

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
THIRTY-NINTH SESSION
Official Records*



NOV 2 1984

FIFTH COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Thursday, 1 November 1984
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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

CONTENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. INDIRA GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

AGENDA ITEM 116: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/39/SR.20
6 November 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

84-57195 7495S (E)

/...

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

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. INDIRA GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

1. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of the Committee, expressed his heartfelt condolences to the Indian delegation, and through it to the Government and people of India, in their tragic loss. Mrs. Gandhi had been a leading light of the Commonwealth, and, as the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, had helped to rekindle commitment to the Movement's fundamental principles. She had been a world leader and a true friend of the United Nations.
 2. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India.
 3. Mr. TAKASU (Japan), on behalf of the Asian States; Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon), on behalf of the African States; Mr. RYDZKOWSKI (Poland), on behalf of the Eastern European States; Miss ZONICLE (Bahamas), on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States; Mr. KOCATURK (Turkey), on behalf of the Western European and Other States; and Mr. NYGARD (United States of America) paid successive tributes to the memory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.
 4. Mr. ROY (India), speaking on behalf of his delegation and the people and Government of India, expressed his profound gratitude to the Chairman and the members of the Committee for their kind words of sympathy and solace and for their tribute to his country's departed leader.
- AGENDA ITEM 116: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/39/453, A/39/483 and Add.1; A/C.5/39/2, A/C.5/39/4 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.5/39/6 and Corr.1, A/C.5/39/9, A/C.5/39/11, A/C.5/39/17 and A/C.5/39/23)
5. Mr. AGAIANTS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation's position on personnel questions was based on Article 101 of the Charter. In particular, strict observance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution was necessary to ensure that all political, ideological and economic systems were represented in the Secretariat, a consideration which was fully compatible with the need to recruit highly competent staff.
 6. It was disappointing that, despite numerous General Assembly resolutions, the personnel situation remained unsatisfactory. An alarming trend was apparent from the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/39/453). Since 1982 there had been no substantial change with regard to unrepresented and under-represented States, while States over the midpoints of their ranges and over-represented States had increased their representation. Indeed, although during 1980-1982 the number of over-represented States had decreased from 60 to 26, it had subsequently increased to 32, while the position of certain under-represented countries had worsened over the past year.

(Mr. Agaiants, USSR)

7. Of the 225 appointments made to geographical posts between July 1983 and June 1984, only 46, or 20.5 per cent, had been of nationals of unrepresented or under-represented States. No explanation had been given for that, or for the failure to implement the various General Assembly resolutions earmarking 40 per cent of all vacancies for such candidates. It seemed that the heads of some Secretariat departments were ignoring the will of Member States. Those responsible for sabotaging General Assembly decisions should be identified and disciplined by the Secretary-General.

8. The Soviet Union, after finally reaching the lower limit of its desirable range, had moved back into the category of under-represented States in June. The explanation offered in the Secretary-General's report was, to put it mildly, strange. The fact was that General Assembly resolution 35/210, which requested the Secretary-General to prevent any decrease in the representation of Member States whose nationals served primarily on fixed-term contracts, was not being implemented. Urgent measures were needed to remedy such an abnormal situation. The midpoint of the desirable range was the only equitable indicator of representation. Only when all States were at their midpoints would there be neither over-represented nor under-represented countries.

9. His delegation had always supported the idea of recruitment planning, and fully endorsed the efforts of the Office of Personnel Services (OPS) to implement the medium-term recruitment plan. However, that would require strict compliance with General Assembly resolutions and a commitment by the Secretary-General to end the current unsatisfactory situation by 1985. Implementation of the plan would be facilitated by regular co-ordination between unrepresented and under-represented States and OPS, in order to prepare bilateral plans for the recruitment of nationals from each State concerned.

10. Many distortions in United Nations personnel policy could be corrected by strengthening OPS, as had been called for in resolution 38/231. Unfortunately no practical measures had been taken to that end. Certainly, no further delegation of authority in personnel matters seemed appropriate.

11. His delegation wished to draw attention to the unsatisfactory composition of a number of Secretariat departments, in contravention of resolution 37/235. Additional measures were clearly required. OPS should allocate some 80 to 90 per cent of all vacant posts subject to geographical distribution to unrepresented and under-represented Member States. No candidates should be recruited from over-represented countries or those at or above their midpoints until all Member States had reached the lower limits of their ranges. Its Government endorsed recruitment missions by OPS to unrepresented and under-represented countries, and was making considerable efforts to identify potential candidates to assist such missions in recruiting specialists from the Soviet Union.

