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FIFTH COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Friday, 26 October 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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

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ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

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)

1. Mr. ROZHKOVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), observing that the unrepresented and underrepresented countries in the Secretariat totalled 15 and 24 respectively, stressed the need for an equitable representation of the various political, ideological and economic systems of the world in the Secretariat and the bodies of the United Nations. The Ukraine was among the underrepresented countries, an anomaly which should be corrected. In his delegation's view, the award of permanent contracts, a practice which was becoming more prevalent, represented the main obstacle to equitable geographical distribution. The lack of rotation meant that the developing countries and the underrepresented countries were prevented from sending qualified personnel to the Organization. Over the long term, that practice would have to be abandoned; for the time being, no more permanent contracts should be awarded to the nationals of countries whose quotas had been filled.

2. In so far as the efficiency of the Secretariat was concerned, the Secretary-General had adopted measures the short-term effects of which were difficult to evaluate. The decision to freeze recruitment for six months might be detrimental to the underrepresented countries inasmuch as it would prevent them from presenting candidates. It would have been far more logical to freeze recruitment from overrepresented countries and to fill the vacancies by taking on nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented countries. On the other hand, the decision to recruit all candidates at the P-1 and P-2 levels by competitive examination was a sensible measure that should be extended to the P-3 level. Furthermore, every effort should be made to fill P-1 and P-2 posts with young people.

3. Appointment delays were another problem which the departments and the Secretariat should overcome by forceful measures. Thus, for example, only one of the five Ukrainians who had recently passed the competitive examination had been appointed; that situation was not acceptable.

4. Still on the subject of the efficiency of the Organization, he said that his delegation was concerned about increasing interference by the Staff Council in decisions affecting the organization of the Secretariat, in particular the award of permanent contracts. Such interference was contrary to both the spirit and the letter of Article 97 of the Charter, by which all authority over the staff was vested in the Secretary-General, and was detrimental to the interests of Member States. Secretariat officials had a duty to assist in furthering the objectives of the Organization, paramount among which were the maintenance of peace and the promotion of economic and social development. They should therefore be selected solely on the basis of their skills and dedication.

5. Mr. DITZ (Austria) said that personnel policy should be based on the two main principles embodied in Article 101 of the Charter, namely, the criteria of efficiency, competence and integrity, and the need to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. All Member States had subscribed to those principles. The Office of Personnel Services had made commendable efforts to apply the principles, but shortcomings had nevertheless been detected by the Joint Inspection Unit. To remedy those shortcomings, his delegation proposed that the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following measures. First, P-1/P-2 posts should, as a general rule, be filled by means of a competitive examination, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/210. Secondly, recruitment by competitive examination should be extended to the P-3 level. Thirdly, the number of countries in which competitive examinations were held should be gradually increased so as to make the competitive examination the only recruitment method up to the P-3 level. The adoption of those measures would ensure that staff members had the requisite efficiency, skills and qualifications.

6. Regarding career development, he said that in a period of international crisis, when the prestige of the Organization was increasingly being questioned, it was more than ever necessary to have a dynamic and innovative Secretariat which would inspire respect instead of scepticism. It was therefore necessary to reward merit and dedication and encourage initiative and efficiency in the Secretariat. Accordingly, if the plan proposed in document A/C.5/39/11 was truly essential to a career development system, it should be financed and implemented without delay.

7. Mr. NAGGAGA (Uganda) welcomed the fact that the Secretariat had finally embarked on the formulation of a co-ordinated personnel policy consisting of three basic elements: the implementation of a recruitment plan designed to bring about the equitable representation of all countries, the establishment of a sound career development system at all levels, and the introduction of a new style of staff-management relations to deal with all problems of common interest.

8. With regard to the first element, the situation was still far from satisfactory: there were still too many underrepresented countries. Remedial action should be taken and might include, for example, assistance to those countries in the form of manpower training to enable them to present candidates to the Organization. Likewise, in order to achieve a balanced composition of the Secretariat and also to set an example, the Organization should recruit more women; the conference to be held in 1985 at Nairobi to mark the end of the United Nations Decade for Women would provide a real opportunity for progress in that area.

9. As to the second element, career development, his delegation would like the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services to inform the Committee how he intended to win full acceptance of the concept of rational human resources planning. In that regard, his delegation would be interested to learn the reason for the reduced availability of P-1 and P-2 posts, and it wished to reiterate that no post should be the exclusive preserve of a country or group of countries. Furthermore, an increasing number of nationals of developing countries should be placed in policy-making posts.

