

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**FIFTH COMMITTEE, 791st
MEETING**

Tuesday, 15 November 1960,
at 3.25 p.m.

NEW YORK

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AGENDA ITEM 60

Personnel questions (continued):

(a) Geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/833 and Corr.1) (continued);

(b) Proportion of fixed-term staff (A/C.5/834) (continued)

1. Mr. ÇALIŞLAR (Turkey) said that Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations contained two elements: first, the staff must satisfy the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Secondly, it must be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The first element was imperative. He drew attention to the word "integrity". In using it, the authors of the Charter had meant to imply that the staff must be impartial and devoted to the ideals of the United Nations as a whole. They must not favour any one country or group of countries or question that the United Nations had come to stay.

2. The second element was conditional, as was shown by the use of the term "as wide . . . as possible", and it was not always compatible with the first. The Secretary-General needed a staff with the appropriate background, and it might well be, when he came to fill a specific post, that he was unable to find persons possessing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in certain parts of the world.

3. He was sure that the Secretary-General would spare no effort to find the most suitable solution possible to the problem.

4. Mr. NACVALAC (Czechoslovakia) noted with regret that the serious imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat threatened to become chronic. Out of 1,168 posts in the Professional and higher categories the United States and its military allies held 864, i.e., more than two-thirds. The neutral countries held 220, and the socialist countries only 84. In the higher categories (D-1 and above) the proportion of posts held by nationals of the United States and its allies was between two-thirds and four-fifths.

5. In various important departments and divisions of the Secretariat, the situation was even worse. For example, the proportion of posts held by nationals of the NATO countries in relation to the number of posts subject to geographical distribution was 87 per cent in the Office of General Services, 80 per cent in the Office of the Controller and the Office of Public Information, and 70 per cent in the Office of Personnel. Naturally, the posts which were not subject to geographical distribution were nearly all held by citizens of the United States. Moreover, the influence of the United States and its allies was increased by the fact that representatives of the socialist countries in the Secretariat were ignored in every possible way. For example, the activities of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, which was headed by a representative of the socialist countries, had in practice been taken over by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, headed by a United States citizen with 10 staff members under him, 9 of them from NATO countries.

6. The situation was made the more untenable by the fact that the political map of the world was changing rapidly with the disintegration of the colonial system and the creation of new independent socialist and neutral States. The prestige of the imperialist countries was declining, while that of the socialist countries—which were in the forefront of political, economic and social progress—was constantly rising, and the neutral countries were playing an increasingly important role in international affairs. The admission of the newly emancipated countries changed and would continue to change appreciably the composition of the Organization. The Asian and African countries, and other countries which had embarked upon the road of political and economic emancipation, such as Cuba, were ceasing to play a passive role and were exerting a growing influence on the activities of the Organization. In the face of such revolutionary changes in the established order, the Organization must change accordingly. The Secretariat must cease to reflect the conditions of the past.

7. In that connexion, he did not at all share the opinion expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report (A/C.5/833 and Corr.1), that "real progress had been made during the past year" and that "in relation to the vacancies available, the recruitment actions taken have contributed substantially to the objectives which the General Assembly has in mind". The facts cited by the Secretary-General in his report did not tally with those statements. The table in paragraph 7 showed that the number of States with no staff members in the Secretariat had risen from 6 in August 1955 to 10 in August 1960. The decline was made all the more serious by the fact that the number of Member States was increasing rapidly. The trend was regressive rather than progressive.

8. On the question of the inadequate representation of the socialist countries, the Secretary-General himself

recognized, in paragraph 19 of his report, that "further and sustained efforts are required to improve the situation, particularly in recruitment from the Eastern European region. Although the number of staff now in posts from this region is higher than it has ever been, it still falls far short of what is desirable if a reasonably satisfactory geographical distribution is to be achieved". The sincerity of the Secretary-General's desire to improve the representation of the socialist countries could be judged by the fact that Czechoslovakia had recently proposed 30 candidates, mostly members of its diplomatic service, and none of them had been accepted. During the many fruitless interviews that had taken place between representatives of Czechoslovakia and the Secretary-General and other senior members of the Secretariat, one of the latter, Mr. Stavropoulos, had openly stated that the candidates from the socialist countries were not objective enough for his liking. Apparently he considered staff members from the NATO countries the personification of objectivity. No doubt that was the reason why he entrusted the preparation of documents for the Office of Legal Affairs to American institutions of unimpeachable imperialist principles. Obviously, the co-operation of staff members from the socialist countries in such "objective" work was not desirable.