12. Its delegation supported efforts to husband resources and would be interested to see the results of the temporary suspension of recruitment. In that connection, the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat submitted at the fortieth session should include a breakdown of vacancies existing on

/...

(Mr. Agaiants, USSR)

14 September 1984, and details of the number of posts becoming vacant between that date and 14 March 1985; the number of such vacancies filled by external candidates and the number used to promote staff members while the suspension was in effect; and the exact amount of resources saved as a result of the suspension. Although his delegation endorsed the aim of saving resources, the suspension should be implemented in such a way as not to hamper the recruitment of candidates from under-represented countries. Further, it should not contravene resolution 35/210 concerning the replacement of staff members on fixed term contracts.

13. The practical effect of competitive examinations for the movement of staff from the General Service to the Professional category had been to increase the representation of over-represented States or States which were above their mid points, since their nationals constituted an overwhelming majority of the General Service category. His delegation thus proposed that such examinations should be discontinued until all States were within range. Such a step would be all the more equitable since the established ratio of 30:70 for internal and external candidates recruited by competitive examination had been disregarded in favour of internal candidates. There were no facts to justify the conclusion that competitive examinations should be extended to P-3 posts. The Secretariat should thoroughly consider the question and submit a report on it at the next session.

14. The system of career development as currently conceived basically reflected the Western concept of an international civil service. The Soviet Union, and other countries, sent specialists to work in the Secretariat on fixed-term contracts, which had proved their viability and superiority over permanent contracts, as evidenced by the growing number of fixed term contracts awarded by the United Nations Secretariat in recent years. Those critical of fixed-term contracts should consider the positive experience of specialized agencies such as UNESCO. Permanent contracts provided opportunities for irresponsibility, since the Secretariat was in effect powerless to dismiss mediocre and incompetent workers.

15. The system of permanent contracts led to the establishment of a closed cosmopolitan caste of international civil servants who tended to lose all contact with their home countries. It not only prevented an inflow of active new manpower and experience reflecting the diverse realities of the modern world, but denied States the opportunity to benefit from the useful experience of specialists returning to their home countries after the expiration of a fixed-term contract. Permanent contracts thus represented a form of the "brain drain".

16. The use of fixed-term contracts enabled the Secretariat to respond more quickly to changing activities and requirements. Where permanent contracts prevailed, the Organization had to enlarge the staff and use expensive outside experts and consultants. Furthermore, the prevalence of permanent contracts at all levels was one of the chief obstacles to the implementation of a number of General Assembly resolutions concerning the need to increase the representation of developing nations in senior and policy-formulating posts. Attempts to solve that problem by artificially inflating the number of senior posts were clearly counterproductive. A better solution would be to make posts at the D-2 level subject to the same appointment procedures and conditions of service as posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General level.

/...

(Mr. Agaiants, USSR)

17. The Soviet delegation accordingly favoured an increase in fixed-term contracts as a means of improving the efficiency of the Secretariat. It also believed that the career development system being worked out by the Office of Personnel Services should take the interests of those staff members serving on fixed-term contracts into special consideration. Until that was done, it would be impossible to start implementing the concept of career development. His delegation could not therefore agree to the increase in the staff and financial resources of OPS proposed in document A/C.5/39/11 and would vote against any request for additional appropriations.

18. The idea of including expensive training programmes in the system of career development was of dubious value. His delegation would like exact data for training costs for the period 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983 and the projected costs for that purpose in the near future. Spending resources on staff training was incompatible with the principle of recruiting only highly competent specialists to work in the Organization. In that connection, the Soviet delegation also supported the conclusion of the report on the status of linguistic skills in the Secretariat (A/C.5/39/6) that there were no grounds for changing the existing system of incentives.

19. In conclusion, he noted that in future it would probably be sufficient to consider personnel questions only once every two years, in so-called off-budget years. That would not only permit more comprehensive preparation for the discussion but would also mean substantial savings in conference-servicing resources, since the number and volume of reports as well as the number of meetings would be reduced.

