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Chairman: Mr. Harry MORRIS (Liberia).

AGENDA ITEM 74

Budget estimates for the financial year 1968 (continued)
(A/6705 and Corr.1, A/6707 and Corr.1 and 2,
A/6854, A/6861, A/6878, A/C.5/1113 and Corr.1
and 2, A/C.5/1114 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1115 and
Corr.1, A/C.5/1118, A/C.5/1123 and Corr.1, A/C.5/
1124, A/C.5/1126-1129, A/C.5/1132, A/C.5/L.901,
A/C.5/L.908)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. TURNER (Controller), replying to questions raised during the general discussion, recalled that the representative of China had asked several questions about the use of the Chinese language. So far as the various special conferences to be held in 1968 were concerned, interpretation and translation services in the Chinese language were included in the budget estimates for 1968 for the International Conference on Human Rights, the second session of UNCTAD and the Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Welfare. If the Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States was held in 1968, provision would be made for services in Chinese. During the long period of planning for the International Conference on the Revision of the Convention on Road Traffic and of the Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, the question of Chinese language services had not, to his knowledge, been raised. If it was formally raised, revised estimates would have to be submitted to the resumed forty-third session of the Economic and Social Council, in the amount of some \$55,000 to \$60,000.

2. The detachment of a large number of Chinese language staff from Headquarters to service those conferences would undoubtedly affect the volume of work which could otherwise be done during the year. Furthermore, the assignment of staff to certain of the conferences which overlapped with the twenty-third session of the General Assembly would also entail severe curtailment of Chinese language services during the period involved.

3. The Office of Conference Services spared no effort to expedite the translation into Chinese of a much greater volume of documentation than had been hitherto requested. The Chinese texts of important and urgent documents of the General Assembly and its Main Committees were in most cases distributed simultaneously with the other language versions as soon as possible after the distribution of the original language version. The use of Chinese typewriters had been under study for some time and it was planned to experiment with two or three of them in 1968.

4. The representative of Sudan had asked why the budget estimates for 1968 made no provision for the establishment of a United Nations capital development fund. At the twenty-first session, the Fifth Committee had decided "that any budgetary requirements of the proposed capital development fund for 1968 could be determined only after the results of the pledging conference were known and that they would be included in the revised budget estimates for the financial year 1968 which would be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its twenty-second session".^{1/} Accordingly, any administrative expenditures envisaged in connexion with the establishment of the fund would be submitted as revised estimates to the Assembly in due course during the current session.

5. The representative of Iran had asked a series of questions (1196th meeting) about the staffing and services of the Headquarters Library. That representative's very pertinent comments, defending a vitally important service which did not command the same measure of support as many other activities, would be taken into serious account both in decisions still to be made concerning 1968 resources and in the preparation of the budget estimates for 1969. He felt certain that all concerned would strive to ensure that the requirements of the Library were met to the fullest extent possible.

6. In reply to a question raised about the "autonomous" or "semi-autonomous" organs which had been established in recent years, he observed that the concern expressed earlier about the status of those organs was no longer considered at all serious by the Secretary-General or the Office of the Controller. "Autonomous" and "semi-autonomous" were inappropriate terms, for such entities as UNCTAD, UNIDO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were an integral part of the Secretariat and subject to exactly the same disciplines, policy directives and central administrative and budgetary controls as any other section of the Secretariat.

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 38, document A/6587, para. 4.

The relations and arrangements worked out with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Executive Director of UNIDO were working very satisfactorily and with complete efficiency, thanks to their co-operation and understanding.

7. On a more general plane, the Secretary-General thanked the many delegations which had referred with satisfaction to the efforts he had made during 1967 to implement the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies^{2/} on budget preparation, presentation and performance. The changes incorporated in the form of the budget for 1968, together with the further proposals set forth in the Secretary-General's separate report on that subject (A/C.5/1121), were designed to bring the work programmes of the Organization into closer relationship with the budgetary resources required for their implementation. The Secretary-General would hope that in due course a budget presented on that basis would serve the needs of both the various authorities reviewing and approving programmes and the authorities responsible for the review and approval of the budget.