9. Despite the fact that some countries were represented in the Secretariat inadequately or not at all, posts were being filled by nationals of countries which were not even Members of the United Nations. For example, 20 Professional staff members and one Director were of Swiss nationality; other posts had been given to nationals of West Germany, South Korea and most recently South Viet-Nam. As far as the Czechoslovak delegation was concerned, the recruitment of staff members exclusively from certain parts of divided countries was not accidental.

10. The present lack of balance might be remedied if posts which became vacant were given to candidates from the socialist countries and from African and Asian countries. However, the Secretariat had made no effort to do so. In the present circumstances, any increase in the number of staff members from the socialist and neutralist countries was, in fact, dependent on an increase in the number of established posts. The practice of considering the number of staff members drawn from the NATO countries as immutable should be resolutely brought to an end and candidates from the socialist and neutralist countries should begin to be appointed to all vacancies.

11. Some of the principles upon which the geographical distribution was based were also highly questionable. It was inequitable to link the so-called "desirable range of posts" with the size of the contribution of the various countries. The United Nations was not a joint-stock company; it was an organization of States which had differing social systems and did not all regard financial means, on which capitalists set such store, as being of prime importance. That principle which, incidentally, derived neither from the Charter nor from any decision taken by a responsible United Nations organ, could lead to absurd situations. For example, according to the table in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report, the median of the desirable range of posts was 27 for Africa and 24 for the Middle East, whereas the figure for North America was 388 and that for Western Europe 299. The same table showed that Africa and the Middle East had, respectively, 59 and 71

per cent more posts than the median of the desirable range, whereas North America had only 76 per cent of the median of the desirable range. In other words, the Secretary-General was saying in his report that it was North America which was under-represented. It was unnecessary to emphasize the patent absurdity of the "principle" of representation in proportion to a Member State's contribution. Wealth was no longer the criterion of influence. The true values which the world recognized were respect for human beings, and the right to work and to freedom.

12. If geographical distribution was to be equitable, it should be applied not only to the staff members at present subject to it, i.e. those at the G-5 level and above, but also to other categories such as experts working under the technical assistance programmes and other United Nations programmes in various parts of the world. However, the Secretary-General was doing exactly the opposite, as he proposed to exclude the G-5 category from geographical distribution. In an attempt to justify that action, which he had taken without consulting the Assembly, the Secretary-General had pointed out that no staff members had been recruited at the principal (G-5) level of the General Service category from outside the Headquarters area (A/C.5/832, para. 15). While that, too, was regrettable, it was even more deplorable that that decision gave a false impression of the true geographical distribution, because the category excluded from the report was almost exclusively composed of nationals of the United States and its allies.

13. In conclusion, he wished to emphasize that certain measures were necessary for the achievement of a satisfactory solution of the problem of the geographical distribution of the staff. The socialist, neutralist and imperialist countries and their allies should be represented in the Secretariat on an equal footing. To that end, the Secretary-General should confine recruitment of new staff members to the socialist and neutralist countries which were either under-represented in the Secretariat or not represented at all. He should suspend completely, for the time being, recruitment of staff from Western Europe and North America. The principle by which the desirable range of posts was related to the size of Member States' contributions should be discarded. The number of staff members from African, Asian and socialist countries should be increased, regardless of the size of those countries' contributions, so that each of the three groups of countries—socialist, neutralist and imperialist—would be represented by an equal number of staff members. Finally, the principle of geographical distribution should be applied to all staff members at the professional level and above, to staff members at the principal level of the general service category and to experts.