(Mr. Naggaga, Uganda)

10. Regarding the third element, his delegation welcomed the establishment of periodic staff-management consultations and hoped that the existing difficulties could be overcome by that means.

AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued) (A/39/30 and Corr.1; A/C.5/39/13 and A/C.5/39/18)

11. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. McLurg, President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA), to introduce document A/C.5/39/18, which contained the observations of FICSA concerning the United Nations common system.

12. Mr. McLURG (President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations), speaking on behalf of the members of 27 staff associations and unions of the United Nations system, said that the staff in the common system were anxious above all else to assure the effective functioning of the organizations of the system. Aware of the current political and economic climate, they firmly believed that Member States had the right to monitor the functioning of the secretariats of the organizations concerned. They none the less felt that a distinction must be made between constructive criticism of, and ill-informed attacks on, the international civil service.

13. It was worth emphasizing that, of the 50,000 international civil servants in the United Nations system, 30,000 - including 18,000 locally recruited General Service staff - were working in the field. The vast majority of the staff were thus engaged in providing direct support to Member States in the achievement of one of the objectives stated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, namely, the economic and social progress of the peoples. Working often in difficult or even hazardous circumstances, all that such staff asked was reasonable conditions of employment and the financial and other resources with which to carry out their tasks. It could not be over-emphasized that those development workers, coming from so many organizations of the common system and representing such a variety of disciplines, were also entitled to receive the support of all Member States. It was in that spirit that FICSA, whose role was to defend the legitimate rights and interests of the staff, came before the Committee. Its purpose in doing so was not to submit a list of requests which would have the effect of increasing the contributions of Member States but rather to reaffirm staff solidarity with the aims and ideals set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the constitutions of the organizations of the common system.

14. In so far as paragraphs 1 to 4 of document A/C.5/39/18 were concerned, he trusted that the General Assembly would request the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to study further the question of the level of remuneration for the Professional and higher categories and to make definitive recommendations on the subject to the Assembly at its fortieth session, and that it would also recommend that ICSC re-examine the question of long-service steps during 1986.

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(Mr. McLurg)

15. With regard to the ICSC recommendations on pensionable remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/233, section III, FICSA had consistently opposed the new approach taken by ICSC, which established a direct link between pension benefits in the United Nations system and those in the United States federal civil service. Although, in accordance with the Noblemaire principle, the federal civil service was the comparator for the establishment of the United Nations salary scale within the framework of total compensation comparisons, it had never been used as a comparator for pension benefits and for very good reasons (A/C.5/39/18, para. 11). Firstly, the United Nations pension scheme was fully funded, whereas in the federal civil service pension scheme any shortfall in contributions was regularly made up from the federal budget. Secondly, the circumstances of United Nations staff members, most of whom were expatriates, were very different from those of United States civil servants. Moreover, when the latter were posted abroad, they joined the Foreign Service, which had a much more generous retirement scheme. Thirdly, the average federal civil servant had a career span 50 per cent longer than that of his United Nations counterpart.

16. With regard to the scale of pensionable remuneration proposed by ICSC, he noted that, according to a report prepared by the Wyatt Company for FICSA, a proper comparison showed that the current United Nations scale for the Professional and higher categories was less advantageous, for most grades, than the corresponding federal civil service scale. Furthermore, FICSA estimated that, since the new scale was based on 1984 data, it should have taken effect on 1 July 1984 and not, as ICSC had requested, on 1 January 1985. As for the savings to Member States and participants under the new scale, the Fund's income would be reduced by some \$10 million a year, which would hardly improve the actuarial balance.

17. With respect to the decision taken by the General Assembly to defer any adjustment in pensionable remuneration which might become due in 1984, FICSA had consulted two eminent international lawyers on its validity. Taking into account the opinion of those two experts and the fact that the trigger point for an adjustment had been reached on 1 July 1984, most organizations of the common system had already applied the 5.4 per cent adjustment which had become due on 1 October 1984. FICSA therefore requested the General Assembly to implement the adjustment of pensionable remuneration with effect from 1 October 1984.