20. Mr. GRECU (Romania) said that staff costs which represent more than two thirds of the Organization's budget, had risen continuously over the years without any corresponding improvement in efficiency. Attention should, therefore, be concentrated on making the Secretariat as a whole more efficient rather than increasing the number of posts or raising salaries or post adjustments. In that context, his country appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts towards that end.

21. The Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/39/453) showed that the inequities in the representation of Member States in the Secretariat subsisted. Referring to table 9 in that document, he observed that in the case of some over-represented countries, the number of posts held was 200 per cent or even 400 per cent higher than the upper limit of their desirable range. Of the countries which were within range, many were at the lower limit or close to it. He stressed that the responsibility of OPS for ensuring the equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat did not end once a country reached the lower limit of its desirable range.

22. The situation with regard to the "qualitative" representation of Member States had also deteriorated. The number of countries with no senior posts had risen to 100, and 65 per cent of such posts were held by only 16 countries, or under 10 per cent of the Member States.

/...

(Mr. Grecu, Romania)

23. The policy with regard to new appointments was the most glaring example of the continuing discrimination in favour of the over-represented countries. During the period covered by the Secretary-General's report, of the 225 appointments made to posts subject to geographical distribution: 40 had gone to over-represented Member States. While there had been no recruitment from 30 unrepresented or under-represented States, between one and four or even more officials had been recruited from 20 over-represented countries, two from a country which already had 300 per cent more posts than the upper limit of its desirable range, and one from a non-member States. The percentage of recruitment from under-represented countries was barely half the 40 per cent target set by the General Assembly, while that from over-represented countries was almost double the upper limit of 10 per cent. Furthermore, the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category tended to increase the representation of already over-represented States still further. It was clear, therefore, that current recruitment policy in fact tended to perpetuate and even intensify inequalities.

24. In order to eliminate the existing imbalances, a more sustained effort and firmer measures were required from all those concerned with personnel matters. An effort must be made to implement all General Assembly decisions on personnel matters, not merely some of them. The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services had described the new policy which OPS hoped to apply. His delegation did not find the justifications offered for the non-implementation of the General Assembly's resolutions, especially those on geographical distribution and the appointment of women, very relevant. It wondered whether the fact that human resources planning was not yet fully accepted in the Secretariat was really the basic cause for the fact that the medium-term recruitment plan had remained largely a dead letter, and whether the absence of reliable statistics was really the reason for the fact that there had been no recruitment from under-represented countries. If that was so, how, with the same statistics, had there been continued recruitment from over-represented countries?

25. The causes of the current unsatisfactory state of affairs went much deeper. In his delegation's view, they centred on the reluctance of the Secretariat to implement certain General Assembly decisions. His delegation hoped that that reluctance would be overcome and that the Administration would improve recruitment policy by taking firm and specific steps to ensure the just and equitable representation of all States. Certain measures were required immediately, including an increase in the number of posts subject to geographical distribution, greater use of fixed-term appointments and the suspension of recruitment from over-represented countries. Without such action, the situation would remain largely unchanged.

26. His delegation had been particularly disappointed by the totally inadequate treatment accorded to Romanian candidates for Secretariat posts and the entirely insufficient level of Romanian representation. The Secretary-General's report gave the impression that the question of Romanian representation had been settled but in fact the problems persisted. One Romanian national had been recruited during the reporting period, not "nationals" as stated in paragraph 7 of the report (A/39/453), but even so, the level of Romanian representation was still at the lowest level of the desirable range.

/...

(Mr. Grecu, Romania)

27. His delegation would have preferred the recently announced six-month suspension of new appointments not to apply equally to under-represented and over-represented countries, since that would help to perpetuate inequalities. It would be much more equitable to apply the suspension only to over-represented countries or those at the midpoint of their ranges, and for a longer period than six months. It should also be borne in mind that the representation of over-represented countries could be increased through promotions from the General Service category rather than new appointments. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had drawn the Committee's attention to serious failings by the Secretariat in regard to the organization of competitive examinations for P-1 and P-2 posts. For example, the number of posts earmarked for the recruitment of external candidates through competitive examination had been five times less than the level requested by the General Assembly. Among the reasons for that situation, JIU had mentioned bureaucratic resistance to the General Assembly's resolutions in the form of a refusal to disseminate information on vacancies, the manipulation of temporary posts and refusal to change existing habits. Given the wholly inadequate way in which the General Assembly's directives regarding the examinations for the P-1 and P-2 levels had been put into effect, the Romanian delegation had serious reservations regarding recruitment to the P-3 level through competitive examination.

