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Chairman: Mr. Najib BOUZIRI (Tunisia).

AGENDA ITEM 78

Pattern of conferences: reports of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/5867 and Corr.1; A/5889, A/5979, A/6162)

1. Mr. LYNCH (New Zealand) said that the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and many Member States had expressed concern over the trend in the programme of conferences, which, as the various documents submitted to the Fifth Committee showed, was reaching unmanageable proportions. In its latest report on the pattern of conferences (A/6162), the Advisory Committee recognized that the increase in the meetings programme was a reflection of the Organization's increased responsibilities, which, together with the rise in its membership, made some expansion inevitable. But it was in the interests of all parties that it should proceed on an orderly basis. The ill effects of an uncontrolled increase included the financial burden, the excessive amount of documentation, which was sometimes prepared in great haste, and the difficulty of preparing for meetings, attending them and evaluating the results. While the steps taken by the Secretary-General to improve the situation deserved praise, his scope of action was limited. The main responsibility for ensuring orderly procedure lay with Member States. It was therefore unfortunate that the Committee was not in a position, because of lack of time, to study the matter fully. It would have been preferable to consider the basic principles and procedures governing the conference programme at an earlier stage in the session, leaving only the actual programme for 1966 until later, and he hoped that

would be done in the future. Nevertheless, his delegation welcomed the draft resolution contained in annex I to the Secretary-General's latest report (A/5979), which would provide useful guidelines for the programming of conferences over the next three years. In particular, it welcomed the provisions of operative paragraphs 4, 5 and 6. How far the draft resolution would achieve its ends, however, was a matter for speculation. It might be advisable to set some quantitative restriction on the conference programme, in numerical or financial terms, or to recommend that certain bodies should hold their meetings every three years, or at least every two years, rather than annually. In the preamble of the draft resolution, there should be a reference to the Special Committee on Programme of Conferences, on whose work the Advisory Committee had laid considerable stress in its report to the nineteenth session (A/5889). His delegation was in favour of the Fifth Committee's endorsing the two proposals set forth in paragraph 8 of the Advisory Committee's report to the present session (A/6162). It would have liked the Fifth Committee to acknowledge formally that the Secretary-General's responsibilities included recommending changes in the suggested pattern of conferences, as stated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 8 of document A/5889. Regarding the suggestions in paragraph 16 of the Secretary-General's latest report, he felt that the Advisory Committee would have been justified in endorsing all three, whereas it had in fact fully endorsed only sub-paragraphs (b) and (c). His delegation was in sympathy with the way the Advisory Committee had reformulated sub-paragraph (a), in paragraph 7 of its own report (A/6162), to mean that as a general rule all organs other than the Security Council should keep to predetermined dates for their sessions.

2. Mr. GIBSON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation sympathized with the Secretary-General, who was responsible for servicing a conference programme which, as he himself had said, was becoming unmanageable. The Secretary-General had done his best to persuade Member States to keep the programme within the capacity of the Secretariat, but so far without success. The United Kingdom therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposals, including the draft resolution in annex I to document A/5979, and the Advisory Committee's recommendations on that report. In the light of past experience, however, there was not much hope that the draft resolution would lead to much improvement. It was couched in much the same terms as previous resolutions on the subject, making a general appeal for restraint in the schedule of meetings. But general appeals were not likely to yield results in specific instances. Every organ thought

that its own work was of prime importance and that self-denial on its part would merely be taken advantage of by others. The Secretariat, on the other hand, found it very difficult to refuse to service any particular meeting so long as accommodation was physically available, and use could be made of temporary staff. But temporary staff could not provide all services, since documents, for example, had to be prepared by permanent staff, and the combined effect of many such individual cases was that the total programme was now beyond the Secretariat's capacity. His delegation therefore wished to repeat its suggestion that the extent of the Secretariat's capacity should be expressed in as clear a manner as possible before the programme was drawn up. Although the key factor was manpower, the only practicable way of expressing such a limit was in financial terms, showing the resources the Secretariat expected to have available in any one year. While there might be difficulties in applying a limit if it was regarded as the responsibility of the Secretary-General alone, it should be feasible if the principal organs could agree on a broad division of resources among themselves, each then allocating its share among its subordinate bodies. Naturally, the limits set would be approximate, particularly to begin with, but with experience the system should prove operable. His delegation was not submitting a formal proposal, but it would urge the Secretary-General to give serious consideration to the idea.