18. Referring to the question of post adjustment, which was of great concern to the staff in a number of duty stations, he drew attention to the intense discussions conducted on the subject by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ), ICSC and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). Moreover, the decision which the Commission had adopted, with only one dissenting voice, had been accepted unanimously by the executive heads and the staff. It should be noted, however, that the decision had had the effect of freezing the level of post adjustment in certain duty stations, while in others, for the first time, there had been a reduction in take-home pay.

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(Mr. McLurg)

19. Concerning conditions of service for staff in the field (A/C.5/39/18, para. 26), he emphasized that most organizations of the common system had been founded before the system's operational role in development activities had been foreseen. It followed that the staff rules and regulations of those organizations were frequently inappropriate to the requirements of that category of staff members. Governments, for their part, had, in general, recognized the particular needs of their expatriate staff by offering them completely different conditions of employment. In establishing the scheme for classifying duty stations according to living and working conditions, ICSC had embarked on a similar course. In that connection, FICSA welcomed the improvements to the scheme made during the current year, although much remained to be done. Accordingly, the Federation particularly welcomed the decision taken by ICSC at its twentieth session to establish a tripartite working group to recommend a rational framework for the determination of field benefits and entitlements. FICSA trusted that the General Assembly would encourage ICSC to pursue that complex and urgent task.

20. Recalling that at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly he had drawn the Committee's attention to the very positive measures adopted by ACC concerning staff security, and noting that no staff member of an organization which had fully implemented the measures was currently under detention (A/C.5/39/18, para. 16), he regretted the fact that the Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations (A/C.5/39/17) failed to mention the ACC decision. Similarly, although the report referred to the discussions which had taken place in the United Nations Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee, no information had been provided concerning similar consultations in any of the other organizations of the system, even though the ACC decision emphasized the need for such consultation. Reiterating the proposal made in paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/39/18, he urged the Committee to request details of the measures adopted by each organization of the common system. In addition, he renewed the request in paragraph 17 of the same document concerning the protection of staff members in high-crime field duty stations.

21. Referring to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Staff costs and some aspects of utilization of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat" (A/39/522), he noted that part II of the report dealt with questions relating to remuneration, which were of interest to all organizations of the common system and which fell within the competence of ICSC. It should be noted in that context that the Inspectors had not only intervened in questions of general policy which were not within their purview, but had done so without consulting the administrations and staff.

22. Furthermore, the JIU report contained many factual errors. A full analysis of those errors was annexed to his statement, copies of which were available to all delegations. In paragraph 11, for example, reference was made to an "increase" in the share of staff costs in the Organization's budget, from 65.8 per cent in 1982-1983 to 63.5 per cent in 1984-1985; yet, those figures appeared to indicate a decrease. In addition, had the Inspectors compared the growth in staff costs with

(Mr. McLurg)

that of the budget, they would have noted that the rate of increase in staff costs (2.5 per cent from 1975 to 1984) had simply kept pace with the general rate of increase in the regular budget (2.57 per cent over the same period). According to paragraph 25 of the report, the presence on the roster of a significant number of candidates from countries with highly-paid civil services meant that United Nations staff were adequately remunerated. If that argument were true, it would not be possible for the Federal Republic of Germany (with 187 candidates on the roster) and Italy (with 140 candidates on the roster) to be so poorly represented in the United Nations Secretariat.

23. The assertion in paragraph 30 that United Nations staff members received education grant benefits which were unknown in the comparator service was both incorrect and incomplete. Only internationally recruited staff members serving outside their own country, who constituted a minority of the staff of the common system, could receive an education grant. Furthermore, although federal civil servants had no entitlement to an education grant when serving in the United States, they were entitled to a grant when serving abroad.

24. In paragraph 37 of their report, the Inspectors stated that the "last review of United Nations salaries was undertaken in 1972", which gave the impression that they were unaware of the work in that area which ICSC had performed since 1975 and of the periodic recommendations which it had made to the General Assembly since that date.

25. Finally, with respect to the "other sources" that Inspector Efimov had mentioned when introducing the JIU report in the Committee, it should be noted that they consisted of commercial publications which were consistently hostile to the United Nations. It was legitimate to wonder whether they constituted appropriate sources of information for the preparation of a factual report to the General Assembly. In view of the factors mentioned, FICSA urged the Committee to recognize the problems raised by the manner in which the JIU report had been written, as well as the inaccuracies it contained, and to decide that the report should be referred to ICSC for comments, before being submitted to the General Assembly at a subsequent session.

