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Chairman: Mr. Vahap AŞIROĞLU (Turkey).

AGENDA ITEM 74

Budget estimates for the financial year 1967 (continued) (A/6305, A/6307, A/6385, A/6457, A/C.5/1054, A/C.4/1055 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1056 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1060, A/C.5/1062, A/C.5/1065, A/C.5/1066, A/C.5/L.868)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. KATAMBWE (Democratic Republic of the Congo) welcomed the fact that the budget estimates of the financial year 1967 (A/6305) showed the Secretary-General's determination to continue his policy or economy. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, too, had shown its concern to do away with all practices at variance with General Assembly resolution 1797 (XVII) or likely to add to the Organization's financial difficulties. At a time when more and more was being demanded of the United Nations, such efforts in the direction of budgetary austerity were to be commended, but they could produce the desired results only if pursued constantly. His delegation was particularly concerned over the Organization's financial situation: for the Congo was itself one of the main causes of the present difficulties, having escaped balkanization at the hands of the neo-colonialists through the help of the United Nations. It was grateful for the assistance rendered at the time of the Katangese secession, and for that reason, among others, had been scrupulous in paying its assessed contributions. The debates in the Security Council on the complaint of the Congo against Portugal had shown once more that it could count on a sympathetic hearing in the Organization. Pride and gratitude, however, must give way to anxiety over the still unsettled debt arising out of the Congo operation, and his delegation would urge other Member States, and particularly the richer ones, to give greater attention to the matter.

2. In the budget estimates themselves, his delegation noted with satisfaction the place given to activities in the field of economic and social development. Most States Members of the United Nations were underdeveloped, and looked to the Organization to help them prepare plans and finance their development programmes. Although in favour of the estimates as a

whole with the amendments recommended by the Advisory Committee (A/6307), his delegation considered that the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General under section 18 (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) should be left unchanged. Many countries had a refugee problem, and the High Commissioner should not be restricted in his work by lack of funds.

3. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) drew the Committee's attention to part III of the report of the Secretary-General on accommodation at Headquarters (A/C.5/1062), which raised the possibility of constructing a new building on Headquarters premises. In commenting on the proposal, he was not guided by subjective considerations, having been a contented resident of New York City for twenty-five years. Nor was he prompted by certain recent unpleasant incidents; all thanks were due to the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations for the way it responded to complaints about such matters, which were usually due to external factors beyond its control. Nor was he accusing New Yorkers of any lack of hospitality or consideration for strangers. Nevertheless, after consulting some forty ambassadors and some twenty senior officials of the Secretariat, he had concluded that the Committee should not allocate a sum of \$150,000 for an architectural and engineering survey preliminary to a possible construction project without the most careful consideration.

4. The reason why the United Nations Headquarters had been built in New York was twofold. First, after the Second World War it had been feared that the United States might retreat into isolationism as it had after the First World War, and that without that country the United Nations would prove no more effective than the League of Nations. It had therefore been felt desirable to establish the Headquarters of the Organization in the United States in order to secure its participation. That aim had already been achieved. Secondly, the Soviet Union had emerged from revolution and war to find itself isolated from the rest of the world for ideological reasons, communism being regarded with apprehension by the capitalist countries. It had nevertheless supported the establishment of the United Nations Headquarters in the United States, partly because it recognized the universal nature of the Organization and partly because it sought a platform from which to demonstrate to the world that those apprehensions were unjustified. That aim had also been achieved. In the twenty years of the Organization's history, the United States and the Soviet Union had lost their suspicion of each other and both now fully accepted the role of the United Nations. The original reasons for selecting the

United States had thus disappeared. As regards the choice of city, various alternatives had been considered, but the deciding argument in favour of New York had been the offer of a free grant of land by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

5. There was nothing, of course, to be said against the city of New York as such. Since 1945, however, there had been a striking increase in the rate of activity in all areas of the city's life, with the result that the position had changed. There were several factors which now made New York an unsuitable location for the Headquarters of the United Nations. In the first place, the physical atmosphere of the city was not conducive to calm deliberation. Manhattan was a small and crowded island, where noise and pollution had reached unbearable levels. There was also a moral factor involved. While the United States was to be commended on its efforts to ensure respect for the civil rights of all its citizens, regardless of their colour, legislative measures were not enough to achieve the desired goal; there would also have to be a long process of educating the general public. Although much kindness and hospitality were to be found in New York, there were also incidents which would not normally be expected to occur in the modern age and in such an enlightened country as the United States. Racial prejudice was found among the simple, uneducated people and even among some politicians. The narcotics trade, a high crime rate and an excessive emphasis on violence and sex all contributed to the unhealthy atmosphere prevailing in New York. Moreover, the existence of pressure groups and lobbying practices made New York political unsuitable as a site for the world Organization's Headquarters. The information media were slanted to present a certain point of view, and advertising, particularly in its subliminal forms, enslaved the minds of the people.

6. Economic considerations were also very important. New York was one of the most expensive cities—if not the most expensive—in the world. It was situated at great distances from the other continents, so that costs of transportation to and from Headquarters were high. The location of the United Nations Headquarters in New York also posed fiscal and financial problems.

