did not imply any responsibility with regard to the decisions adopted. The consultation process worked quite well at Headquarters without diminishing the authority to take decisions which, in accordance with the Charter, was vested in the Secretary-General in his capacity as the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

28. Replying to questions asked by the representative of Canada with respect to the job classification system and the financial implications of its implementation, he said that it would take at least nine months from the date on which that task was entrusted to the competent personnel to complete the preparation of a system applicable to General Service staff in New York and Geneva. With regard to Professional staff, he said that the basis of the system would have been established by the end of 1977 for all posts subject to the geographical distribution criterion or which required special linguistic qualifications. However, it would take another two years to classify all the Professional and General Service jobs in Geneva and New York in accordance with the appropriate system so that all that would then remain to be done would be to put the system into effect. That estimate of the time needed might seem high, but more than 3,200 Professional and more than 4,000 General Service jobs would have to be classified and several hundred job descriptions might have to be prepared. The implementation of a strict job classification system, particularly with respect to the General Service category, would doubtless give rise to new problems in connexion with pay adjustments, promotion prospects and career development.

29. The financial implications of the job classification for 1977 would be presented in a separate document. About \$172,000 would be needed for the classification of posts in the General Service category, and approximately \$193,000 for the Professional category. The Secretary-General did not propose to request further resources in connexion with those reforms. The cost of implementing the systems, once the job classification had been carried out, could be estimated only after the systems had been worked out.

30. Referring once again to the Inspector's report, paragraph 10 of which proposed a "second and speedier method" of introducing the reforms that had been needed for so long, he said that that method was, in effect, the one that had been adopted by the Office of Personnel Services. Measures had been, or were being taken with regard to each of the points proposed by the Secretary-General and approved by the Assembly only 18 months earlier, in December 1974. It was for the Committee to determine whether or not the Secretary-General's report demonstrated fully his desire to implement his proposals.

31. By way of example, he cited the occupational groups, which were referred to specifically as one of the aspects the Office of Personnel Services had begun to

/...

(Mr. Gherab)

implement very timidly. Those occupational groups had been in use since the first implementation of the long-term recruitment plan, a report on which had been submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session, and the definitions of occupations were continually being adjusted as the main units making use of them became more familiar with the idea and adapted it to their requirements.

32. He had also transmitted to Mr. Bertrand a list of the occupational groups employed in the Secretariat for both the candidates roster and the distribution of staff according to occupational groups. That list had been intended to be indicative and did not contain a detailed description of each occupational group. More detailed descriptions existed, in fact, for most of the occupational groups and were being prepared for others. Very recently, a combined list had been completed which contained information on 12 occupational groups in the General Service category and on 37 occupational groups in the Professional category, for the purpose of verifying information on careers of staff in the Professional and higher categories.

33. Another point raised by Mr. Bertrand to which he wished to revert and on which he had serious reservations, concerned the promotion of staff from the General Service to the Professional category towards the end of their careers. The Inspector proposed reducing the number of such staff by a third in 1977 and again in 1978, so that it would be reduced by two thirds, since many of the staff concerned on the whole possess a sufficiently high academic level or level of general training. He did not know on what data Mr. Bertrand based that conclusion with regard to recent promotions, and simply wished to point out that, of the General Service staff promoted to the Professional category in 1975, eight had the equivalent of a master's university degree, 14 the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, and six had continued their studies at university level. Only 14 had not completed their secondary education, and of those, only seven were over 45 years of age.

34. As was explained in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report, the Secretariat was currently undertaking a survey of the capabilities and experience of all staff in the General Service category who had pursued studies in some form beyond the secondary level, and was preparing competitive examinations to identify those possessing appropriate qualifications for promotion to the Professional category, which was a more positive method than adopting limits to resolve questions which should be dealt with on an individual basis. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee itself, in the report submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session (A/9841, para. 20), had supported the Secretary-General's thesis that the opportunity for passage to the Professional category should be afforded exceptionally to General Service staff who had demonstrated their potential.

35. In conclusion, he wished to make a number of observations on the objectives proposed by the Inspector in paragraph 33 of his report with regard to action to be completed during 1977 and 1978. The Secretary-General's report clearly showed the general direction of the anticipated measures relating to items (a), (b),

/...