8. It had seemed to the Secretary-General that the need for such action had not only been implicit in the *Ad Hoc* Committee's recommendations but was also the only satisfactory way of ensuring that the limited funds available were utilized effectively and economically in the fulfilment of the programmes of the highest priority to the Member States. As was generally recognized, the success of such an approach also depended largely on the development of longer-term plans based on clearly determined objectives and the establishment of an order of priority in the work programmes to be undertaken, taking into account the practical possibilities and the costs involved. In his report on the United Nations budget cycle (A/C.5/1122), the Secretary-General had stressed the importance he attached to improved longer-term planning and programme formulation as a prerequisite for embarking on a biennial budget cycle. Those two aspects—closer integration of work programmes and budget, and longer-term planning—had also been in his mind when he had appealed for some guidance from the Member States as to the level of financial resources they were prepared to make available for the implementation of the work programmes.

9. The Secretary-General believed that some such guidance, in the light of which he could frame future budget estimates, would materially assist the whole process of programme and budget building, since it would facilitate the establishment of a work programme based on priorities and provide greater assurance that the funds required for its implementation would be forthcoming. The Secretary-General had definitely not had in mind any such notion as a budget ceiling or some arbitrary limitation of growth rates. Notions of that kind were utterly foreign to the Secretary-General's understanding of the problems involved. However, the provision of suitable guidance—it might for convenience be called a target planning figure—

should in the Secretary-General's opinion be based on a careful review of the work programmes and activities of the Organization for the budget period to be covered. That would by itself require work programmes to be drawn up on a longer-term basis, since they would represent a forecast covering a period of some two years ahead.

10. Ideally, the Secretary-General would hope that, if he was required to provide the General Assembly annually with some target figure, he would be afforded the opportunity of establishing such a figure on the basis of a prior review of the work programmes, particularly in the economic and social area, by the appropriate legislative bodies. In that way, he could be assured that the budget figure would be reasonably in accord with the programmes to be undertaken, not only as set forth initially by the Secretariat but as accepted and approved by the various reviewing bodies. He would thus be equally assured that the programmes represented the priority wishes of the Member States.

11. Such a procedure would of course require much closer co-ordination between the sectors of the Secretariat responsible for the preparation of the work programmes and those responsible for the compilation of the related budget estimates. Closer co-ordination became equally indispensable in introducing the improvements proposed by the Secretary-General in the form of the budget and would become an essential prerequisite to embarking on a biennial budget cycle. The availability of adequate budgetary resources did not by itself ensure the effective implementation of work programmes. Much depended on the selection of the objectives to be achieved, the thoroughness of the initial planning, the care with which continuous review and up-dating of the programmes was undertaken, and the effectiveness of the over-all management and day-to-day supervision.

12. A great deal of the substantive work programmes carried out by the Secretariat, particularly in the economic and social area, was interrelated with similar activities undertaken by Governments, specialized agencies and other agencies within and outside the United Nations framework. Thus there were important aspects of co-ordination to be taken into account. Furthermore, the techniques of evaluation needed to be improved so that the implementation of future programmes might benefit from past experience. In assessing the budgetary requirements, greater consideration must be given to the practical possibilities of undertaking work programmes within given periods of time and a more analytical formula must be designed for measuring, in quantitative terms, the manpower and other resources needed. Quite clearly, the development of those criteria would take time. However, the longer the Organization delayed in moving forward, the longer it would take to perfect its present practices.

13. Mr. ESFANDIARY (Iran) noted that, as his delegation had thought, the needs of the Library were greater than the resources made available to it; he was particularly gratified by the reassurances given by the Controller that in the decisions still to be made regarding 1968 and the preparation of the budget esti-

^{2/} *Ibid.*, agenda item 80, document A/6343.

mates for 1969 those needs would be taken into serious account.

14. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's continuous co-operation with the Controller and his staff had convinced it that the task of budget preparation and implementation was being performed in the most responsible manner. The budget represented a compromise between competing claims, involving an evaluation of the optimum use of existing and future resources. The Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee sometimes made differing evaluations, because of the different nature of their responsibilities. The Advisory Committee was grateful for the assurances given by the Controller, particularly with regard to sections 19 and 20 of the budget, relating to UNCTAD and UNIDO.

15. The Advisory Committee welcomed the understanding of its recommendations shown by many delegations and the support expressed for the proposed reductions. It had no fear that the reductions would cause delays in the execution of tasks of high priority on which the Member States had taken decisions. It was essential for its actions and proposals to be thoroughly examined by Member States; the Advisory Committee therefore welcomed the questions raised and criticisms voiced in the Fifth Committee.

16. Comments had been made on the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in the number of new posts proposed by the Secretary-General for 1968. As he himself had explained (A/C.5/1129, para. 10), the Advisory Committee had not been convinced that existing staff resources were being fully and effectively utilized for activities of a truly priority nature. The vacancy situation was also important; it was likely that a considerable number of vacancies would be carried forward into 1968. In addition, in 1968 there would be a larger number of separations of senior staff members due to retirement. The Advisory Committee had therefore recommended reductions in the proposed increase in the manning table. It felt that recent developments did not invalidate that view. The Advisory Committee was still convinced that the reduction recommended would not adversely affect the implementation of programmes or endanger any programme or project of high priority, particularly those concerning economic and social development and human rights. He wished to assure the representative of Trinidad and Tobago that, when it spoke about flexibility in the use of the manning table and of vacancies, the Advisory Committee envisaged not interchangeability of personnel between entirely different sectors of the Secretariat but a certain measure of interchangeability between units requiring comparable skills.

17. The representatives of Trinidad and Tobago and of the United Republic of Tanzania had asked why the Advisory Committee had not retracted its recommendation for a reduction, when the Trade and Development Board had decided that the second session of the Conference on Trade and Development, to be held at New Delhi, should last eight rather than seven weeks. If it was established that the Conference should last eight weeks, the necessary

resources would have to be made available. There was, however, still an element of uncertainty about the exact duration of the Conference. When it became clear that more funds were required for section 19, chapter I (Second session of the Conference), it would first have to be ascertained whether the additional requirements could be met by transfers from the other chapters in that section. If that proved impossible, other ways of providing the necessary funds would have to be considered. The Advisory Committee was aware of the importance of UNCTAD and UNIDO and of the desire of Member States for those organs to develop and meet increasing requirements. It would continue to recommend all necessary budgetary and administrative measures to ensure that UNCTAD and UNIDO could carry out their priority programmes. It recommended reductions in that and any other case only when it believed that the same work could be done at a somewhat lower cost.

18. Mr. WEI (China) said that his delegation was grateful for the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve Chinese language services. He hoped that, as had been the case with the Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States, it would be possible to revise and reduce the estimate given by the Controller of the cost of providing Chinese language services for the international conference on road traffic and road signs and signals.

19. Mr. ZIEHL (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation had come to expect irrational tirades from the Cuban delegation, such as the one it had heard at the 1196th meeting. It would therefore not refute the points raised in detail. The world knew Cuba's record, particularly as regards subversion, and the technique of the "big lie" had been used before. The Cuban delegation's accusations regarding specific incidents in New York had been thoroughly investigated by impartial authorities and disproved. However, that delegation still persisted in deluding itself with the same myths.

20. Mr. EL BARADEI (United Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that world public opinion knew who was the aggressor and who was the victim of aggression in the Middle East. Israel forces had occupied many parts of Arab territory and Israel's policy was currently being unmasked in the Security Council. In the Fifth Committee, the Israel representative should confine himself to explaining the looting of United Nations property by Israel forces.

21. Mr. SALEEM (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that at the preceding meeting the Israel representative had referred to the presence of Iraqi forces in Jordan. Unlike the Israel troops in Jordan, Syria and the United Arab Republic, the Iraqi troops were in Jordan with the consent of the country concerned. Ties between Iraq and Jordan had existed long before the State of Israel had been created. The Israel representative had made his remarks in an attempt to conceal his inability to answer the charges made by United Nations representatives in the Middle East concerning the theft, confiscation and illegal appropriation of United Nations property by Israel.

