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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 110: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/37/6/Add.2, (Part I) and (Part II) and Corr.1 and Corr.2, A/39/6 and Corr.1, A/39/38, A/39/173 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/39/667 and A/C.5/39/1 and Corr.1, A/C.5/39/21 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/39/45)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in accordance with rule 103.5 (b) and (c) of the rules governing programme planning, the Advisory Committee had considered two addenda to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. The two documents related to chapters 26 to 30 of the plan, covering financial, personnel management, general and other technical support services and conference and library services. The Committee's observations were contained in document A/39/667.
2. Each chapter of the plan was divided into two main parts. The first part described the general orientation of the major programme and the second gave detailed information on the programmes and subprogrammes comprising the major programme. The presentation followed for chapters 26 to 30 was intended to take account both of regulation 3.6 of the regulations governing programme planning, which stated that "the plan shall be presented by programme and objective and not by organizational unit", and of rule 103.6 (e), which provided that "for servicing activities the format of the medium-term plan proposals shall be by organizational unit and function".
3. Since it was the first time that an attempt had been made to plan that type of activity, the presentation adopted by the Secretariat was experimental in nature and should be reviewed at a later stage in the light of the experience gained and of the observations made by delegations. In fact, both the presentation and the substance of the proposals could have been considerably refined. It would be possible to shorten the documents considerably by organizing them better. Even if the plan had to be established by organizational unit and function, there was no need to subdivide the programmes into subprogrammes merely to take account of the existence of small organizational units. Such a compartmentalized approach did not help in presenting a consolidated picture of the programme of activities of departments.
4. The Advisory Committee believed that a clear differentiation should be made between the new initiatives and continuing activities. Many of the services included were, by definition, of a continuing nature, but it should nevertheless be indicated whether it was intended to modify or enhance those activities during the plan period. It would then be easier for delegations to picture their general orientation.
5. With regard to the introduction of technological innovations, especially the use of computer services, the plan did not present a clear picture of what was proposed or of the extent to which the objectives were attainable within the current plan period. The Advisory Committee had therefore requested additional information, which was reproduced in annexes I and II to its report concerning, respectively, the Department of Administration and Management and the Department of

(Mr. Mselle)

Conference Services at Headquarters. The chief deficiency of the information provided was that it did not indicate the totality of the technological innovations envisaged, since virtually no details were given about the services in Geneva and Vienna. The Advisory Committee hoped that the deficiency would be remedied before the submission of the next medium-term plan.

6. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 21 to 24 of the Advisory Committee's report, in which ACABQ welcomed the Administration's declared intention to develop control mechanisms to ensure that utilization of computer and other technological resources was consistent with planned requirements. It also welcomed the fact that the Administration proposed to carry out studies to determine the desirability of new computer applications with a view to ensuring that any solution adopted was the most responsive to needs of the Organization. It also endorsed the Administration's desire to study the possibility of integrating a number of systems currently in use in order to reduce duplication, overlap or serious gaps in existing systems.

7. Lastly, ACABQ was pleased to note the importance which the Administration attached to the question of the security of United Nations computer systems, especially since, as indicated in paragraph 29.12 of Addendum 2 to Part II, it was anticipated that a number of Member States would be given access to the data and information stored in United Nations data banks. In paragraph 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee requested the Secretariat to provide it with a detailed proposal prior to implementing that activity.

8. In conclusion, he emphasized that the inclusion of annexes I and II to the ACABQ report in no way implied that a definite position had been taken by the Advisory Committee on the activities outlined therein.

9. Mr. HANSEN (Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination) said that, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations evaluation units and systems, the Secretary-General had stated in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session that one Professional post had to be established in each of the following units: the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination of the Department of International Economic Affairs, ECLAC, ESCAP, ECA, UNCTAD, and HABITAT. The Secretary-General had indicated that he would review the possibility of providing the additional resources through redeployments. In section III, paragraph 3, of resolution 38/227 A, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to consider a timetable for the establishment of evaluation units in all departments and measures for redeployment of resources.

10. As could be seen from the annex to document A/C.5/39/45, ECA, UNCTAD and HABITAT had been able to find some of the necessary resources through redeployment, but only for the current biennium. Despite their efforts, the three other entities had not been able to redeploy resources for the establishment of new posts, since the funds available to them had already been committed for other programmes or redeployed for the strengthening of evaluation systems. The Secretary-General was not requesting additional resources for the current biennium; he would do his best to redeploy resources to evaluation, particularly where resources were clearly

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(Mr. Hansen)

inadequate. As far as the biennium 1986-1987 was concerned, the Secretary-General would request the establishment of the necessary posts in his programme budget proposals.

