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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,
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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/C.5/1009 and
Corr.1; A/C.5/1025 and Corr.1; A/C.5/1027,
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Point of order raised by the representative of India

1. Mr. S. K. SINGH (India), supported by Mr.
MWALUKO (United Republic of Tanzania) and
Mr. SANU (Nigeria), proposed that, since the South
African representative's statement at the 1086th
meeting had been ruled out of order, it should be
expunged from the summary record of that meeting.

2. Mr. TOTHILL (South Africa) objected to the
proposal on the grounds that summary records of
meetings should be a true reflection of actual pro-
ceedings.

3. Mr. NOLAN (Ireland) said that to omit any part
of the Committee's proceedings from the summary
record was contrary to established practice and
would constitute an unfortunate precedent. He hoped
that, in the best interests of the United Nations,
the Indian representative would agree to withdraw
his proposal, since any decision by the Committee
would inevitably be a political one.

4. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take
a decision on the Indian representative's proposal.

The Committee decided, by 39 votes to 16, with
16 abstentions, that the statement by the South African
representative should be expunged from the summary
record of the 1086th meeting.

First reading (continued) (A/C.5/L.833)

SECTION 3. SALARIES AND WAGES (continued)
(A/5996, A/6005, A/6007 AND CORR.1; A/C.5/1027;
A/C.5/L.844/REV.1, L.845)

SECTION 4. COMMON STAFF COSTS (continued)
(A/6005, A/6007 AND CORR.1; A/C.5/L.845)

5. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume
consideration of the draft paragraph submitted by
sixteen delegations (A/C.5/L.844/Rev.1) and the draft
resolution submitted by Ecuador and Poland (A/C.5/
L.845).

6. Mr. FRANZI (Italy), speaking as co-sponsor of
the draft paragraph, said that the limitation imposed
on recruitment for 1966 and 1967 was not intended
in any way to jeopardize the implementation of
United Nations economic and social development
programmes. All countries had an equal interest
in solving the problems of economic development and,
although it was essential to effect savings wherever
possible, cuts in economic and social development
programmes should be avoided at all costs. He shared
the concern of the sponsors of the draft resolution
to reduce expenditure under the budget, but a reduc-
tion of \$1 million could not be made without specifying
where the cuts would be made and what the conse-
quences would be. A clearer explanation of how such
a reduction could be effected would make it easier
for his delegation to reach a decision on that draft
resolution. In the meantime, he would continue to
support the compromise draft paragraph.

7. Mr. DIOSO (Philippines) drew attention to the
observations of the Advisory Committee on Adminis-
trative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 165,
166 and 174 of its main report (A/6007 and Corr.1)
and said that it was on the strength of those obser-
vations that he had co-sponsored the draft paragraph
now before the Fifth Committee. It would be in the
best interests of the United Nations to allow plenty
of time for the recruitment of new staff, particularly
for posts requiring high technical skills. The draft
resolution submitted by Ecuador and Poland would
have the advantage of providing for an immediate
reduction of \$1 million in the current estimates,
but such a reduction would not only cause difficulties
for the Secretary-General but might also result in
the curtailment of programmes of vital interest to
the developing countries, including those of the United
Nations Conference on Trade and Development. His
delegation would therefore be unable to support it.

8. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said that there was no fundamental conflict between the draft paragraph and the draft resolution submitted by his delegation and that of Ecuador. He shared the view expressed in the draft paragraph that it was unlikely that qualified candidates could be recruited for the posts recommended for 1966, but he also felt that immediate expression should be given to that view in the budgetary provisions for 1966. The draft paragraph foresaw the creation of surpluses on budget accounts and, in view of the general desire to effect the maximum savings, he was opposed to the creation of such surpluses. The reduction of \$1 million proposed in the draft resolution represented only slightly more than 1 per cent of the appropriations involved and had been arrived at after a careful consideration of all areas where savings might be achieved. It was generally accepted that a considerable number of the new posts requested for 1966 would not, or should not, be filled during that year, so that some savings could be made. He would also suggest that, after the approval of the salary increases recommended by ICSAB, the reclassification of posts planned for 1966 should either be postponed or undertaken with extreme restraint. There were, of course, other possible ways of distributing the proposed reduction, but that was a question which should be left to the discretion of the Secretary-General. In that respect, the draft resolution did not differ from the draft paragraph.