26. The Fifth Committee occupied a unique place among all the governing bodies of the United Nations: it had a legislative function vis-à-vis the United Nations Secretariat, and it legislated on certain matters of importance to all the organizations and staff of the common system. However, FICSA had the impression that in recent years those two distinct roles had become blurred. Moreover, it was convinced that, as the General Assembly had consistently emphasized, it was essential to maintain the independence and effectiveness of ICSC in order to strengthen the common system, while at the same time recognizing the differences in the organizations applying it. FICSA therefore trusted that the General Assembly would continue to maintain those principles, and pledged its full support to that end.

27. Mr. McLurg withdrew.

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28. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Gurunlian to introduce document A/C.5/39/27 containing the comments by the Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System regarding the United Nations common system.

29. Mr. GURUNLIAN (Co-ordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations) said that, in offering its comments, the Co-ordinating Committee, which represented some 20,000 staff members throughout the world, hoped to focus not only on the conditions of service of international civil servants, but also on improving the efficiency of the organizations which applied the common system.

30. Among the major issues affecting the common system, the question of pensions was one of the most sensitive. Most international civil servants had no resources other than their pension when they retired. Indeed, many of them, because they were expatriates, had no access to a national social security system. It was not surprising, therefore, that any questioning of their pension benefits should be seen as a threat to their financial security in old age and aroused considerable protest among the staff at large.

31. He indicated that the arguments against deferring any increase in pensionable remuneration were set forth in the document submitted by the Co-ordinating Committee, and he hoped that the Fifth Committee would agree, in accordance with ICSC's recommendation, to implement the increase which had become due on 1 October 1984.

32. With regard to the new scales of pensionable remuneration proposed by ICSC for the Professional category and above, the Co-ordinating Committee had expressed strong reservations about the methodology used. It believed that the Noblemaire principle could not be strictly applied in the case of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. First, the United Nations did not have a social security system and therefore the Pension Fund must provide for the welfare of the orphans and surviving spouses of international civil servants. Second, the dispersion of staff members and retirees in a multitude of countries with different economic conditions, different costs of living and different rates of inflation made comparison with any national system difficult, if not impractical. It was clear that the United States federal civil service pension arrangements were not geared to meeting the same type of problems.

33. The question of pensionable remuneration could not be dealt with separately from pension benefits. The debate on that subject at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly had caused considerable emotion among the staff of the whole system and, at the extraordinary meetings of staff which had followed, the participants had mandated their representatives to reject any further reduction in benefits. In that respect, it should be pointed out that for any persons seeking employment, and especially for those who joined the Organization, the pension benefits they could expect were a major consideration, and they were bound to feel that any reduction in benefits constituted a downgrading of their original terms of

(Mr. Gurunlian)

employment. Nevertheless, the participants' representatives, largely taking into account the concerns of the General Assembly, had agreed to a compromise, or package of measures, aimed at eliminating the actuarial deficit. Those economy measures included, on the one hand, several reductions in benefits and, on the other, recommendations to increase the contribution rate to 24 per cent and to extend the mandatory age of separation to 62 years. The staff now feared that the Fifth Committee would approve the reductions but might postpone or reject the other recommendations, which were the most significant ones for the elimination of the actuarial deficit.

34. In that regard, he reminded the members of the Committee that the contributions for the staff of the World Bank were set at 24.15 per cent of gross salary, of which 17.15 per cent was borne by the employer, and that the contributions of the staff of IMF represented 36.5 per cent of gross salary, of which 29.5 per cent was borne by the employer. With regard to the mandatory age of separation, it should be noted that some organizations had already introduced the proposed flexibility. The Co-ordinating Committee therefore urged the Fifth Committee to accept the package recommended by the Joint Staff Pension Board in its totality and not selectively.

35. The Co-ordinating Committee was gratified to see that ICSC had finally addressed the problem of staff members who had been at the top of their grades for too many years. While it would have preferred the introduction of more than one additional step, the Co-ordinating Committee believed that the ICSC recommendation would have a very positive psychological effect and trusted that the General Assembly would endorse it.

36. The Co-ordinating Committee was grateful to the Fifth Committee that its proposal to increase the education grant for disabled children to 100 per cent of costs up to the agreed limit had been approved and implemented in 1983. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had agreed to set a target of 2 per cent for recruitment of disabled persons. It was important that the United Nations, as a socially minded employer, should set an example in that respect. The Committee would be pleased to see the General Assembly recommend that the whole United Nations system should adopt such a policy.