28. Mr. MOHIELDIN (Sudan) said that, as the Assistant Secretary-General had indicated in his statement to the Committee at its 14th meeting, between June 1983 and June 1984, appointments from unrepresented and under-represented countries had constituted only 20.5 per cent of appointments, as against a target of 40 per cent while appointments from over-represented countries had been 17.8 per cent as against a target of 10 per cent. Despite the many General Assembly resolutions calling for equitable geographical distribution, the gap between the over- and under-represented countries was increasing. The result was a more limited and rigid Organization with little capacity for innovation.

29. The basic problem was the methodology used in selecting and evaluating candidates for appointments. The procedures described in the various reports should be revised and an effort made to eliminate those negative aspects which resulted in unfair geographical distribution.

30. General Assembly resolutions 35/210 and 38/231, among others, had laid down the general principles on which personnel policies should be based. They had called in particular for increased representation of unrepresented and under-represented countries in senior and policy-formulating posts. Although, according to those resolutions, priority should be given to candidates from developing countries they were not always able to present the required academic qualifications. Provision should therefore be made for the evaluation by competent technical bodies of the practical abilities and qualifications of such candidates.

31. With regard to competitive examinations, he said that adoption of the proposal to use only the working languages of the Secretariat, English and French, in future competitive examinations would adversely affect countries using other languages and could further increase the already unfair geographical distribution of posts.

/...

(Mr. Mohieldin, Sudan)

32. The Secretary-General had told the Committee that one of his main objectives in suspending all recruitment for six months was to improve the efficiency of the Secretariat. He had claimed that his policy would be flexible and would not affect programme delivery. One result of his decision, however, would be more internal promotions which would affect the composition of the Secretariat and undermine equitable distribution still further. Moreover, filling senior posts from within the Secretariat would deprive the Organization of fresh talent. Posts which might be left vacant as a result of the suspension of recruitment had been authorized in the budget, which was in itself less than the Secretariat had proposed as the minimum required in order to carry out the programmes of the Organization. The approved budget already reflected the concern to ensure efficiency and productivity. The freezing of posts was usually a temporary measure, designed either to overcome a particular financial situation or to cover certain priority needs. If the freezing of vacancies was regarded as a means of increasing efficiency and productivity, however, it became a continuing rather than a temporary measure. His delegation feared that the direct practical impact of the freeze would be to hamper programme delivery and to create further imbalances in geographical distribution.

33. Mr. NTAKIBIRORA (Burundi) said that it was clear from document A/39/453 that efforts had been made to correct the existing imbalance in the geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat. Such efforts must however be continued as the results to date had fallen far short of the targets set by the General Assembly for the recruitment of women and nationals of unrepresented and under-represented States. In particular, there was a need to increase the representation of African States at the senior levels of the Secretariat.

34. Despite the generally satisfactory results of the competitive examination system, there were still instances in which political pressure was used to influence appointments. His delegation proposed that, in the immediate future, priority should be given to holding external examinations in unrepresented and under-represented countries, especially developing countries. He also welcomed the view expressed by JIU that competitive methods of recruitment should also be used by other agencies of the United Nations system. It was also essential that action should be taken to overcome the resistance offered in certain Secretariat departments to the recruitment recommendations of OPS.

35. His delegation could not support the suggestion that the system of recruitment by competitive examination should be extended to posts at the P-3 level as such a system would place too great a weight on university degrees and would thus be prejudicial to candidates from less developed countries.

36. He noted that the system of incentives to language study established by General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII) seemed to be functioning satisfactorily, and that the Secretary-General's new proposals for improving linguistic balance in the Secretariat would have financial implications. His delegation continued to believe that the opportunity to improve their skills and to receive accelerated step increases should be incentive enough for staff to acquire a knowledge of additional official languages.

/...

(Mr. Ntakibirora, Burundi)

37. His delegation had noted the Secretary-General's proposal to implement a more rational career development system; it supported the goals of such a system and would be prepared to approve reasonable expenditure on it.

38. On the issue of the privileges and immunities of staff members, his delegation considered that the relevant principles should be applied consistent with strict respect for the laws and internal regulations of Member States.