9. The proposed reduction was not a mere gesture, but was intended to reduce the financial burden on Member States. It could not therefore be a token sum. On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to envisage a reduction of more than \$1 million. There were instances where the Advisory Committee recommended reductions of a fixed amount and requested the Secretary-General to distribute them. There was no reason why the Fifth Committee should not on occasion do the same, and he could not accept the assumption that the proposed reduction was arbitrary.

10. Mr. BEN AISSA (Tunisia) remarked that, while his delegation attached great importance to the expansion of United Nations economic programmes and understood the Secretary-General's desire to ensure the success of such bodies as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Centre for Industrial Development, it felt that caution was necessary in view of the financial situation of the United Nations. It had therefore suggested during the general discussion (1076th meeting), that the number of new posts requested for 1966 should be reduced. The draft paragraph met the concern of his delegation by spreading the new posts over a period of two years. He sympathized with the desire of the sponsors of the joint draft resolution to see savings effected, but he believed that the same result would be achieved by the draft paragraph, without causing difficulties for the Secretary-General. His delegation would therefore abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

11. In conclusion, he expressed his country's disappointment that highly qualified candidates from Tunisia had not been successful in securing posts

in the Secretariat. Much had been said concerning the difficulties of recruitment and the need for higher salaries to attract properly qualified personnel, and it was therefore difficult to understand why those candidates had been rejected. He hoped that the Secretariat's recruitment policy would be based on the need to take proper account of qualifications and on the essential principle of equitable geographical distribution.

12. Mr. MAKSIMOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) noted that the greater part of the total proposed increase in the budget estimates for 1966 was accounted for by the \$10 million increase in the sections relating to staff costs. Such an unprecedented increase naturally aroused serious concern. One of the main reasons for it was the Secretary-General's request for the establishment of a large number of new posts. In addition, he was asking for reclassification of a considerable number of posts, and the salaries of over 2,000 staff members were to be increased. In the opinion of his delegation, the proposed increase in expenditure on the staff, particularly the request for 699 new posts for the years 1965 and 1966, was completely unjustified. The draft paragraph put forward by sixteen Powers would help to counteract the trend towards unnecessary expansion, but it would not solve the whole problem, since the Advisory Committee's recommendations would remain unchanged. Instead of the creation of unnecessary new posts, a greater effort should be made to identify the large unexploited reserves in the Secretariat. In that connexion, his delegation fully supported the draft resolution submitted by Ecuador and Poland. The current practice of citing the growth in activities as justification for an increase in staff was wrong. A mere increase in staff would not solve all the complicated problems facing the United Nations. It was more important to co-ordinate activities, to establish priorities, to eliminate redundancy and to abandon a whole series of programmes which conflicted with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

13. The greatest number of new posts were requested for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It was precisely in that Department, however, that there was the worst waste of resources and the greatest duplication, particularly with the work of the specialized agencies. His delegation therefore considered the request unjustified, except in the case of the Centre for Industrial Development. An example of an unjustified increase was the proposal concerning the newly established department of the Commissioner for Social Development and Housing. In paragraph 3.54 of the budget estimates for 1966 (A/6005) it was stated that after careful consideration, the Secretary-General felt it necessary, as a first step towards evolving long-term organizational arrangements, to establish a post at the Under-Secretary level for the Commissioner. The Advisory Committee, however, in paragraph 58 of its main report, stated that it had not been in a position to study and appraise thoroughly all the implications of the structural reform. It was quite understandable that the Advisory Committee should find it difficult to do so when the needs of Member States in social matters were not known and a new programme of work in that field