3. Mr. CISS (Senegal) remarked that the conference programme was the result of decisions by Member States, whose wishes must be respected. It would therefore not be appropriate to place any kind of rigid limitation on the programme. In particular, his delegation understood the proposition stated in paragraph 9 (b) of the Advisory Committee's report (A/6162), that the Secretary-General was best placed to decide when and where a particular meeting could be held to greatest advantage, to mean that while organs should take his views into account they were not obliged to accept them. His delegation would cast its vote on that understanding. He asked, with reference to operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, who was to decide when a meeting was an emergency one. Member States could scarcely be expected to accept the severe limitation contained in the paragraph if that point was not clear. In operative paragraph 5, the wording was too rigid and the word "shall" should be replaced by "should".

4. Mr. Mohamed RIAD (United Arab Republic) agreed with the representative of Senegal. His delegation would vote for the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the understanding that they did not imply the setting of any numerical or financial limit on the programme of meetings. United Nations organs could not be deprived of the right to hold meetings if they wished. The only restrictive factor should be the availability of facilities to service such meetings and in that respect the Secretariat should be provided with the resources necessary to meet the demands placed upon it.

5. Mr. NOLAN (Ireland) said that he would support the draft resolution in annex I of document A/5979. His delegation shared the general concern at the size

of the present conference programme. The problem was to devise a pattern of conferences which would overstrain the resources of neither Secretariat nor delegations, and would allow time for both adequate preparation and the assessment of results. Unfortunately there was no time now for a proper discussion, and he accordingly supported the New Zealand representative's suggestion that in future the item should be dealt with earlier in the session. The pattern of conferences might be more usefully discussed, for example, in connexion with section 1 (Travel and other expenses of representatives and members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies) of the budget estimates.

6. In paragraph 7 of its report (A/6162), the Advisory Committee noted with interest a suggestion of the Secretary-General that "with the exception of the Security Council, all other organs and subsidiary organs should, as far as possible, have predetermined dates for their sessions". While it was certainly desirable that dates should be set in advance and adhered to so far as possible, his delegation agreed with the United Arab Republic representative that no limit should be placed on the right of United Nations bodies to meet when they considered it necessary. However, it was useful to draw a distinction between the Security Council, which by definition was always in session, and other bodies, which were not.

7. Reference had been made (A/6162, para. 8 (a)) to the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The Fifth Committee had considered the matter before, but there seemed to be a need to restate that, in order to ensure maximum results, those commissions should meet at intervals such that their sessions could be properly serviced and prepared. That interval had been found to be two years.

8. Mr. S. K. SINGH (India) recalled his delegation's position that it was the role of the United Nations to give expression to the aspirations of its increasing membership and that as a result of the natural expansion of its activities over the years there was bound to be an increase in meetings and documentation. While his delegation agreed that Members should exercise restraint in requesting meetings and conferences, in order not to subject the Organization's resources to undue strain, it opposed any cut-back in basic United Nations activities. He would accordingly vote for the draft resolution in annex I of document A/5979 on the understanding that self-discipline and economy were necessary, but that no inflexible rules would be imposed on the programme of meetings and conferences. It was to be hoped that, in the higher interests of decolonization and the fostering of trade and development, the United Nations would not place the relevant activities in a strait-jacket.

9. Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) fully supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General. Member States should assist the Secretary-General, morally and materially, to make the best use of available resources at a time when developing countries were entering the Organization in increasing numbers.

10. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to decide whether it wished to recommend to the General As-

sembly the adoption of the following principles recommended by the Advisory Committee (see A/6162, paras. 7 and 8):

(a) That, as a general rule, only the Security Council be allowed to meet, as necessary, throughout the year; all other organs and subsidiary organs should as far as possible have predetermined dates for their sessions so that they could be fitted into a rationally planned programme of meetings;

(b) That the Economic and Social Council be requested to reconsider the question whether or not it was necessary for all of its functional commissions, with the exception of the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission, which already met on a biennial basis, to hold meetings every year;

(c) That, as provided in operative paragraph 5 of the revised draft resolution (A/5979, annex I), the General Assembly would decide that not more than one major special conference of the United Nations should be scheduled in any one year.

The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the above principles.

11. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should renew its endorsement of the propositions that:

(a) Under the Charter the function of considering and approving the budget of the Organization was reserved exclusively to the General Assembly, whose rules of procedure—notably rules 153, 154 and 155—reinforced its power of financial control. Therefore, although certain United Nations bodies were authorized to decide the place of their meetings, that prerogative was necessarily subordinate to the appropriating authority of the General Assembly;

(b) As regards conference arrangements, it was the Secretary-General who was best placed to decide, in full knowledge of all pertinent factors, when and where a particular meeting could be held to greatest advantage.

It was so decided.

The draft resolution contained in annex I of the report of the Secretary-General (A/5979) was adopted unanimously.