37. Regarding the question of post adjustment, it was regrettable that the results of the cost-of-living surveys had led again to a reduction of the level of post adjustment indices in the major European duty stations in spite of the fact that, in the past 10 years, remuneration in those duty stations had not kept pace with the increase in the cost of living. The Co-ordinating Committee nevertheless welcomed the adjustment for the base city introduced by ICSC. That decision had been based on figures irrefutably demonstrating the error of the former methodology. The members of the Fifth Committee were undoubtedly aware of the high cost of living in New York. The Co-ordinating Committee was confident that the Fifth Committee would not challenge the final decision on post adjustment taken by one of the Organization's most respected bodies.

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(Mr. Gurunlian)

38. Questions had been raised concerning the comparability of United Nations remuneration with that of the comparator civil service. In that respect, the Co-ordinating Committee wished to draw attention again to the additional compensation provided to the staff of the comparator civil service seconded to international organizations. As long as that practice was in force, it would be very difficult to convince the international civil servants that their remuneration was adequately determined in relation to the best paid national civil service. For example, a United States civil servant seconded to an international organization in Geneva would, on his return, receive a payment of several thousand dollars for each year of service in that duty station. The Co-ordinating Committee urged the Fifth Committee to address that problem, which affected the independence of the staff and their confidence in the system.

39. With regard to conditions of service in the field, the Co-ordinating Committee welcomed the progress made by ICSC in studying field questions. It would nevertheless be desirable in the future for greater attention to be paid to those staff serving far from designated duty stations, such as UNICEF and UNHCR project workers. In particular, a more co-ordinated approach should be undertaken to provide housing, especially in isolated areas.

40. The Fifth Committee had before it a report by the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Staff costs and some aspects of utilization of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat". The staff were extremely concerned at the inclusion in the agenda of the Fifth Committee of recommendations relating to the common system without their having been reviewed by the International Civil Service Commission. However, the General Assembly had established a mechanism through which staff could be heard by ICSC before recommendations or decisions were adopted. The submission of a document directly to the Fifth Committee, bypassing ICSC on issues which had been discussed at length at its various sessions, reflected blatant disregard for the consultation process.

41. Since the question of the increased cost of the Organization lay at the heart of that JIU report, the Co-ordinating Committee wished to remind the General Assembly that the base salary for Professional staff had not been increased in 10 years. The increase in staff costs was therefore entirely due to the greater number of staff needed to carry out new programmes mandated by the legislative bodies. However, the implicit allegations that staff were becoming more and more costly and less and less efficient could not go unchallenged. Thousands of staff members who had dedicated their lives to the goals and ideals of the United Nations were bound to feel deeply hurt by such allegations.

42. Finally, with regard to staff members who had been detained or arrested in contravention of the principle of the immunity of international civil servants, the staff of the United Nations respectfully requested all States detaining international civil servants to review their position and to release them without further delay.

(Mr. Gurunlian)

43. The staff recognized that for millions of men and women the United Nations represented the best that humanity had to offer: hope. For their part, staff members would continue to do their utmost to ensure that those who had placed their confidence in them would never be disappointed.

44. Mr. Gurunlian withdrew.

AGENDA ITEM 110: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Statements of programme budget implications

45. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) pointed out that in section II, paragraph 7, of resolution 38/227 A of 20 December 1983, the General Assembly had reaffirmed its request to the Secretary-General to provide the General Assembly with programme implications of draft resolutions being considered by the Assembly in accordance with the following general guidelines: (a) each statement should be an integrated statement of programme, financial and administrative implications; (b) each statement should indicate how the activities proposed in the draft resolution fulfilled or reinforced the objectives and strategies of the current legislative mandate; (c) each statement should provide, for decision by the General Assembly: (i) an analysis and recommendation by the Secretary-General for the funding of the proposed activities; (ii) an analysis of alternative solutions to the funding of the proposed activities through existing or additional appropriations; (iii) further indications of clear implications of the draft resolution with regard to the existing programmes within the relevant sections of the programme budget, in the case of possible funding through existing resources. In addition, by the same resolution, the General Assembly had decided that the adoption of new resolutions by the General Assembly would not imply the elimination of existing activities or programmes carried out as a result of legislative mandates, nor the elimination or reduction of resources appropriated to them by the Assembly, unless the Assembly expressly decided otherwise.

