



Chairman: Mr. Max H. WERSHOF (Canada).

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE SIXTH COMMITTEE IN DOCUMENT A/8202 ON AGENDA ITEM 91\* (A/C.5/1344)**

1. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that under operative paragraph 2 (a) of the draft resolution submitted by the Sixth Committee (A/8202, para. 18), the Secretary-General would be requested to prepare a supplementary report on the legal problems relating to the utilization and use of international watercourses. The Secretary-General stated in his note (A/C.5/1344) that the supplementary report would be prepared by the staff of the Office of Legal Affairs and issued as a document of the International Law Commission. The translation and reproduction costs would be absorbed within the budgetary provisions for 1971 relating to the work of the International Law Commission.

2. Under operative paragraph 2 (b) of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to forward to the International Law Commission the report prepared by him in 1963 in response to General Assembly resolution 1401 (XIV). That report<sup>1</sup> was currently out of stock, and reprinting in English, French and Spanish would cost an estimated \$1,200; however, the Secretary-General stated that he would endeavour to carry out the reprinting internally by photo-offset, without requesting an additional appropriation.

3. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that adoption of the draft resolution would not call for any additional appropriation for 1971.

4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that adoption of the draft resolution of the Sixth Committee would require no additional appropriation.

*It was so decided.*

**AGENDA ITEM 73**

**Budget estimates for the financial year 1971  
(continued) (A/7822, A/7937, A/7968, A/7987 and**

\* Progressive development and codification of the rules of international law relating to international watercourses.

<sup>1</sup> Document A/5409 of 15 April 1963.

Add.1, A/8006, A/8008 and Add.1 to 5, 8 to 10 and 12, A/8032, A/8033, A/8072, A/8122, A/8133, A/C.5/1296, A/C.5/1298, A/C.5/1302 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.5/1303 and Add.1, A/C.5/1305, A/C.5/1307, A/C.5/1309, A/C.5/1310, A/C.5/1315 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1317, A/C.5/1319, A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1322 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1325 and Add.1, A/C.5/1328 and Add.1, A/C.5/1329, A/C.5/1331, A/C.5/1332, A/C.5/1333, A/C.5/L.1047, A/C.5/L.1055)

**Review and reappraisal of United Nations information policies and activities (A/8008/Add.5, A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1)**

5. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1) dated back to a suggestion made by the Advisory Committee in 1963;<sup>2</sup> developments since then were outlined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/8008/Add.5). After reviewing the constitutional background of the Office of Public Information and the nature of United Nations information work, the Secretary-General formulated a number of conclusions and recommendations. Some of them were concerned with information policy, others were more concrete but were without financial implications, and others still had financial implications, but not in 1971, since the Secretary-General did not suggest any modifications to his revised estimates for 1971 for the Office of Public Information. The Advisory Committee considered that information policy was not within its purview but was a matter for the General Assembly. It had confined its comments—in paragraphs 10 to 14 of its report—to proposals which would have financial implications after 1971. If the General Assembly took a decision of principle at the current session on the matters raised in the Secretary-General's report, the decision could be taken into account by the Secretary-General in the preparation of the initial estimates for 1972; on the other hand, should pressure of business compel the Fifth Committee to postpone action, the Secretary-General could take the financial implications into account in the revised estimates for 1972 or the initial estimates for 1973.

6. Mr. HAMID (Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information) said that he had followed with interest the references which several members of the Commit-

<sup>2</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 7*, para. 86.

tee had made in recent days to the subject of the information services provided in the French language by the Office of Public Information. Some of the comments, which not only seemed to indicate incomplete knowledge of what services were in fact being provided in the French language by the Office of Public Information but questioned intentions of that Office in the matter, had been disturbing to him. For example, at the 1399th meeting the representative of Mali, stressing the importance which French-speaking countries attached to the French-language operations of the Office of Public Information, had observed that the use of French, as well as other languages, should not be arbitrarily suppressed by that Office. At the 1395th meeting, the representative of France, for his part, had described the existing French language services of the Office of Public Information as being in a precarious situation and had asked for assurances concerning its future intentions as far as output in the French language was concerned.