11. The issue of the report in document A/C.5/39/45 had been deliberately delayed, as the Chairman of CPC and other interested parties had wished to hold consultations following the Secretary-General's statement to the Fifth Committee on 18 October, in which he had proposed certain adjustments in the area of evaluation and monitoring which might have affected one of the central evaluation units.

AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/39/30 and Corr.1, A/39/522 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.2; A/C.5/39/13, 18, 26 and 27; A/C.5/39/L.8 and L.10)

(a) REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)

(b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

12. Mr. DITZ (Austria), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/39/L.10 in his capacity as Vice-Chairman, said that that text was only the first part of a longer resolution on the report of ICSC. It did not reflect the exact position of his delegation but was the product of difficult negotiations in which a great many delegations had participated. The Working Group responsible for those negotiations had examined the legal and technical aspects of the planned decisions and their implications for the common system. In its deliberations it had been assisted by the Deputy Controller, the Chairman of CCAQ and the ICSC secretariat.

13. Turning to the main points of draft resolution A/C.5/39/L.10, he said that the fourth preambular paragraph reaffirmed that the Noblemaire principle should be the basis for the determination of the level of remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories.

14. The working Group had considered that the moment had come to request the International Civil Service Commission to define what would constitute a desirable margin between the net remuneration of the United Nations in New York and that of the United States federal civil service, feeling that a margin of 24 per cent was excessive. To that end, ICSC should take account of the reasonable size of the margin in the past, which had averaged 15 per cent. Without specifying the ideal size of the margin, the working Group had indicated in the draft resolution the guidelines and parameters on which ICSC might base its study. To avoid any future confusion in calculating the margin, ICSC was requested, in paragraph 1 (b) to submit a concise summary of the methodology applied.

15. Considering a margin of 24 per cent to be excessive, the Working Group had also concluded that the increase in post adjustment for New York envisaged for December 1984 should be suspended (para. 1 (c)). That decision would hardly satisfy Governments: some felt that it was too conservative, others that it was too radical. It did, however, represent a middle course that would make it possible to establish the salary scale on a more solid basis.

(Mr. Ditz, Austria)

16. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution indicated that ICSC should continue to report on movements affecting two margins, one for total remuneration and the other for net remuneration. Paragraph 2 (b) stated that in determining the total compensation margin, ICSC should consider all the relevant factors including the differences in annual leave entitlements. In that connection the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/39/522 and Corr.1) and the related comments would be referred to ICSC (para. 3). Finally, paragraphs 4 and 5 provided for the consolidation into base salaries of 20 points of post adjustment, in order to maintain the resources of the Tax Equalization Fund at an adequate level.

17. The CHAIRMAN announced that, at the request of Mr. ROY (India), who had invoked rule 122 of the rules of procedure, consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/39/L.10 was postponed to a subsequent meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 109: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11, as orally revised, concerning agenda item 80 (j) (A/C.5/39/41 and Add.1)

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), presenting the Advisory Committee's oral report on the statement of programme budget implications in document A/C.5/39/41 and Add.1, said that in draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11, the Secretary-General was requested to organize in 1985 a five-day seminar on remedies for the deterioration of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territories. Experts and representatives of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations would be invited to take part in the seminar.

19. In document A/C.5/39/41, the Secretary-General gave an estimate of the costs of holding the seminar in Nairobi, where the headquarters of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) was located. He also indicated the costs which would be incurred if, because of practical and political considerations, the seminar was to be held in Vienna.

20. In its observations (A/C.5/39/41/Add.1), the Committee on Conferences had indicated that the choice of Vienna as the venue for the seminar would represent a departure from paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/140, section I. Nevertheless, in view of the exceptional circumstances surrounding the proposed seminar, that Committee had decided to consent to that departure. Accordingly, the seminar would be held in Vienna, and the related costs (travel and subsistence costs for the participants and fees for one consultant) were estimated at \$36,200.

21. The Advisory Committee was recommending the approval of an additional appropriation of \$36,200 under section 19. The amount of \$46,000 required for conference servicing would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing costs to be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage during the current session.