46. With regard to subparagraph (c) (iii), the agreed text of the resolution had referred to "relevant section". However, in editing and finalizing the text of the resolution for submission to the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly, the plural had been erroneously introduced. The Secretariat wished to assure the members of the Committee that, in the interpretation and practical application of the resolution, it would respect the wording of the agreed text.

47. In order to initiate the implementation of that resolution, the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board had issued in July 1984 instructions to programme managers on the kind of information that should be submitted to the central management whenever proposals before the General Assembly would generate changes in the approved programme of work, with or without the need to request additional resources. To assist programme managers and their staff in that new task, samples of instruction forms and of statements of programme budget implications to all the substantive Main Committees had been issued.

(Mr. Ruedas)

48. Essentially, the old procedure for providing statements of administrative and financial implications would continue to be followed. However, in accordance with section II, paragraph 10, of resolution 38/227 A, the statements of programme budget implications to a substantive Main Committee would indicate: (a) the new activity or activities contained in the draft resolution and their relationship to the approved programme of work; (b) the way in which they would be implemented; (c) the modifications that would be required in the approved programme of work for the current biennium; and (d) the additional requirements, if any, at full cost. Should the proposal be recommended by a substantive Main Committee for adoption by the General Assembly, a statement of programme budget implications would be submitted to the Fifth Committee in accordance with section II, paragraph 10, of the resolution. In addition to the elements in the statement to the substantive Main Committee, that statement would include an analysis of alternative solutions to the funding and, in particular, an indication of: (a) whether the fully costed additional requirements could be absorbed in whole or in part within the approved programme budget for the current biennium; (b) if so, the means by which that could be achieved, i.e., by the delay of some stages of the implementation of an existing activity, by the curtailment of some of its aspects, or by its termination, provided that such activity had no direct legislative mandate or was not deemed necessary to the implementation of another mandated activity; and (c) the net cost of the additional requirements for which new appropriations would be requested from the General Assembly. That net cost should be determined after the possibilities of absorption had been considered.

49. The experimental application of those new methods and procedures was a complex and time-consuming task. However, the Secretariat hoped that, with the co-operation of all delegations, the procedure for statements of programme budget implications would be introduced smoothly. Finally, in accordance with section II, paragraph 12, of resolution 38/227 A, the Secretary-General would report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twenty-fifth session, on the experience gained in implementing that section of the resolution.

50. Mr. EL-SAFY (Egypt) said that, to avoid any subsequent risk of confusion, the error in resolution 38/227 pointed out by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management should be corrected. He asked whether it was intended to issue a corrigendum. In any event, the resolution clearly provided that the procedure used so far for the administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions would also apply thenceforth to programme implications, and it clearly defined the respective roles of the Fifth and other Main Committees. He trusted that it would be correctly interpreted by the Secretariat.

51. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) believed that the text of the Under-Secretary-General's statement should be made available to delegations.

52. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) stressed that the aim of the new procedure was to improve consideration of the programme implications of draft resolutions, and not to weaken the authority of the substantive organs. He trusted that, without waiting until the fortieth session, the changes deemed necessary in the light of experience would be made. He reserved the right to return to the question.

53. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) agreed with the representative of Egypt that a corrigendum should be issued. In his capacity as Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), he recalled that the procedure detailed in resolution 38/227 was in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly concerning the respective spheres of competence of the Fifth and other Committees. Moreover, it was being implemented on an experimental basis and could be reviewed - in accordance with the provisions adopted at the thirty-eighth session - during the twenty-fifth session of CPC and the fortieth session of the General Assembly. The Committee would also have an opportunity to consider the matter when it took up the CPC report and when the statements of implications envisaged were submitted to it. Finally, if the system was not satisfactory, Member States could decide to abandon it.

54. Mr. NYGARD (United States of America) said that he shared the concern expressed by the representative of Japan. The fact that, under the procedure outlined by the Under-Secretary-General, the Fifth Committee alone decided the measures to be taken to finance activities proposed within existing resources was likely to hamper the other Main Committees in the full discharge of their mandates. He reserved the right to return to the matter.

55. Mr. CRUM (Netherlands) said that he agreed with the viewpoints expressed by the preceding speakers. The new procedure was being implemented on an experimental basis and, in the light of the results obtained, the General Assembly and CPC could decide on improvements.