7. With the completion of the manpower utilization survey the Office of Public Information was at last able to present to the current session its report (A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1) on the review and reappraisal of its activities during the preceding twenty-five years and its recommendations for the future. In submitting the report, which it had unfortunately not been possible to issue earlier, he had hoped that there would be a full-scale discussion of the over-all question of public information in the context of the Organization's present-day activities and preoccupations, including the question of output in the French and other languages. However, in view of the comments made on the subject of the French-language services in another context, he thought it necessary to intervene at the present stage in an attempt to set the record straight.

8. Since its inception, the Office of Public Information had recognized the importance of maintaining services in French as well as other official languages. The nature and extent of those services had necessarily been conditioned not only by the law of supply and demand but also by the resources which the General Assembly had seen fit to make available for the purpose. The Office of Public Information maintained regular daily radio broadcasts of United Nations meetings during the General Assembly sessions in English and in French. In addition, it prepared news programmes, in French among other languages, which were broadcast daily during the General Assembly sessions and weekly between sessions. The Office of Public Information also distributed, every two weeks from Headquarters, a fifteen-minute feature programme on political, economic and social issues; and every month from the United Nations Office at Geneva a half-hour feature entitled *Tour du Monde*. Those programmes were available to all French-speaking radio organizations in Europe, Africa and elsewhere, free of charge.

9. In the field of films, it had been the consistent policy of the Office of Public Information to make educational films in French available to French-speaking audiences. As to television services, which the General Assembly had not so far seen fit to sub-

sidize in the same way as other media, the Office of Public Information was obliged to rely on its own resources. That had had the effect, largely, of restricting productions to English for sale in the English-speaking world, mainly North America, although a limited number of television programmes had been produced in French. The Office of Public Information had wished to recommend that the General Assembly permit a small expansion of its television staff and a small addition to its operational budget in order to enable it to undertake television production in the French language, for free distribution to French-speaking developing countries; it had also desired to make similar recommendations for television output in Spanish and Arabic. However, those recommendations had had to be shelved for the moment in view of the budgetary situation and the position stated by the Secretary-General (see A/C.5/1309) at the 1357th meeting of the Committee.

10. With regard to press and publications, it had been the inflexible policy of the Office of Public Information, which continued to the present day, to treat English and French equally in all its output, to the maximum extent possible. Everything that was published in English was automatically and invariably also published in French, as well as other languages. Thus, such publications as the *UN Monthly Chronicle* continued to be published in French, even though sales of the French edition amounted to only some 500 copies, thus representing a very heavy United Nations subsidy, compared with the English edition, which was self-supporting. Representatives who might have read the Secretary-General's report on the reappraisal of information activities would note that the Office of Public Information had recommended that the French edition of the *UN Monthly Chronicle* should be maintained in French, despite its small circulation and high cost. Only in the case of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and the United Nations press releases had the bilingual principle had to yield to financial and practical realities. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* was published only in English, because of its high printing cost and low sales prospects. Similarly, press releases at Headquarters had so far been available only in English, for the very simple practical reason that they were intended essentially for correspondents stationed in New York, who could be expected to know the language of the host country. But even in the field of press releases, it could be noted from the Secretary-General's report that the Office of Public Information had underlined the importance of re-establishing within the Press and Publications Division a French language unit to undertake the special functions described in paragraphs 126 to 130. The Office of Public Information had originally hoped to establish a French language unit of a size adequate enough to enable it to publish, as rapidly as possible, not only French language versions of important documents and statements—those originating with the Secretary-General and senior members of the Secretariat—but also a daily summary in French of the news which formed the subject-matter of the press releases in English. However, the Office of Public Information had had to adopt a less ambitious approach because of the budgetary difficulties which

he had referred to earlier. The Administrative Management Service had suggested that an attempt be made to provide such an expanded French language service by redistributing present manpower and functions. He noted that at its 1400th meeting the Committee had approved a statement to that effect submitted by the French delegation at the 1395th meeting, and said that the Office of Public Information, in the spirit of the Secretary-General's statement at the 1357th meeting, would try to give effect to the Committee's desire, within the available resources. He hoped that ways and means could be found to continue during 1971 on a regular basis publication of the daily French-language summary service which had been initiated on an experimental basis during the current session in response to the wishes of French-speaking delegations, to which the Office of Public Information attached all due importance.