First reading (continued)* (A/C.5/L.908)

section 5. TRAVEL OF STAFF (A/6705 AND CORR.1, A/6707 AND CORR.1 AND 2, A/6854, A/C.5/1114 AND CORR.1)

22. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the budget estimates for the financial year 1968 (A/6705 and Corr.1) and the revised estimates resulting from decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its forty-second and forty-third sessions (A/C.5/1114 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General had presented estimates totalling \$2,334,000. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended (A/6707 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 223) that the initial estimates be reduced by \$150,000. It had also recommended (A/6854, para. 3) a reduction of \$13,500 in the revised estimates. Thus the total appropriation recommended for section 5 was \$2,170,500.

23. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the total appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee represented a reduction of \$163,500, compared with the Secretary-General's revised estimate of \$2,334,000. The initial appropriation for 1967 had been \$2,014,230 or \$156,270 less than the figure now recommended by the Advisory Committee.

24. The Advisory Committee was not recommending any reductions under chapter I (Travel and other expenses of representatives and members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies). For chapter II (Travel of staff on other official business) it had recommended a reduction of \$63,500, to be applied mainly to the travel of Headquarters staff. Excessive travel, especially by senior officials, impaired the effectiveness of work programmes and led to delays in the production of basic documentation. In proposing a reduction of \$100,000 in chapter III (Travel of staff and dependants on home leave) the Advisory Committee had made a comparison with actual expenditure for that purpose in 1966, since roughly the same groups of staff were entitled to home leave in 1966 and 1968.

25. The Advisory Committee was confident that the amount it had recommended under section 5 would prove adequate.

26. Mr. TURNER (Controller) said that the Secretary-General was not contesting the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. It should be pointed out, however, that the recommended reduction in chapter III might not be achieved. The year 1966 had been an exceptional one as regards non-exercise of entitlement to home leave. It would probably be necessary at the twenty-third session to submit a supplementary estimate for that chapter, as had been done for 1967.

27. Mr. ESFANDIARY (Iran) said that his delegation supported the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee. In view of the amount of travel by representatives and staff members, he wondered whether it would not be possible for the United Nations to obtain a discount from international carriers.

28. Mr. VAUGHAN (Under-Secretary for General Services) said that originally the United Nations had made its own travel arrangements. As the Organization had grown, however, that task had absorbed an increasing volume of funds and occupied an increasing number of staff members. It had therefore been decided to contract an outside agency to handle travel arrangements. There was no cost to the United Nations, because it made no payment to the agency. The travel agency's profits consisted solely of the discount which was given by the carriers in accordance with the rules of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and other, similarly constituted associations.

29. Under IATA rules, airlines could grant discounts only to bona fide travel agents and not to the United Nations or similar organizations. Representations had been made to IATA in that connexion as recently as 1966, but to no avail. Nor would IATA allow United Nations staff members to enjoy special travel rates, since it felt that would set a dangerous precedent. Of course, groups of staff members travelling together benefited from the group or charter rates available to the general public.

30. One way for the Organization to obtain a direct discount would be for all the United Nations organizations to form an agency to handle their travel arrangements, provided that IATA and other, similarly constituted associations could recognize it as a travel agency. However, such an arrangement might be difficult to implement. Representatives would have to be stationed in almost all the countries in the world and the co-operation of all carriers would be required.

31. The question was being given continuous attention in the United Nations. It was one which might usefully be considered by the joint inspection unit.