7. It would be vastly preferable for the United Nations to move to a small, neutral European country, such as Switzerland or Austria. There the cost of living would be lower, life would be more relaxed, there would be less tension, and the physical environment would be better than in New York. If it was thought that Geneva could not accommodate the United Nations, the Organization could perhaps be established at some spot equidistant from Geneva and Lausanne. Any difficulties that the transfer might cause could soon be resolved, and there would be great advantages in having United Nations Headquarters located in such a citadel of neutrality. Various other countries which were not great world Powers, inside or outside Europe, would also offer suitable sites. Of course, the move should not be made overnight. However, the Organization was ailing, physically, morally and politically, and a change of air might do the patient good. There would be no difficulty in disposing of the

existing Headquarters buildings, which would fetch a high price.

8. His remarks were not made in a spirit of criticism; a debt of gratitude was owed to the people and Government of the United States, which had sheltered the United Nations for the past twenty years. However, the good of the Organization must be the primary consideration. He hoped that delegations would consult their Governments on the subject, and that the Committee would not approve the expenditure of a sum of \$150,000 on a blueprint for the construction of another building on the existing United Nations site, which would still further reduce the small green space left in the area.^{1/}

9. Mr. BAKOTO (Cameroon) said he noted with satisfaction that all members of the Committee were concerned that the United Nations should discharge its responsibilities effectively and that the Organization's budget should be administered in an orderly manner. That concern for method and clarity was reflected in the presentation of the budget estimates for the financial year 1967 and in the care with which the Advisory Committee had examined the Secretary-General's proposals. The debate on the budget estimates was taking place in a special atmosphere, for the Fifth Committee had before it not only the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, but also the work of the Special Committee on Co-ordination of the Economic and Social Council, and above all the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies.

10. The essential prerequisite for effective United Nations action was the political will of its Members to assist the Organization. When the African countries had won their independence, they had looked to the United Nations to protect them against threats, direct or indirect, to their newly acquired sovereignty. They had hoped that the concerted action of the international community would help to liberate their still-oppressed brothers. Instead, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples remained a dead letter, and the various organs of the United Nations concerned with colonial questions were impotent to bring decolonization any nearer, despite the proliferation of their meetings, the only result of which was a steady increase in Member States' contributions and in calls for Secretariat services.

11. The failure of Member States to co-operate was at the root of other problems facing the United Nations in its work for the maintenance of peace, the abolition of racial discrimination, the encouragement of economic development, and so forth. When, for example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1964 had laid the foundations for international economic co-operation, the third world had hoped that the developed countries would modify their trade policies to the advantage of the poor countries. Instead, there had been innumerable meetings of subsidiary bodies whose work had been torpedoed from the outset by certain great Powers. The

^{1/} As a result of a decision taken by the Committee at its 1135th meeting, on 31 October 1966, the complete text of the statement was subsequently circulated as document A/C.5/L.878.

most striking example was the recent United Nations Cocoa Conference, which had dragged on indefinitely although the future of several countries depended on its outcome.

12. It followed that the problems arising from the expansion of United Nations activities could be solved only if Member States respected their obligations, recognized the right of self-determination, abolished racial discrimination and placed international economic relations on a sound footing. Before deploring the increase in the Organization's needs, Members should make an effort to extend the necessary co-operation. If colonial domination was abolished, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples would disappear together with all its subsidiary bodies; if the recommendations of the 1964 Conference on Trade and Development were implemented, the second session of the Conference would not find itself at the same point as the first session. The energies of the Secretariat could then be directed to the crucial problem of economic development.

13. The developing countries could not be reproached for being the cause of certain measures of an economic nature having been taken by the United Nations in the hope of improving those countries' lot. As the Advisory Committee had pointed out (A/6307, para. 27), Member States had decided that, in the light of the limited results achieved during the first half of the United Nations Development Decade, the Organization should embark on a considerable expansion of activities in economic, social and human rights fields, particularly in the domains of trade and industry, including an enlarged programme of conferences and meetings. Not that this country favoured the proliferation of conferences: on the contrary, because of its limited resources it was obliged to press for a limitation of the number of conferences, which

might then produce tangible results. That raised the essential problem of the co-ordination of activities throughout the United Nations systems. His delegation hoped that once the role of the Economic and Social Council had been reappraised, certain bodies could be given the autonomy which they needed to play the role expected of them. Some recently created bodies had already been granted such autonomy. But the basic problem was the rationalization of United Nations activities. Method and effectiveness were not incompatible with the expansion of the Organization's activities.

14. Another aspect of the problem was the existence of what the Secretary-General had described as "certain basic differences in policy and principle, affecting both the regular budget and future peace-keeping financing" (A/C.5/1065, para. 6). There again, only the political will of Member States could help to overcome those differences and restore the United Nations to financial health.

15. His country was grateful to the services rendered by the Secretariat in the discharge of its responsibilities. The time had come, however, to give the newly independent countries a larger place in the executive machinery of the Secretariat. The criteria by which candidates were judged excluded many nationals of the new countries, and cast doubt on the Secretariat's methods of recruitment.

16. Despite the pessimism of certain of its views, his delegation would adopt a flexible attitude during the detailed consideration of the estimates. It had given close attention to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, and to the specific proposals put forward by the Danish delegation (1126th meeting). He hoped that the United Nations would soon surmount the present period of uncertainty and would go forward with renewed strength.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.