39. Mr. KAZEMBE (Zambia) said that the various reports on personnel questions helped the Committee to understand the approach of the Administration to the problems of recruitment, career development and geographical distribution. His delegation considered that top priority must be given to increasing the representation of the under-represented States and therefore welcomed the assurance given by the Assistant Secretary-General that increased efforts were being made to recruit from those States. While some progress appeared to have been made on the issue, the reports indicated a continuing trend of recruitment from countries which were over-represented. Little real progress appeared to have been made in the recruitment of women.

40. The earmarking of 30 per cent of Professional posts for recruitment by internal competitive examination would do little to improve the geographical distribution of posts. As a result of resistance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/210, only 15.1 per cent of all new appointments during the reporting period had gone to successful candidates in external national examinations. That was far below the 70 per cent target set by the General Assembly. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's acceptance of the JIU's recommendation No. 1 (A/39/483, para. 56). The Secretariat must pay greater attention to the views set out in paragraph 6 of the JIU report (A/39/483) if equitable geographical distribution was to be achieved. There was also a need for a wider geographical distribution of posts at the policy-formulating level. Implementation of the JIU recommendations on the use of competitive examinations would go a long way towards achieving greater equity in the geographical distribution of posts and the recruitment of women.

41. Ms. CONWAY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the ten member States of the European Community, said that the reports before the Committee provided the first opportunity to review the implementation of the personnel policy which had been outlined the previous year by the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services. That policy had been structured on the basis of three essential interrelated points, namely: the implementation of a medium-term recruitment plan for the period 1983-1985; the progressive organization of a sound career development system; and the establishment of a new style of staff-management relations.

42. The Ten shared the view of the Assistant Secretary-General that the overall results to date of the application of the medium-term recruitment plan had been somewhat disappointing; they were particularly concerned that the concept of human resources planning had not yet been fully accepted in the Secretariat. There was a

/...

(Ms. Conway, Ireland)

need to improve the operational methods of OPS in the exercise of its authority in all personnel matters, including more widespread and timely publicity for Secretariat vacancies; in that connection, they had noted with interest the proposals contained in document A/C.5/39/11. There was a need for continued monitoring of the medium-term recruitment plan, but it should not be forgotten that the special measures taken at the beginning of 1984 had been expected to produce significant results by the end of the year in terms of improved representation of unrepresented and under-represented Member States.

43. The Ten had noted with approval the Secretary-General's statement that the motivation behind the recent six-month recruitment embargo and other temporary measures had been to increase Secretariat responsiveness to the Secretary-General's consistent search for increased efficiency. They welcomed, in particular, the Secretary-General's statement that those temporary measures would not affect programme delivery and that the embargo would not apply to cases in which programmes would be adversely affected if recruitment was not effected immediately.

44. The Ten had in the past supported the use of competitive methods for recruitment at the junior levels of the Secretariat and were therefore prepared to accept the Secretary-General's proposal that the competitive examination system should be extended on a trial basis to P-3 posts, provided that the candidates met certain basic standards. They also felt that an adequate number of P-1 and P-2 level posts should be maintained. The Secretariat should implement the JIU recommendations designed to correct shortcomings in the organization of competitive examinations.

45. The Ten welcomed the proposals for a career development system for all categories of staff contained in document A/C.5/39/11. They had noted that the planned system was expected to improve staff morale and thereby productivity and efficiency; appropriate training should be an integral part of such a plan. The Ten also expected that the proposed system would take into account the view which they had previously expressed that, in career development and promotion, there must be equal opportunities for women. They were also glad to note that the proposed plan would apply to staff in the General Service and related categories as well as to Professional staff; career prospects of General Service staff had often received inadequate attention.

46. The Ten would take a final position on the financial implications set out in document A/C.5/39/11 in the light of the comments of the ACABQ thereon and also reserved their position on the potential upgrading of posts which might result from the implementation of the job classification exercise referred to in paragraph 11.

47. The Ten had noted from document A/C.5/39/9 that, while some 20 departments or offices in the Secretariat had achieved the 25 per cent goal established for the proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, the proportion of women was still substantially below the desirable level elsewhere. They welcomed the prospect that the representation of women in the Professional category would exceed the target which, in their view, should be raised by the end of the

/...