32. In reply to a question put by Mr. TARDOS (Hungary), Mr. KIRKBRIDE (Secretariat) said that ACC had accepted the revised standards of travel for staff members approved at the twenty-first session of the General Assembly. He believed that most of the specialized agencies, at least the major ones, had adopted the same standards of travel.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/6707 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 223; A/6854, para. 18) for an appropriation in the amount of \$2,170,500 under section 5 was approved on first reading by 55 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

SECTION 18. INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE
(A/6705 AND CORR.1, A/6707 AND CORR.1 AND 2, A/6861, A/C.5/1113 AND CORR.1 AND 2)

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the initial estimates submitted by the Secretary-General under section 18 (A/6705 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/1113 and Corr.1 and 2) were in the amount of \$1,394,800, while the Advisory Committee recommended an appropriation of \$1,356,350 (A/6707 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 365; A/6861, para. 21).

34. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said the Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$23,100 under section 18 in the belief that

*Resumed from the 1191st meeting.

some economies could be made in general staff costs, travel and other administrative arrangements. The salaries of the judges of the Court, like those of other United Nations staff members, were periodically reviewed. They were, however, *sui generis* and no form of post adjustment was applied to them. On the basis of the increase in the weighted average of United Nations post adjustments since the last revision of the judges' salaries six years earlier, the increases in the salaries of the executive heads of the agencies and the rise in the salaries of the top ranks of national civil services, it seemed appropriate to increase the judges' salaries to \$30,000 from 1 January 1968. However, in the absence of any arrangement to protect the real value of those salaries until the next revision, and bearing in mind the view expressed by the Fifth Committee that those salaries should not be subject to frequent revision, the Secretary-General had considered that a somewhat larger increase—to \$31,000—might be warranted. The Advisory Committee had reservations about the more or less arbitrary addition of \$1,000, which appeared to anticipate inflation and establish a precedent whose possible implications had not been thoroughly examined. Moreover, the judges were not required to spend all their time at The Hague and could often reside in their home countries, where the cost of living was different. The Advisory Committee had therefore recommended that the salaries be raised to \$30,000.

35. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) said he had not been convinced by the arguments adduced in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee for increasing the judges' salaries from \$25,000 to \$30,000. He did not understand how the proposed increase had been calculated, or which city's cost of living it was based on. Although the Advisory Committee had stated that the salaries had been established outside the context of the common system of United Nations salaries and allowances, comparisons were made with the salaries of the highest executives in the United Nations system. The judges, whose work was not in the same category as that of the heads of the specialized agencies, were already highly paid, and the proposed increase seemed excessive, especially as the judges did not spend all their time at The Hague. He would not formally propose a revision of the recommended increase, but would abstain from voting on the relevant appropriation. He understood that some members of the Court were at present in New York and asked who was paying their expenses.

36. Mr. TURNER (Controller) explained that it was the practice for the President and a few members of

the Court to be in New York for the early part of the General Assembly's annual session. The President and three members had attended the opening of the current session. Their travelling expenses in that connexion were not paid by the Court. The proposed salary increase was based on the weighted average rise in the cost of living in cities where the United Nations and specialized agencies had their principal offices, and was designed to maintain the purchasing power of the salaries at the level originally agreed upon. He assured the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania that the Advisory Committee had thoroughly examined the proposed revision.

37. Mr. HAMBRO (Norway) felt that some criticism was implied in the question of the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania regarding the presence of members of the Court in New York. He recalled that the Sixth Committee, of which he was Chairman, had welcomed the members of the Court attending its meetings and that several delegations had thanked them for participating in United Nations activities in the legal field. He understood that the cost of their stay in New York was not borne by the United Nations budget. To avoid disagreeable debates on the subject of the judges' salaries, it might be wise to consider, at some future date, the possibility of instituting an arrangement whereby those salaries could be adjusted in the same way as those of other staff members.

38. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) assured the Fifth Committee that it had not been his intention to criticize the judges in any way.

The Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the salaries and pension arrangements of members of the International Court of Justice (see A/6861) were approved by 66 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee's report on that section of the budget estimates should include an appropriate draft resolution for action by the General Assembly giving effect to the decision just taken by the Committee.

It was so decided.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/6707 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 365; A/6861, para. 21) for an appropriation in the amount of \$1,356,350 under section 18 was approved on first reading by 69 votes to none.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.