The Committee approved the basic programme of meetings for 1966 as set forth in annex III of the report of the Secretary-General (A/5979).

AGENDA ITEM 76

Budget estimates for the financial years 1965 and 1966 (continued*) (A/5799 and Corr.1; A/5805, A/5807 and Corr.1; A/5940 and Corr.1; A/5969, A/5995, A/5996, A/6005, A/6007 and Corr.1; A/6050, A/6137, A/6138 and Corr.1; A/6144, A/6152, A/6169, A/6172; A/C.5/1009 and Corr.1; A/C.5/1011, 1014, 1025 and Corr.1; A/C.5/1027, 1035-1038, 1040, 1042, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1050; A/C.5/L.833, L.836, L.855)

Budget estimates for the financial year 1966 (continued*) (A/5799 and Corr.1; A/5805, A/5807 and Corr.1; A/5940 and Corr.1; A/5996, A/6005, A/6007 and Corr.1; A/6050, A/6137, A/6138 and

Corr.1; A/6144, A/6152, A/6169, A/6172; A/C.5/1009 and Corr.1; A/C.5/1025 and Corr.1; A/C.5/1027, 1035-1038, 1040, 1042, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1050; A/C.5/L.833, L.836, L.855)

Revised estimates under section 7 (Buildings and improvements to premises) (A/6169; A/C.5/1047)

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the revised estimates concerned the extension of emergency electric power and lighting facilities at Headquarters, the expansion of seating facilities in the Economic and Social Council and Security Council chambers and the automation of elevators in the Secretariat building. The Secretary-General requested additional credits of \$248,000 for the first purpose and \$97,200 for the second; regarding the last matter, he requested authority to sign the necessary contract in 1966 in order that work might commence in 1967. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (A/6169) suggested that the General Assembly might at that time wish to approve a total additional credit of \$300,000 for 1966 for the first two purposes, representing a reduction of \$45,200 in the estimates proposed by the Secretary-General. It also recommended that the Secretary-General should be authorized to sign a contract in 1966 for work on automating the elevators in the Secretariat building at a cost of \$344,235 in 1967 and a similar amount in 1968.

13. Mr. FEKKES (Netherlands) observed that the Committee was about to approve an expenditure of nearly a quarter of a million dollars against the possibility of a recurrence of the recent power failure. Several factors should be borne in mind, however. One was that the competent United States authorities were doing all they could to prevent a recurrence, and in all likelihood they would be successful. Another was that no serious accidents had occurred at Headquarters during the power failure, even without emergency facilities. He therefore wondered whether the costly facilities now proposed were really necessary. Perhaps a supply of candles or electric torches at suitable locations would suffice. In any case, his delegation wished to have it on record that it was not at present in favour of the proposed extension of facilities.

14. Mr. CISS (Senegal) asked what elevator automation would mean in terms of savings to the Organization and the personal welfare of the present elevator operators.

15. Mr. TURNER (Under-Secretary—The Controller) replied that the automation would entail a large initial expenditure, some \$600,000 or \$700,000. That sum would be recouped in about five years and thereafter there would be a net saving of about \$150,000 a year, and probably more as time went on. The elevator operators were not United Nations staff members but employees of a private concern with which the United Nations had a contractual arrangement. The services of operators would of course be in large part dispensed with, but the situation was hardly unique to the United Nations; such arrangements were becoming the rule in the New York area.

16. Mr. GIBSON (United Kingdom) endorsed the remarks of the Netherlands representative. The recent power failure was a matter of acute concern to the whole of the United States and means of preventing a

*Resumed from the 1109th meeting.

recurrence were receiving the closest attention. The Government and people of the United States could be relied on, he believed, to make it virtually certain that the failure would not recur. It was therefore a question of judgement how far the United Nations should go in taking precautions against a rather remote eventuality.

17. Paragraph 15 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/6169) said that the Secretary-General's representatives, when making their proposal, had been unaware of the measures being taken to prevent another general power failure. Those measures should, however, be taken into serious consideration. Moreover, the proposed facilities would not enable the Organization to continue to function, but would only assist in the evacuation of the premises. But the evacuation during the recent failure had been successful, without extensive emergency facilities. Lastly, it was noteworthy that the United Nations already had electric power arrangements to minimize the effect of a localized power failure in the city.