had not been drawn up. It should be noted in that connexion that in resolution 1916 (XVIII) the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a draft programme of social developments for the second half of the United Nations Development Decade, to cover not only priorities of international action in the social field but also major targets of social development to be achieved in the different less developed regions by the end of the Decade, and methods of implementation. At the sixteenth session of the Social Commission in May 1965, the Secretary-General had therefore submitted a report on "Progress made by the United Nations in the social field during the period 1 January 1963-31 December 1964 and proposals for the programme of work 1965-1967" (E/CN.5/390).^{1/} As in the past, however, three-quarters of the proposed programme was taken up with projects relating to community development and policy in the field of criminal law, so that any idea of the revision of the programme was in practice excluded. In a note (E/CN.5/388, ^{2/} para. 23), moreover, the Secretariat invited the Social Commission merely to consider the question of the revision of the programme and recommended that the Economic and Social Council should postpone any decision until 1966 or 1967. It was for that reason that at its thirty-ninth session the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 1086E (XXXIX), in which it invited the Secretary-General to submit to the Social Commission a report based on the replies of Governments to a questionnaire which he would address to them for the purpose of determining the needs of Member States in the social field and, if possible, the priority to be given to those needs, and the possibilities of increasing the technical co-operation resources which Member States could offer. No such report had yet appeared and the new programme was still to be drawn up. His delegation therefore agreed with the view expressed in the Economic and Social Council by several representatives, according to its report,^{2/} that it would be appropriate to wait for the proposed reappraisal of the United Nations programme of work and priorities in the social field before attempting to assess the need for increases in the social welfare staff at Headquarters and in the regional economic commissions.

14. The proposals relating to the Bureau of Social Affairs were characteristic of most of the requests for staff increases in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In his delegation's view, mechanical additions to the budget and staff were not the way to advance the Organization's economic and social activities, which could be undertaken with the existing resources by the elimination or postponement of activities of minor importance. In making those comments, his delegation was motivated by the desire to combine economy with efficiency.

15. Mr. LYNCH (New Zealand) observed that, if the United Nations was to fulfil its responsibilities, the Secretariat must be staffed by persons of the highest calibre. That was indeed the case; but it should be acknowledged that devotion to duty could be taxed to

a point beyond which diminishing returns would result. Reasonable proposals to strengthen the staffing establishment should be given sympathetic consideration, where it was evident that otherwise the efficiency of the Secretariat would be prejudiced. The Advisory Committee had carefully reviewed the needs of the Secretariat and, in its suggested allocation of new posts, had maintained the balance between the substantive departments and the central, administrative, general and conference services, in proportion to that sought by the Secretary-General. He was therefore prepared to support its recommendations.

16. The two proposals before the Committee both sought to provide assurance to Member States that the growth of the regular budget would be subject to firm direction and control. His delegation had co-sponsored the draft paragraph because it believed that the procedure proposed in it was a rational one. The Advisory Committee had expressed its reservations on the prospects of recruiting and assimilating in one year the number of posts recommended and had observed that sizable increases of staff should be so phased as to permit periodical review and evaluation of the Organization's requirements. Furthermore, the spread of recruitment over two years would not lead to an imbalance in the distribution of the work-load within the Secretariat, nor would it in any way impair the Secretary-General's freedom to proceed with the implementation of those work programmes to which Member States attached priority. The draft paragraph was a first step towards realizing the concept of long-term planning of needs.

17. The alternative proposal did not have those merits. Any modifications by the Fifth Committee of the Advisory Committee's recommendations should be made only after careful consideration of the consequences. To authorize a reduction of \$1 million, equivalent to a further reduction of 90 to 100 posts in the number recommended by the Advisory Committee, without a careful analysis of the implications, would be an arbitrary decision. It would be difficult for the Secretary-General to distribute so large a reduction without creating the very imbalances and disorder which it was the Committee's purpose to avoid. The same financial savings, and possibly even greater ones, could be effected under the draft paragraph, without any damage to the work programmes.