11. He hoped that he had been able to dispel some of the misunderstandings concerning the French language service, and assured members of the Committee that, within the general directives laid down by the General Assembly and the resources it thought fit to make available to the Office of Public Information, the Office would continue its efforts to make its services available in as many languages as possible and to as many individuals, institutions and areas of the world as possible.

12. Mr. BEAULNE (Canada) said that with a number of other delegations, his delegation felt that priorities in the United Nations information services must be reordered if the Organization's present-day aims were to be better conveyed to the public. The Office of Public Information seemed to experience some difficulty in adapting itself to evolving United Nations activities and particularly to the great advances in the economic and social development sector, although the recent establishment of the Centre for Economic and Social Information was a step in the right direction. The Centre was suffering financing growing pains and for the time being was primarily dependent on voluntary contributions; the Canadian Government had approved a special contribution of \$60,000, for 1970 only, which should enable two publications to be issued in connexion with the launching of the Second United Nations Development Decade. He hoped that his country's contribution would assist the Secretary-General in his efforts to secure financing for the Centre under the regular budget of the United Nations.

13. His delegation supported the proposal in paragraph 130 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1) regarding the establishment of a French language unit within the Press and Publications Division, which would be responsible for the publication in the French language of some documents produced by the Office of Public Information; however, he deplored the fact that the publication of such documents had been possible only on an *ad hoc* basis and through the co-operation of the French Translation Section of the Office of Conference Services. It appeared from the Secretary-General's report that English was the only working language used by the writers in the

Press and Publications Division; until the eve of the current session, there had not been a single senior French-speaking official in the Division, and its English language officials seemed to be unaware of the importance of communicating in French with users of that language. Most of the press releases were issued in English, with only a few texts in French, translated from English. The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information had observed that correspondents stationed in New York must necessarily know English; but they clearly did not have available to them translation services which would enable them to wire their dispatches in French. It was his delegation's view that in New York as well as at Geneva, the Press and Publications Division should in future print and release simultaneously in French and English the statements of the Secretary-General, of his representatives and of senior Secretariat officials, as well as press releases. In that connexion, it had carefully noted the statement made at the 1395th meeting by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, and the Committee's decision, taken at its 1400th meeting, to include in its report on the budget estimates for 1971 a paragraph on the need to maintain a French language unit within the Office of Public Information. However, such a unit must be established on a permanent basis.

14. He had been glad to hear of the good intentions of the Office of Public Information, as indicated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information. However, he recalled that, until 1958, the Press and Publications Division had included a French language section, which had disappeared as a result of administrative changes. Since that time, there had been a sizable increase in the number of French-speaking Member States: approximately one fifth of Member States used French either as an official or as a working language. The French language unit of the Press and Publications Division should therefore be re-established.

15. His delegation felt that the Organization should attach as much importance to linguistic balance as to geographical balance; the language training programme was an extremely effective tool, and his delegation would like to know if the Secretariat had enough human and material resources to ensure the programme's proper functioning. His Government was exerting great efforts to ensure that both English and French were used in government offices, by making it easier for public servants to study the second language; the Public Service Commission had fixed a percentage of officials in each category who should possess an adequate knowledge of both official languages by a particular date.