14. Mr. PARISIS (Belgium) recalled that some delegations had pointed out that personnel questions might affect the direction and progress of the Secretariat's work, the correctness with which decisions of United Nations organs were interpreted and, consequently, the implementation of the tasks assigned to the Secretariat. His delegation wished to go into the question of how the geographical distribution of the staff affected the work of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/833 and Corr.1) showed that that distribution had improved, since the number of countries with staff within or above the "desirable range" had

risen and the 105 appointments made had been spread among 39 nationalities, 86 per cent being from countries which had not been represented at all or had been under-represented. The observations made by the representative of the Secretary-General at the 790th meeting had shown that, in fact, even more substantial progress had been made.

15. However, the requirements of geographical distribution could not take precedence over considerations of integrity, competence and efficiency. As the Secretary-General had stated in paragraph 20 of his report (A/C.5/833 and Corr.1), vacancies arose most frequently in specialist fields and for those vacancies specialized training and experience was essential. Furthermore, the need to provide for a career service also precluded the Secretariat from terminating staff members following changes in geographical distribution.

16. There were three possible methods by which the Secretariat could ensure some flexibility in the composition of the staff: first, appointment of staff members on a fixed-term basis; secondly, secondment of officers from national services or other institutions; thirdly, recruitment of trainees who, after a certain period, could occupy junior professional posts for a fixed-term. The use of such methods was to be encouraged, but the requirements of geographical distribution raised a question of principle: in order to guarantee independence and impartiality, was it essential to have a form of recruitment under which each country would have adequate representation? The answer to that question was twofold: first, it was essential that the Secretariat should make every effort to achieve, within the shortest possible time, a representation as exactly proportional as possible to the contribution of each country; secondly, once that requirement had been fulfilled, the Secretariat should concern itself more with individuals than with statistics. That was, in fact, the meaning of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. The impartiality and the efficiency of the Secretariat did not depend on the presence of a particular number or proportion of nationalities on the staff. It depended primarily on the calibre of its individual members who were required to meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

17. It seemed to him that "integrity"—which the Secretary-General had put first—should be mainly interpreted as loyalty to the United Nations, that was to say, towards each of its ninety-nine Member States. At a time when nationalism was leading certain parts of the world or certain countries to assert themselves by opposing one another violently instead of by vying

with one another to promote progress, international officials should be required, without in any way renouncing their allegiance to their own countries, to detach themselves from national considerations in carrying out their work and to refrain from complying with political directions from their own Governments. Should any suspicion arise on that score, the Organization would be irreparably ruined. The idea of classifying staff members into categories in terms of political or military blocs was therefore unacceptable. His delegation would never agree to any system of world organization based on three blocs which were, moreover, far from clearly defined. Even if the geographical distribution was not perfect, impartial international officials could prevent a group of countries from exerting a dominant influence. On the other hand, even assuming that the optimum geographical distribution was attained, if international officials did not have the required basic qualifications, it would be impossible to prevent a group of Powers from subverting or paralysing the United Nations.

18. At the 769th meeting of the Committee, the Secretary-General had stated that he had found it easier to recruit from some parts of the world than from others. That meant that the number of qualified persons available was always dependent upon the state of a country's development. Consequently, if that state improved, recruitment would become easier.

19. It should also be borne in mind that some regions where certain political regimes prevailed had long refused to provide international officials or had made their recruitment contingent upon political control, which was incompatible with the spirit of the Charter.

20. The international staff would meet the requirements of integrity and efficiency if they did not regard the United Nations as a supra-national government, but rather respected each of the Governments represented with the tact and discretion appropriate to their status. The international official should disregard his personal views and feelings. What mattered was the work he had been recruited to perform on the strength of his integrity and competence.

21. Mr. HAILEMARIAM (Ethiopia) said he would like further information on the figures given in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/833 and Corr.1), concerning the median of the desirable range of posts and the ratio of staff to the median, particularly with regard to Africa. He also wished to know what criteria, other than contributions, were applied by the Secretariat in determining the desirable range.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.