(c), (d), (f), (g) and (j). He had already given his own views on item (h), concerning the setting of a limit for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category. With regard to item (e), concerning establishment of a system for rapidly filling the candidates roster, such a system was already in effect. A coherent network of contacts with national institutions and other competent bodies already existed and the Secretariat had no apparent difficulty in obtaining candidates. With regard to proposal (i), concerning the submission of a preliminary report for prerecruitment training for countries interested in a particular occupational group, the Secretary-General had stated in his report to the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/1601, para. 36), that, in his opinion, it was not for the United Nations to assume that responsibility. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General had studied the possibility of implementing such a system with UNITAR, which seemed to be in a better position to consider the question. The action to be completed by the end of 1978 did not call, therefore, for any further comments.

36. In conclusion, he wished to refer to subparagraph (k) and to paragraph 31 of the Inspector's report which dealt with the need to recruit specialists for the Office of Personnel. He wished to assure the members of the Committee and Mr. Bertrand that the Office of Personnel Services was able to implement the various proposals for reform made by the Secretary-General, except those regarding the particular sphere of the classification of posts, an operation which had not been carried out in the Organization for many years, but one for which the Secretariat had already recruited the competent experts.

37. He wished to stress again that the difference of opinion between the Inspector and the Office of Personnel Services related only to the method to be adopted and the evaluation of the difficulties to be overcome by the desired reform and not to the objective itself; the Inspector, with his initial report and his subsequent advice, had made a very useful contribution and the Secretary-General, for his part, had decided to apply the reforms proposed, to determine the procedure to be adopted for introducing them, and to carry them out as soon as possible.

38. Mr. BOUAYAD AGHA (Algeria) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services for the statement he had just made; that statement, together with Inspector Bertrand's report, gave an over-all picture of the situation. It was to be hoped that useful work could be carried out on that basis.

39. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said his delegation hoped that the record of the meeting would reflect in extenso the statement made by the Assistant Secretary-General which contained interesting and indeed surprising information, for example, in relation to the rights of the staff.

ITEM 100: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (A/31/11, A/C.5/31/L.7, L.8) (continued)

40. Ms. TROTTER (New Zealand) said that her delegation fully supported the principle of capacity to pay, which it interpreted as relative capacity to pay. The Committee on Contributions, despite a detailed examination of possible alternatives, had reached the conclusion that there was at present no acceptable substitute for national income as the principal measure of capacity to pay.
41. Given the unprecedented economic changes which had taken place in the past few years, there was less hope than usual that the Committee on Contributions would succeed in pleasing everyone in 1976. New Zealand was not happy with its proposed rate of assessment for the next triennium, 1977-1979. The year 1973 and part of 1974 was an exceptional period for the New Zealand economy with record terms of trade. The level of national income was boosted far above the long-term trend. Since then, its economy had been subject to severe external pressure with the result that between June 1973 and December 1975 there had been a 45 per cent decline in New Zealand's terms of trade. For those reasons, and on the basis of data published by the World Bank, the New Zealand authorities had concluded that, compared with a number of developed countries, the New Zealand assessment was too high. Consequently, New Zealand expected to make detailed representations to the Committee on Contributions and had no doubt that the Committee would examine its case closely and objectively.
42. Despite the reservations New Zealand had about the application of existing criteria, New Zealand felt that the guidelines which the General Assembly had given to the Committee on Contributions had served Member States reasonably well over the years. That was not, however, to suggest that they should not be re-examined from time to time. The Committee on Contributions, whose members were experts, should study some of the new and interesting ideas which had been put forward during the present session, bearing in mind that the overriding consideration must remain the principle of relative capacity to pay and that the capacity to pay should be assessed for each individual country.
43. Mr. CLAVE (Philippines) said his country's contribution that had been outstanding as of 20 September 1976 had been paid in full on 26 October. He requested the Secretariat to note that fact in the records. His delegation considered that the capacity to pay was the most appropriate basis for apportioning the expenses of the United Nations. With regard to the statement by the Committee on Contributions that there was no substitute for national income as the principal measure of capacity to pay, he pointed out that there was a lack of reliable information, apart from the national accounts of Member States. The lack of up-to-date information on national income statistics brought out the need in the United Nations for a sophisticated computer system to be used for the gathering and summarizing of statistical data. The Statistical Office should be given appropriate facilities to perform that kind of work. His delegation welcomed the increased emphasis by the Committee on the plight of the developing countries, particularly the least developed and the countries most seriously affected by the high cost of meeting their energy requirements and servicing their external public

(Mr. Clave, Philippines)

debt. The Philippines was included among the latter group of countries for, in spite of having adopted very strict measures for the conservation of energy, imports under that heading could not be covered by exports and the Philippines had to request loans from international banks. His delegation also agreed that the scale of assessments should remain in force for three years.