18. Mr. FERNANDEZ MAROTO (Spain) recognized that the draft resolution would effect an immediate and considerable reduction in the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee, whereas the draft paragraph would merely impose a limitation on future expenditures, without specifying how the proposed staff increase should be spread over the next two years. The latter proposal was, moreover, subject to unforeseen developments which might nullify it. It nevertheless had the advantage of allowing the Secretary-General greater freedom of action and his delegation would therefore abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

19. Mr. JABR (Lebanon) said that, while his delegation appreciated the importance of reducing expenditure under sections 3 and 4, it doubted the wisdom of the \$1 million reduction proposed in the draft

^{1/} Mimeographed document.

^{2/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Supplement No. 3, para. 419.

resolution and would accordingly vote against it. On the other hand, his delegation feared that the sixteen-Power draft paragraph might be an obstacle to the smooth running of the Centre for Industrial Development. If the sponsors would agree to include in the text an explicit assurance that the Centre's activities would not be affected by their proposal, his delegation would vote for it. Otherwise it would abstain.

20. Mr. BARAC (Romania) observed that the draft resolution gave practical expression to the general concern for economy and offered the Committee an opportunity to face up to its responsibilities, and his delegation would vote for it.

21. His delegation regarded the sixteen-Power draft paragraph as an addition to the draft resolution, and was accordingly prepared to take a favourable attitude towards it. In order to give unequivocal expression to the Committee's feelings, however, the text should be made as rigorous as possible. To avoid ambiguity, his delegation suggested that the second half of the last sentence should be deleted. In addition, it should be categorically stated that adoption of the proposals would not mean authorizing the Secretary-General to increase expenditures under section 3 by means of temporary assistance.

22. Mr. GOTZEV (Bulgaria) said he was convinced that it was possible to put a stop to constant staff increases. It was for the Committee to seek ways of improving the efficiency of the Secretariat. The arguments advanced by the Advisory Committee in favour of its proposals under section 3 were too general; as the USSR representative had pointed out (1086th meeting), more detailed information was needed. In view of those considerations, his delegation would vote for the draft resolution, which would better serve the interests of the Organization than the alternative proposal.

23. Mr. NOLAN (Ireland) thought that the Fifth Committee was not well placed to examine the Advisory Committee's recommendations in sufficient detail to determine where the establishment of new posts was or was not justified. Nevertheless, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, in his statement (A/C.5/1038) at the 1066th meeting, had expressed some disturbing views about the additional staff to be recruited in 1966, in particular when he had stated that in certain instances requests had not been kept to the unavoidable minimum.

24. In so far as staff increases were necessitated by the introduction of programmes requested by the Member States themselves, his delegation, too, approved of them. But just as the multiplication of meetings or of operational programmes offered no guarantee of real progress, so was the recruitment of numerous extra staff no guarantee that the new programmes would be quickly carried into effect. Moreover, the Advisory Committee itself had stated that any sizable increase in staff should be so phased as to enable the Organization to take stock and re-evaluate the needs of its work programmes.

25. His delegation had co-sponsored the draft paragraph with the above-mentioned views of the Advisory Committee in mind. To go further, as did the draft resolution, would mean asking the Secretary-General

to discharge his responsibilities with fewer staff than the Advisory Committee considered necessary. Delegations taking that position must be prepared to indicate the areas in which reductions were to be effected. Without the assistance of the Advisory Committee, his own delegation would feel incompetent to take such a decision.

26. The draft paragraph offered a more practical formula, and one which would yield the best results in the long run. It was a compromise reached after extensive negotiations. It was a balanced text, and its unity would be damaged if any changes should be made now. He accordingly commended it to the Committee as it stood.