22. Mr. LADOR (Israel) said that, judging from the amount of money requested in document A/C.5/39/41, the United Nations had no financial problem. It would certainly be a misuse of its resources to organize a seminar, as envisaged in draft

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(Mr. Lador, Israel)

resolution A/C.2/39/L.11, to study something which had been determined a priori and in no way reflected reality. The whole draft was based on the hypothesis that there had been a "deterioration of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territories", something which had been proved untrue ad infinitum, as was documented even in reports of the United Nations.

23. Israel should perhaps be flattered that its activities were so interesting to the Organization that it devoted part of its resources to them. Were they so important, however, that they should take precedence over the most pressing problems of the day? The proposed expenditure for the seminar was between \$82,000 and \$104,000, depending on the venue selected. Given the financial emergency of the United Nations, it might perhaps be advisable to organize a special fund-raising campaign to pay for the seminar. He was glad that Israel, so often labelled the "aggressor", had not been asked to pay for a seminar on the plight of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. They were suffering painfully, of course, from an improved standard of living, full employment and substantial growth in the GNP and private consumption.

24. His delegation wondered how the Fifth Committee could sanction such heavy spending on sterile debate at a time when millions of Africans were dying of hunger. If the Organization really had money to spare, could it not be used on food aid to those who did not reap the benefits of the world of diplomacy?

25. Mr. NYGARD (United States of America) said that his delegation would vote against the Advisory Committee's recommendation. The additional appropriation requested would serve to pay the fee of a consultant and the travel and subsistence costs of so-called experts. They would in no way benefit those Palestinians who were in need. As for the report which the seminar was to produce, it would do nothing to improve the situation of the Palestinian people who were supposed to be being helped.

26. Mr. MAKTARI (Yemen) said that, contrary to the claim of the Israeli delegation, the situation described in draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11 was a fact. It had been admitted, moreover, by an Israeli author that the 1967 war had caused tremendous economic, social and cultural upheavals in the society and State of Israel, which were reflected in a feeling of national superiority that incited Israelis to violence in the occupied Arab territories.

27. His delegation was incensed by the situation of the Arab people of the occupied Palestinian territories, who were living in deplorable conditions and who had been robbed of their lands. It would therefore vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

28. Mr. YONIS (Iraq) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation. It also thought it was wise, both practically and politically, to have chosen Vienna as the venue for a seminar which would focus attention on the problems and the situation of the Arab people of Palestine.

29. Mr. NASHASHIBI (Jordan) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation because of its opposition to the Israeli

(Mr. Nashashibi, Jordan)

measures which were altering the demographic composition of the occupied Arab territories and forcing a dispossessed people into exile. Those measures were hampering the economic and social development of the Arab people of Palestine.

30. Mr. EL-SAFETY (Egypt) said that the Fifth Committee should not be discussing political issues. It should confine itself to examining the administrative aspects and programme budget implications of the activities envisaged in draft resolutions. On that strictly technical basis, his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's wise recommendation.

31. Mr. KASTOFT (Denmark) said that when the draft resolution was under consideration, the Second Committee had been given to understand that the seminar would not require additional appropriations; the statement of financial implications now submitted by the Secretary-General was therefore hard to understand or to accept. Nevertheless, in keeping with its position of principle, his delegation would vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

32. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on the Advisory Committee's recommendation to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.11, as orally revised, an additional appropriation of \$36,200 would be required under section 19 of the programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985. The actual additional requirement in respect of conference-servicing costs, estimated on a full-cost basis at \$46,000, would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement to be submitted before the end of the current session.

33. At the request of the representative of Israel, a recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Grenada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

34. The Advisory Committee's recommendation was adopted by 92 votes to 2, with 11 abstentions.

35. Mr. RALLIS (Greece), Ms. CONWAY (Ireland), Mr. HERRIDGE (United Kingdom), Mr. ORSATELLI (France), Mr. de CLERCK (Belgium), Mr. MAJOLI (Italy), Ms. van DRUNEN LITTEL (Netherlands) and Mr. HOLBORN (Federal Republic of Germany) explained that their delegations had abstained in the voting because it had been their understanding, during the debate on the matter in the Second Committee, that any costs which might arise would be financed from available resources.

36. Mr. EL-SAFETY (Egypt) expressed concern at the explanations of vote he had just heard. He thought that issues were decided by Main Committees on their merits. It was disturbing, therefore, that some delegations which had voted in favour of the original draft resolution should be unwilling also to approve the expenditure which their own decision would entail.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.