(Ms. Conway, Ireland)

United Nations Decade for Women in 1985. As only 10 per cent of the candidates submitted by Governments for inclusion in the Roster were women, the Ten renewed their appeal to Governments to submit the names of female candidates on an equal basis with men; the nomination of additional numbers of qualified female candidates was essential if representation of women in the Professional category was to be significantly improved.

48. The Ten had previously expressed the view that it was highly desirable that the staff should be encouraged to acquire additional language skills, taking account of the special position of those staff members whose mother tongue was not one of the official languages. Document A/C.5/39/6 showed that staff members were sharing an increasing interest in the development of their linguistic skills; that trend should be strongly encouraged.

49. The Ten believed that a frank and open dialogue between the Administration and the staff should lead to improved understanding and co-operation; they therefore welcomed the current review of mechanisms and procedures for conciliation and appeal, as well as the study on the possibility of appointing an Ombudsman for the Secretariat.

50. The Ten had noted with interest the Secretary-General's conclusion in paragraph 8 of his report (A/C.5/39/17) that there were signs that the efforts of Member States and the Organization in recent years were beginning to have a positive impact on the level of respect for the principles governing the privileges and immunities of officials. They were pleased to see that the majority of the new cases reported in the period September 1983-August 1984 had been successfully resolved but were nevertheless concerned about the 10 new cases specified in table 1 of document A/C.5/39/17 in which the Secretary-General or the appropriate executive head had not been able to exercise his responsibility for the protection of United Nations officials. The Ten therefore called upon the countries concerned to co-operate with the Secretary-General or the executive head in accordance with the relevant international legal instruments. The Ten also welcomed the Secretary-General's implementation of a number of measures recommended by the Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee designed to improve the efficiency of the Organization's response to cases involving arrest and detention of officials. They would also appreciate any up-to-date information resulting from the Secretary-General's inquiries concerning those staff members who had been reported missing in recent years.

51. All Member States had an inescapable duty to observe Article 105 of the Charter. The independence of international civil servants was absolutely essential to the fulfilment of their task. In that connection, the Ten also recognized the obligation of staff members to observe the laws and regulations of host countries.

52. Miss ARCHINI (Italy) said that document A/39/453 had shown that the total number of staff from Italy had not increased since the thirty-eighth session. That situation was the more serious in that, following the increase in Italy's contribution to the regular budget for the current biennium, its desirable range

/...

(Miss Archini, Italy)

had increased accordingly. The number of Italian Professionals in the Secretariat continued to be below the lower limit of her country's desirable range. She emphasized that there was no lack of qualified Italian candidates and expressed the hope that the recruitment mission which had visited Rome in May 1984 would lead to the appointment of more Italian nationals. Her delegation also hoped that the candidates selected through the national competitive examination in Rome at the beginning of October would be recruited within a reasonable time.

53. The Assistant Secretary-General had indicated that, among the possible causes of shortcomings in personnel policy, had been the reluctance on the part of some departments to accept decisions by OPS. Member States should not be adversely affected by the consequences of internal problems within the Secretariat. In that connection, her delegation had observed that current procedures for the selection and appointment of candidates were particularly slow, and ordinary administrative measures, such as requests for internal transfers, had become increasingly difficult to implement.

54. With regard to the temporary suspension of recruitment, her delegation understood that cases already under consideration would be resolved during the current session and hoped that due consideration would also be given to other cases which might arise.

55. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) welcomed the presentation of FICSA and its emphasis on the common interests and goals which Member States shared with the Secretariat. Those common interests were sometimes obscured by the institutionalization of the world community's inability to resolve certain seemingly intractable problems, such as apartheid or the Palestinian question, and the perpetuation of structures established to deal with issues which had largely been overcome, such as trusteeship matters and decolonization machinery. In neither case should the Organization be faulted when it was clear that the failures lay with Governments. The Secretariat should not be a scapegoat for Member States' lack of political will: it was a service organization reflecting the wishes and intentions of the international community. Member States needed to renew their commitment to an efficient Secretariat and help improve the morale of international civil servants, more than half of whom worked in the field, sometimes in circumstances where they were subject to arrest, detention and enforced disappearance.

56. With regard to the administration of justice in the Secretariat, staff morale had been badly affected by the serious backlog of cases before the Joint Appeals Board. His delegation believed that reform of the existing machinery was necessary, and favoured the proposal contained in document A/C.5/39/23 for an Office for the Administration of Justice. His delegation also supported the proposal for an office of Ombudsman at Headquarters. The required staff could probably be redeployed from within the Secretariat and the office must have complete independence and impartiality. In the light of experience, similar offices might well be established at other duty stations.