27. Mr. MERON (Israel) remarked that both proposals before the Committee were motivated by the belief that it was necessary and possible to achieve economies under sections 3 and 4. In addition, they both reflected the general belief that any reduction in expenditure should not be such as to curtail necessary activities, particularly in the economic and social fields. He noted that the bulk of the increases proposed by the Secretary-General for 1966 related to the strengthening of the Organization's economic and social activities. But the Secretary-General had also urged the necessity to strengthen the conference, administrative and financial services to keep pace with the rapid increase in the operational and substantive activities of the United Nations.

28. As his delegation understood it, the purpose of the sixteen-power draft paragraph was orderly recruitment coupled with economy. If recruitment were spread over two years, the Secretariat would be enabled to engage staff of the highest calibre on a broad geographical basis, and to absorb such staff. If, on the other hand, the Secretary-General found it possible to recruit sufficient staff in 1966, he would have the means to do so. The draft paragraph was thus more flexible than the draft resolution, making it possible to effect savings and to plan ahead.

29. Mr. RIVERA TOLEDO (Guatemala) noted that both the proposals before the Committee would result in savings. However, his delegation favoured the sixteen-Power draft paragraph because it would limit the establishment of new posts in the future, and remained opposed to any increase in the budget, which was bound to be reflected to Member States' assessments.

30. Mr. TURNER (Under-Secretary—The Controller) said that the \$1 million reduction proposed in the draft resolution could be effected only by a further reduction in the number of new posts recommended by the Advisory Committee, i.e., under chapter I (Established posts). The appropriations requested under other chapters of section 3 had been calculated to take into account those new posts. Where individual experts and consultants were concerned, under chapter III, it should be remembered that over 80 per cent of the total amount requested related to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional economic commissions, including \$300,000 for industrial development—all areas of concern to the developing countries.

31. The \$1 million reduction must therefore be applied to chapter I, with related adjustments under section 4. Because of the "turn-over factor"—the savings accruing from delayed recruitment—the appropriation for new posts must be reduced by as much as \$1.3 million in order to effect a net saving of \$1 million. In practical terms, that meant reducing by more than 100 the number of posts recommended by the Advisory Committee for establishment in 1966.

32. That was of course possible; but the practical implications must be reckoned with. Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to distribute the \$1 million reduction in a way which would not curtail programmes from which the developing countries were benefiting, and in particular the programme of the Centre for Industrial Development. But he feared that the proposed reduction would inevitably impair those priority activities. It would, in any event, mean the complete elimination of any provision for strengthening other areas of the Secretariat.

33. It was illuminating to consider the matter in its historical perspective. There had been a period of virtual stability from 1954 to 1961. Setting aside the Economic Commission for Africa, the records even showed that the established staff had in fact been fewer in 1960 than in 1954. It was only since 1961 that the staff had undergone "excessive inflation". The first appreciable increase, under pressure of events, had come in 1963 when the Secretary-General had asked for the establishment of 200 new posts—two-thirds of them relating to economic and social programmes. 1964 had been the year of "consolidation and containment". In 1965, the General Assembly had authorized the establishment of a further 200 posts, half of them again relating to economic and social programmes. Of the 277 new posts recommended by the Advisory Committee for establishment in 1966, two-thirds were once again connected with economic and social activities, and above all with the Centre for Industrial Development.

34. Thus, there had been a virtual freeze in the other key areas, especially the conference and central administrative services. The Advisory Committee had frankly recognized that fact. There was no point in adopting ambitious programmes if the Secretariat did not have the means to recruit and pay the necessary staff to carry them out. He would caution the Committee that it could not go on indefinitely assigning top priority to economic and social development without taking steps to strengthen the supporting services.

35. He appreciated that \$1 million was only a small percentage of the amount recommended for section 3 and 4. Nevertheless, a reduction by that amount would create serious difficulties and impair the work of the Organization in every field. Many delegations believed that there were unexploited resources in the Secretariat. If there were, he had not detected them. Some unevenness in the productivity of different departments was perhaps inevitable in an organization such as the United Nations, but there was certainly no reserves in the Secretariat to enable it to con-

tinue working at the same level despite a \$1 million cut.