18. The Advisory Committee expected the Secretary-General to "take into account any developments which might make it possible to reduce the expenditures at present envisaged" (*ibid.*, para. 16). He realized that the Secretary-General attached considerable importance to the present proposals, and his delegation was prepared to support them, but it hoped that before actually undertaking the work the Secretary-General would fully consider the steps being taken by United States authorities.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/6169, para. 19) that an additional credit of \$300,000 should be approved under section 7 for 1966 for the extension of emergency electric power and lighting facilities at Headquarters and for alterations to the Security Council chamber.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/6169, para. 19) for an additional credit of \$300,000 under section 7 was approved on first reading by 57 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

20. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to decide whether, as recommended by the Advisory Committee (A/6169, para. 21), the Secretary-General should be authorized to sign a contract in 1966 committing the United Nations to undertake in 1967 and 1968 the automation of the elevators in the Secretariat building.

It was so decided.

21. Mr. TURNER (Under-Secretary—The Controller) assured the Committee that the Secretary-General had no intention of making hasty commitments for the extension of emergency electric power and lighting facilities. In any case, several months of engineering studies would be needed, and during that time developments would be watched so as to avoid any unwarranted expenditure.

AGENDA ITEM 21

United Nations Emergency Force:

(b) Cost estimates for the maintenance of the Force (A/6059, A/6060, A/6171; A/C.5/1049)

22. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions)

said that on the present occasion the item had two special features. First, the General Assembly was asked to take or recommend action not only on the cost estimates for the maintenance of the Force in 1966, but also on the revised cost estimates for 1964 and on the estimates for 1965 (A/6059). Secondly, the Committee had before it, in addition to initial cost estimates for 1966 (A/6060), a report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1049) accompanying the report of the Survey Team recently sent by the Secretary-General to the area involved to undertake a new examination of UNEF with particular reference to its functioning and cost. The Secretary-General suggested that the Committee, for the purpose of considering the 1966 cost estimates and appropriate financing arrangements for UNEF, should proceed on the basis of a revised estimate for 1966 of—provisionally—\$16,489,000.

23. Regarding the estimates for 1966, the Advisory Committee had confined itself to an examination of the cost based on the strength of the UNEF personnel. It had been interested in the measures recommended by the Survey Team which would lead to reductions in the costs of maintaining UNEF. It appreciated the reasons given by the Secretary-General for anticipating a reduction of \$2,030,000 for 1966 and a decrease of \$3.5 million for a full year's operation. It expressed the hope, however, that the Secretary-General might be able to effect further savings for the year 1966, towards a target expenditure figure of \$15 million. It furthermore suggested that the Secretary-General should give further consideration to the recommendations of the Survey Team regarding the UNEF base at Rafah and the problems of establishing a uniform system of rotation, and also to recommendations for limiting expenditures which might result from further reviews.

24. Mr. QUIJANO (Argentina) reiterated his delegation's concern at the fact that UNEF, established as an emergency measure under General Assembly resolution 1001 (ES-I), had in practice become a permanent institution. Recently, new circumstances had arisen which obliged the United Nations to reconsider the situation of UNEF: first, the crisis at the nineteenth session of the General Assembly, precipitated by the problems of financing UNEF and ONUC; second, the unwavering opposition to UNEF reaffirmed by a group of States in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations; third, the consensus of 1 September 1965^{1/} that Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations was not applicable to the financing of UNEF and ONUC.

25. Those three factors must be taken into account when considering the cost estimates submitted by the Secretary-General. Little could be said about the estimates for 1965, since the year was almost at an end; but approval of the revised cost estimates for 1966 would be tantamount to giving the Emergency Force a new mandate. It should be noted that in his survey of UNEF (A/C.5/1049), the Secretary-General had already indicated the expenses of the Force for 1967 and beyond.

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, annex No. 21, document A/5916.

26. The survey contained much material falling outside the competence of the Fifth Committee, which could discuss only the budgetary aspects of UNEF. Unfortunately, it was too late in the session to refer those matters to some other competent body for decision. All the Fifth Committee could do, therefore, was to determine whether the cost estimates were or were not adequate, state that it was not competent to deal with the other matters in document A/C.5/1049, and recommend their referral to the competent body or bodies. A decision on the possible financing of the expenses of UNEF would meanwhile be left pending.