(Mr. Pedersen, Canada)

57. For an organization that spent over 70 per cent of its budget on personnel, little attention was paid to human resources planning and career development. That was a primary cause of inefficiency, and as a result of that neglect, there was little flexibility in resource deployment, occupational groups had become encrusted, and recruitment and appointment was done on an ad hoc basis. Departments had a tendency to pursue their own short-term interest, and there was insufficient input from OPS and no comprehensive strategy for personnel placement, rotation and career development. Only a small percentage of staff had been able to move progressively through the system, and most had been left to stagnate, particularly in the middle range of the Professional category.

58. A serious commitment to career development and human resources planning would pay considerable dividends in terms of staff morale and better service to the goals of the United Nations itself; it would also make for economies, reducing the need for outside recruitment and consultants. The beginnings of an overall strategy and work programme were found in paragraphs 15 to 19 of document A/C.5/39/11. If it was decided to maintain the Career Development and Placement Unit, additional human resources would probably be required and should be made available through redeployment. A system of rotation would also be beneficial for career development, and consideration should be given to the possibility of exchanges of Professionals between the United Nations and other organizations.

59. His delegation wished to see increased efforts made in the sphere of the recruitment and promotion of women. It would also be wise to examine fully the question of career development for General Service staff and consider whether a unified system based on occupational lines would serve the needs and goals of the United Nations. Lastly, the linkage between training and career development was at present inadequate, most training being related to languages. Once the Organization had determined the kind of work-force it needed over the medium to long term, then training could be geared to career development.

60. Mr. EL-HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), said that his delegation wished to stress the importance of the principles contained in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. In keeping with those principles, the General Assembly had adopted a number of resolutions with a view to establishing balanced representation in the Secretariat and reforming personnel policies. Regrettably, however, it was clear from the Secretary-General's report (A/39/453) that there had been little constructive co-operation between departments in implementing those resolutions.

61. Representation was still inequitable because of the insufficient number of posts subject to geographical distribution in comparison to the total number of posts financed from the regular budget. The percentage of such posts had, in fact, dropped over the previous year from 33.5 per cent to 33.4 per cent. At the same time, the number of unrepresented Member States had increased from 14 to 15 and the number of under-represented countries had decreased only marginally, from 25 to 24. Appointments from the over-represented countries, however, covered a wide range of posts. Moreover, the situation with regard to senior and policy-formulating posts was particularly unacceptable. Since 1982, there had been

(Mr. El-Houderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

a downward trend in the representation of developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and in that of countries with centrally planned economies, yet there had been an upward trend in the representation of other groups at the senior levels.

62. His delegation believed that definite obstacles had been placed in the way of implementing the various General Assembly resolutions on personnel questions. Firstly, the hegemony of certain countries, which had succeeded in dominating the Secretariat especially at the senior levels, created a situation of inequality of opportunities. Secondly, bureaucratic resistance within the Administration was a major obstacle to any kind of reform. That could be seen, for example, in the practice of tailoring the requirements for post to the qualifications of the favoured candidates, the reclassification of certain posts to promote specific persons, and the withholding of information about possible vacancies. There had also been insufficient co-ordination between OPS and other departments regarding the advertisement of vacancies.

63. It was not the case that some countries were unrepresented or under-represented at the higher levels because they did not seek senior posts for their own nationals. For example, his country, which was under-represented, had endeavoured without success to improve its position within its desirable range through the nomination of qualified nationals and participation in the competitive examinations. Despite the fact that the Secretary-General had favoured an increase in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's representation, no practical measures had been taken in that direction.

64. Unrepresented and under-represented countries constituted the large majority of Member States, and effective measures were required to achieve a more equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat and to uphold the principles contained in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. Improved co-ordination was needed between OPS and other departments, and the Secretary-General should play a major role in that matter. Implementation of the various General Assembly resolutions on personnel questions should be carefully monitored and information concerning any violation of those resolutions should be submitted for action by the General Assembly.

65. Finally, it was essential to ensure respect for the privileges and immunities of international civil servants. In that connection, his delegation deplored the mass detentions of UNRWA staff in the occupied Arab territories by the Israeli authorities in violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.