36. The sixteen-Power draft paragraph reflected the belief that recruitment should proceed in an orderly manner and without any sacrifice of standards. While it was not unreasonable to anticipate greater progress with international recruitment in 1966 than in the current year, it was likely that more than one full year would be necessary to fill all the new posts. The proposals also reflected the Committee's feeling that the best interests of the United Nations in any case called for a short period in which the new staff could be properly assimilated and the Secretariat could take stock of the situation. Thus, the Committee was being asked to concur in the Advisory Committee's recommendations in so far as they related to authorized expenditure for 1966. It was a reasonable assumption that some savings might result in the current year.

37. The draft paragraph further sought to give the Secretary-General a clear policy directive to the effect that the 1967 estimates should be based on the staffing levels approved for 1966. The 1967 estimates would of course be affected by any decisions with staff implications taken in the course of 1966. Provided the proposals reflected a broad consensus in the Committee, the Secretary-General would be ready to proceed accordingly.

38. Mr. ABDI (Ethiopia) said that both proposals before the Committee reflected the desire expressed by most delegations in the general discussion to achieve the greatest possible economies without curtailing important development programmes. They differed, however, in their approach to that aim. The draft resolution was more restrictive and might cause the Secretary-General unnecessary inconvenience. The sixteen-Power proposal was more flexible and would allow the Secretary-General to exercise a certain discretion. As was the tradition in the Fifth Committee, it avoided any direct challenge of the Advisory Committee's recommendations. He would therefore vote for it. If the draft resolution was put to the vote, however, he would abstain.

39. Mr. OMRAN (Syria) recalled that his delegation had expressed its views, in the general discussion (1081st meeting), on the importance to the developing countries of the United Nations economic activities. It was opposed to any attempt to restrict those activities and was therefore wary of any attempt to limit the growth of the budget. The Members of the Organization must accept the responsibility for their own decisions. Syria could not, therefore, support the draft resolution, which would be prejudicial to programmes of value to Member States. It also feared that the sixteen-Power draft paragraph might have that effect, particularly because it did not specifically exclude the possibility of any curtailment of the activities of the Centre for Industrial Development. His delegation would therefore abstain in the vote on it.

40. Mr. POLIT ORTIZ (Ecuador) said that the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Poland and his own reflected the position taken by most members in the general discussion. The Fifth Committee,

although it was assisted by the Advisory Committee, was responsible for making the final recommendations to the General Assembly on the budget estimates. In that connexion, he drew attention to the comments made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 37 of his foreword to the budget estimates concerning the financial implications of decisions by subsidiary organs. At the present time of international economic crisis, when many countries were suffering from a decline in export earnings, it was necessary for Member States to weight their contributions to the United Nations family of organizations very carefully in relation to the services that those bodies could render. While most activities undertaken by the United Nations were undoubtedly of benefit, it was necessary to have some sense of priority and to establish the criteria governing expenditure. The draft resolution made it clear, as the sixteen-Power draft paragraph did not, that the Committee considered it essential to achieve a reduction in the estimates. It did not state in what fields cuts should be made, but various possibilities had been indicated during

the discussions; for example, there were meetings held routinely every year without justification, excessive documentation that could not be absorbed by Governments, and programmes which no longer deserved priority. There was, moreover, a striking disparity between the salaries paid to senior officials, for many of whom promotion or reclassification was sought, and the average per capita income in the countries they were supposed to be assisting. The reduction proposed by Poland and Ecuador would encourage the Secretary-General to consider whether all the requested promotions and reclassifications were necessary. It would also lead him to establish a strict order of priority with respect to programmes. The draft paragraph, on the other hand, would not place any precise obligation on the Secretary-General and could not be regarded as an alternative to the draft resolution. The sum of \$1 million was not unreasonable and it would be unfortunate if the Committee refused to approve a specific reduction.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.