27. His delegation took the view that, failing a political decision and taking into account the debates on peace-keeping operations—especially the consensus of 1 September 1965—the financing of UNEF in 1965 and 1966 could be effected only on a voluntary basis. Given the many objections to a prolongation of its mandate and the fact that a large group of countries regarded the operation as illegal, while other countries having a direct geographical and political connexion with UNEF had announced that they would not pay their arrears, it would be totally unrealistic to apportion the expenses of UNEF among all Member States in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Charter, which the International Court of Justice had declared to be applicable in the case.^{2/}

28. His delegation did not reject the concept of collective responsibility as a basis for the financing of peace-keeping operations under the terms of General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV), but the minimum conditions for a decision to that effect were lacking in the present case. The situation might be remedied if the political aspects of UNEF could be studied by the competent organs. Since many countries, including almost all the permanent members of the Security Council and the countries of the region, believed in the advantages of maintaining UNEF, there was no reason why its mandate should not be revised in such a way as to meet objections based on the original mandate. Furthermore, it was clear that the reasons for which the Force had been established in 1956 were no longer valid today, although there might be other reasons why it was desirable for the United Nations to continue its peace-keeping function in the region. Another possibility might be negotiations leading to a political solution, as a result of which the United Nations could substantially reduce its presence there.

29. If some such steps were taken, whether there was general support for treating UNEF as a collective operation or whether it was agreed that it should evolve in the direction of an observation and negotiation mission, his delegation would support any draft resolution imposing financial responsibility on all Member States. But it took a different position in regard to the strictly police character which that operation had assumed.

30. Argentina had supported resolutions under which its assessed contributions to the financing of UNEF

^{2/} See Certain expenses of the United Nations (Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Charter), Advisory Opinion of 20 July 1962; I.C.J. Reports 1962, p. 151.

had been well over \$1 million. It had paid its share, considering that the expenses had been properly approved by the General Assembly. It did not intend to invoke the consensus of 1 September 1965. However, in view of the circumstances in which the new estimates had been submitted, and of the political aspects he had outlined, Argentina would be unable to undertake further financial commitments. His delegation's vote on any formula imposing further contributions on the same basis as had been applied until 1964 would have to be negative. That attitude would not, however, prejudice its endorsement of the maintenance of the Force if a majority of Member States should consider it appropriate.

31. Any draft resolution adopted by the Fifth Committee on the subject should avoid the controversial aspects and offer a solution, if only a provisional one. Such a draft resolution might approve the cost estimates of UNEF on the basis of the Advisory Committee's report (A/6171); declare that the financing of those expenses should be effected by voluntary contributions and invite Member States to make such contributions; and request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-first session a study of UNEF similar to that contained in document A/C.5/1049, broadened and brought up to date, but not going beyond the terms of reference set forth in annex A of that document. Thus, at its twenty-first session the Assembly would have the necessary elements for a thorough study of the problem preferably elsewhere than in the Fifth Committee. Such a solution should present no great difficulty even to delegations which had opposed UNEF, and would help the United Nations out of its present impasse in regard to the financing of peace-keeping operations.

32. Mr. TARDOS (Hungary) said that his delegation could support only one kind of resolution: a resolution terminating the mandate of UNEF and requesting the Security Council to consider the situation in the region with a view to deciding whether a United Nations presence was necessary, and if so, in what form after the withdrawal of the Force. His delegation could not accept the statement, in paragraph 15 of the report of the Survey Team transmitted by the Secretary-General (see A/C.5/1049), that "a continued United Nations presence of the UNEF type is an important element in the maintenance of peace and security in the area, since its withdrawal at this time might well give rise to a sharp increase in the frequency of incidents and violations along the line, probably with serious consequences" as a sufficient basis for continuing the mandate of UNEF. A temporary force should not become permanent, and the United Nations should seek to heal wounds, not keep them open. Meanwhile, his delegation would take the same stand as in previous years: it would vote against any draft resolution making assessed contributions to the expenses of UNEF binding on all Member States, and his Government would not regard itself as bound by any such resolution.

33. There had been rumours about a draft resolution providing for a new method of apportioning the expenses of UNEF for 1966. Such a draft, which would re-introduce in the guise of a financial measure a

proposal on which the Special Political Committee had been unable to agree after lengthy discussion, would constitute an attempt by a few States to impose their opinion on the entire membership. Adoption of the "Irish formula" (see A/SPC/L.121/Rev.1) by the Fifth Committee would be a breach of the consensus of 1 September 1965, and his delegation would draw the necessary conclusions. The "Irish formula" would require the developed countries to pay an amount calculated at 39 per cent of their rates under the regular scale of assessments, whereas in 1964 they had been asked to pay 42.5 per cent. His delegation wondered whether the small decrease was sufficient reason to endanger the very future of the United Nations. Rather than upset the fragile balance of the General Assembly in the last days of its session, it

would surely be better to allow discussion of the matter to continue in the Special Political Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies.

34. Mr. NOLAN (Ireland) said that the nine-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.121/Rev.1) before the Special Political Committee referred to by the Hungarian representative dealt with the future, not the past. In any case, none of the sponsors had placed any such proposal before the Fifth Committee. The Hungarian representative's arguments were therefore irrelevant to the present discussion.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.