16. Within two years the Secretariat would have reached the stage where it would have to take into account not only geographical but also linguistic balance in recruiting its officials. However, the Office of Public Information should correct its deficiencies immediately. Senior officials capable of expressing themselves in French and conscious of the need to explain the activities of the United Nations in French

to the millions of people from all parts of the world who understood and used the French language should be appointed without delay, specifically to the Press and Publications Division. While French had been one of the working languages of the United Nations since the San Francisco Conference in 1945, it had ceased to be so for no valid reason in the Office of Public Information, which had systematically failed, during the preceding twelve years, to acquire French-speaking staff, particularly in the Press and Publications Division. The recent assignment to that Division of two or three French-speaking officials had partly rectified the anomaly; time would show whether broader measures should be adopted. In any event, it was essential that the Press and Publications Division should start working again in French so that the achievements of the United Nations could become known in many countries, including Canada, where the French language was spoken.

17. Mr. NAUDY (France) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information for his clear and conciliatory statements and commended the objectivity and precision with which the complex practical questions and questions of principle confronting the Office of Public Information had been dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1320 and Corr.1). Because of the variety and importance of those problems, it was doubtful whether the Committee could do more than skim the surface of them at the current session. His delegation therefore thought that the report should be taken up again and consideration of it should be completed at the twenty-sixth session. He pointed out that his delegation had already had occasion to express its views on the organization of information services in the French language; the gaps in those services had just been eloquently described by the representative of Canada and the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information had given satisfactory explanations regarding them. The comments made by his delegation at the 1395th meeting were in complete harmony with the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraph 262, items 2 and 7, of the report. Information services should be provided without discrimination in favour of one of the languages of the United Nations: that was one of the conditions for strengthening harmony and understanding within the Organization and, consequently, was a means of improving its efficiency. States belonging to the various linguistic groups should be able to consider themselves full Members of the Organization. Moreover, the Committee should consider in detail, at the twenty-sixth session, the report of the Advisory Committee (A/8008/Add.5), which dealt mainly with questions other than the policy to be followed and which met with the approval of his delegation.

18. Mr. WEI (China) said that the Office of Public Information, whose main function was to disseminate information concerning the United Nations to all the peoples of the world, should take into consideration the available statistics on the number of persons using the principal languages of the world. According to the 1970 edition of the *World Almanac*, the principal languages of the world used by more than 100 million

people were: Arabic (102 million), Bengali (102 million), English (320 million), German (120 million), Hindi (185 million), Japanese (103 million), Mandarin Chinese (580 million), Portuguese (101 million), Russian (194 million), and Spanish (183 million). The Office of Public Information should pay greater attention to the areas which had so far been inadequately covered, making a special effort in respect of the Chinese people. He hoped that the Office of Public Information could inform him to what extent it had developed, or reduced, its programmes for the dissemination of information on the United Nations to the Chinese people in recent years, in order to reply to those people who accused it of neglecting to inform the Chinese people about the activities of the United Nations.

19. With regard to the division of United Nations organs into three groups for purposes of press release coverage, his delegation was in general agreement with the suggestions of the Secretary-General. It thought, however, that all the Main Committees of the General Assembly should receive equal treatment. If the Fifth Committee was placed in group B, as suggested, it would be covered by a weekly press release only, which perhaps would not be very satisfactory, for example, to those who were interested in the recent discussion of salary increases. Other difficulties arose from the fact that the agenda items considered by the various committees were frequently interrelated. If a daily press release was issued on one agenda item or on part of it considered by one committee while another part of the same item or a related item considered by another committee was covered by a weekly press release, a balanced picture of the same item might not be obtained.

20. With regard to the establishment of a Regional Production Bureau for documentation, which was mentioned in paragraphs 216 to 230 of the Secretary-General's report, his delegation thought that that measure would only add one more step in the process of disseminating information. Moreover, the Secretary-General thought that the re-institution of regional meetings of Directors of Information Centres would help to develop a sense of common purpose among those officers, even if the essential advantage of that sense of identification in a universal effort was difficult to evaluate in any concrete terms. His delegation hoped that those officers had already developed a sense of common purpose since they had taken an oath on joining the Secretariat, and it would like to know to what extent the information staff's morale had been affected since those meetings were discontinued six years earlier. It wondered whether the re-institution of those meetings would actually be reflected in an improvement in the achievements of the United Nations in the sphere of public information and thought that, if it was difficult to evaluate the result in concrete terms, it would perhaps be better to defer until the twenty-sixth session the adoption of any measures relating to that question, particularly in view of the current financial situation of the Organization.