56. Mr. PINHEIRO-GUIMARÃES (Brazil) said that he agreed with the Egyptian comment concerning the issuance of a corrigendum. As stated by the representative of Cameroon, the procedure was clearly set forth in resolution 38/227, which had been adopted after lengthy consultations. The financial, administrative and programme aspects of draft resolutions were linked and were of particular concern to the Fifth Committee. Appropriate lessons should be drawn at the end of the session from the experience gained and the procedure should be carefully re-examined if it proved unsatisfactory.

57. Mr. ORSATELLI (France) said that the experience gained in applying the new procedure should be incorporated in the resolution. In common with the representatives of Japan and Cameroon, he felt that the procedure concerned not only the Fifth Committee but also the other Main Committees. He reserved the right to return to the question.

58. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that he, too, trusted that the text of the Under-Secretary-General's statement would be circulated to delegations. The fundamental aim of the provisions under consideration was to ensure that before taking any decision, all the Committees concerned had received all the relevant information. As for the method itself, he recognized that it was experimental and that it should be reviewed in the light of the results. Concerning the error pointed out in resolution 38/227, he believed that an appropriate authority should be consulted as to the procedure to be followed.

59. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that she was surprised by a number of points in the Under-Secretary-General's statement, particularly those concerning the respective roles of the Fifth Committee and the other Main Committees. She called for strict observance of the spirit and letter of the Financial Rules and Regulations and the resolution. She reserved the right to return to the question at a subsequent meeting.

60. Mr. ODUYEMI (Nigeria) also requested a copy of the Under-Secretary-General's statement.

61. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that he shared the concern for caution expressed by delegations. With regard to the error pointed out in the resolution, he would consult the Division of General Assembly Affairs on the procedure to be followed and would report back to the Committee. He would arrange for his statement to be circulated.

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

62. The SECRETARY-GENERAL, speaking on behalf of the executive heads of the organizations and programmes making up the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), said that at its second regular session of 1984, held on 22 and 23 October, ACC had adopted two statements relating to items on the Fifth Committee's agenda.

63. In its first statement (A/C.5/39/29), relating to pensions and pensionable remuneration, ACC had stressed the need to preserve the integrity and financial soundness of the pension system and to place it on a firm and secure footing, free from any doubt regarding either its financial validity or the adequacy of the benefits it provided. ACC consequently supported the package of measures unanimously recommended by the Joint Staff Pension Board, which, if accepted in their entirety, would virtually eliminate the actuarial imbalance of the Fund. He therefore hoped that the measures would be approved as a package by the General Assembly, since they represented a balanced consensus reached by the representatives of the various legislative organs, the executive heads and the participants.

64. On the question of pensionable remuneration, ACC had noted that the two technical subsidiary organs requested to study the matter, namely ICSC and the Joint Staff Pension Board, had concurred in the recommendations they had made to the General Assembly. The revised scale, which the two organs had recommended should be applied with effect from 1 January 1985, had been arrived at after careful consideration and took due account of the concerns expressed by the Fifth Committee at previous sessions. Finally, he very much hoped that the constitutional considerations referred to in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the ACC statement would be carefully borne in mind by the Fifth Committee.

65. The second ACC statement (A/39/522/Add.1) related to the report presented by two Inspectors of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Staff costs and some aspects of utilization of human and financial resources in the United Nations

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Secretariat". The very serious questions raised by the report related both to the respective areas of competence of two subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and to the procedure that must be followed in order to ensure that reports affecting the organizations of the common system might be duly considered by those organizations. ACC had reached the conclusion that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/126, the part of the report dealing with the remuneration of the Professional and higher categories should be referred to ICSC before it was considered by the Assembly, as, indeed, the Chairman of ICSC had stated at the 16th meeting of the Fifth Committee. JIU itself had suggested that the question should be considered by ICSC. The Fifth Committee should therefore be able to approve that procedure without any difficulty.

66. He would soon submit to the Fifth Committee his comments on that part of the JIU report relating only to the United Nations Secretariat. However, he wished to indicate forthwith that the assertions made in the report regarding the so-called persisting inefficiency of the Secretariat were entirely without basis. The quest for efficiency had been his consistent concern. He was aware that improvement was always possible, and had done everything in his power to motivate the staff in that direction. He could therefore not accept a generalized accusation of the type made, which did not do justice to the vast majority of dedicated and efficient staff who served the Organization throughout the world.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.