44. In 1976 the Philippines had been struck by two natural disasters: in May a typhoon had caused losses of \$200 million in property damage and had left 600,000 persons homeless; in August there had been an earthquake which had caused more than 8,000 dead and losses estimated at more than \$125 million. Hence, his delegation was glad to note that the Committee on Contributions had recognized severe economic losses caused by natural disasters and hoped that it would continue to consider that factor in the future. Furthermore, it had no objection to the new formula for the reduction of assessments because of low per capita income.

45. His delegation favoured the adoption of the report of the Committee on Contributions which had studied the various elements that could be of assistance in establishing an equitable scale of assessments. However, the Committee should not have imposed on it inflexible guidelines which would hinder the evaluation of other relevant factors. When the next scale was established, the opinions expressed during the discussion should be studied in detail. The Fifth Committee should invite the Committee on Contributions to explore other possibilities for bringing about a fairer application of the principle of capacity to pay.

46. Mr. BISHARA (Kuwait) said that the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions should not be regarded as a verdict to be accepted or rejected outright but simply as a draft which the Fifth Committee should study carefully and modify as it saw fit. His delegation did not approve of the secrecy with which the discussions of the Committee on Contributions were conducted and believed that contacts with Member States should be more open.

47. His delegation objected strongly to the conclusions of the Committee on Contributions. Neither the criteria which had been followed nor the form in which the conclusions had been presented were satisfactory. The economy of a country was an extremely complex reality, and the unprecedented growth of a single source of income was not enough to make the entire economy healthy. In his delegation's opinion, the principle of capacity to pay had been overemphasized and had been isolated from other crucial elements without which it was not possible to gain an accurate idea of the economy. The Committee on Contributions had failed to produce a satisfactory substitute for national income as a means of determining a country's capacity to pay. For countries like Kuwait, whose economy was still developing despite the fact that its national income was high, that criterion was unjust. It was also regrettable that the Committee on Contributions had not taken account of the assistance being given to other countries by a number of developing countries, including Kuwait.

/...

(Mr. Bishara, Kuwait)

48. His delegation felt that it was absolutely essential to postpone the application of the new scale of assessments for two years. Any increase should not exceed 15 per cent of a country's contributions, and the minimum contribution should be re-examined for the benefit of the least developed countries. The proposed scale of assessments was unjust and ran counter to the interests of the developing countries. His delegation therefore opposed the adoption of the report of the Committee on Contributions.

49. Mr. JAIPAL (India) said that he appreciated the efforts of the Committee on Contributions to find a substitute for national income as an indicator of a country's capacity to pay, although for the time being it had not proved possible to do so. Although the new scale of assessments was based on statistical information covering a period of great economic instability, the Committee had apparently taken the necessary precautions to avoid any over- or under-assessment. His delegation agreed on the need to revise the low-income allowance formula and found acceptable the proposed new upper limit of \$1,800 and new maximum reduction of 70 per cent. However, it felt that the duration of the scale of assessments should correspond to the biennial budgetary cycle.

50. Under the new scale, the assessments of nine developed countries would be reduced, the total reduction amounting to 3.56 per cent. His delegation trusted that the countries in question would forgo those reductions. Under the new scale, the assessments of 28 Member States would increase. Since the scale had been established on the basis of the strict application of agreed criteria, it was obvious that those criteria should be examined and revised, with a ceiling set in the case of developing countries. As for the floor level, he felt that all Member States should, as a matter of principle, pay a reasonable minimum percentage which should not, however, be so low as to detract from their dignity.

51. His delegation proposed that, in assessing Member States' capacity to pay, the Committee on Contributions should take into account their respective military expenditures.

52. His delegation was convinced of the need to revise the existing criteria. That should be done without delay, and other States, in addition to the members of the Committee on Contributions, should participate in the work. Meanwhile, for 1977 the new scale could be applied or the old scale continued for one year.

AGENDA ITEM 101: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued)

(a) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS (A/31/127; A/C.5/31/38)

53. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the proposal to renew the appointment of Mr. C. S. M. Mselle, and to appoint Mr. A. Abraszewski, Mr. T. Ouattara and

Mr. C. R. Thomas, to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. There were thus four candidates for four vacancies; on previous occasions when an election had not been contested, the General Assembly had dispensed with the requirement under article 92 of the rules of procedure that all elections should be conducted by secret ballot. He therefore suggested that the Fifth Committee should decide not to hold a secret ballot on the present occasion; should recommend by acclamation that Mr. Abraszewski, Mr. Mselle, Mr. Ouattara and Mr. Thomas be appointed to the Advisory Committee for a period of three years from 1 January 1977, and should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly on the matter.

54. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.