21. Mr. ALWAN (Iraq) welcomed the presence in the Fifth Committee of the Assistant Secretary-General

for Public Information and thanked him for the useful information he had provided. Iraq always followed closely the activities of the Office of Public Information and he noted with satisfaction that some anomalies which had existed for a long time regarding the United Nations Information Centre in Iraq had been rectified. In 1970 an Arabic-speaking Director had been appointed for the first time and he had already achieved more than his predecessors had done in six years. He nevertheless wished to draw the attention of the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information to certain inadequacies which still existed, particularly regarding office facilities. The Iraqi Government was aware of the difficulties encountered by the Office of Public Information but it nevertheless thought that the Arabic-speaking peoples, more than 102 million in number, did not receive the attention they deserved. At the twenty-fourth session (1305th meeting), the Iraqi delegation had submitted a number of proposals relating, particularly, to the improvement of programmes broadcast by the United Nations in the Arabic language and he would like information regarding the implementation of those proposals.

22. Mr. PAJARI (Finland) said that he was in agreement with the way in which the Secretary-General, in his report, had defined the aims and the role of United Nations information activities. He, too, thought that the functions of the Office of Public Information were of a supplementary nature and that the budgetary and policy guidelines formulated in the relevant General Assembly resolutions remained valid. Nevertheless, those guidelines should be interpreted in a sufficiently flexible manner to enable the Office of Public Information to adapt its work to the changes in United Nations activities as a whole, as well as to the rapid development of information media.

23. The establishment of the post of Special Assistant within the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General, proposed in paragraph 65 of the report, was justified since long-term planning activities should be strengthened. In his functions, the new Special Assistant should give priority to planning and review activities and any support which he could eventually give to the Assistant Secretary-General in the day-to-day discharge of his responsibilities should take a secondary place.

24. His delegation also thought that it was important to ensure greater co-ordination of United Nations information activities. The establishment of a planning and co-ordination group would certainly help. That group, and the interdepartmental committee proposed in paragraph 244 of the report, might in due course consider the problem of co-ordinating the information activities of the various United Nations organizations. It appeared, for instance, that some of the documentation produced by those organizations remained unutilized, or overlapped with other material, or did not entirely correspond to the requirements of national organizations and the public. Moreover, planning and co-ordination of information activities would certainly be improved if the group worked in close consultation with the national organizations and national United

Nations Associations, in the case of Finland and the other Nordic countries, in order to assess the needs and possibilities in the field of information.

25. His delegation thought that the proposals regarding changes in the procedure for press release coverage, contained in paragraphs 93 to 95 of the report, would not only result in savings but would also help to improve the quality and functional value of those publications. It thought, moreover, that the considerable delays in the publication of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* significantly reduced its usefulness and it supported the recommendations of the Administrative Management Service in paragraph 109. It noted with satisfaction, from paragraphs 186 and 187 of the report, that there was a growing realization in the United Nations of the need to work more closely than in the past with non-governmental organizations and it awaited with interest the result of the steps to be taken in that direction. In addition to the meetings of Directors of Information Centres, it might be useful to bring together, at the regional level, representatives of national organizations and representatives of the Office of Public Information and of the Centres, as had been done in 1969 before at Addis Ababa.

26. His delegation shared the opinion expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 11 of its report (A/8008/Add.5) concerning the proposed equipment modernization and replacement programme of the Office of Public Information. While it appreciated the need to replace and modernize that equipment in order to maintain existing services, it considered that the proposals of the Office of Public Information should be re-examined, as was suggested by the Administrative Management Service and the Advisory Committee.

*Mr. Tardos (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

27. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reminded the members of the Committee that under resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, it was the Department of Public Information which had the primary responsibility for informing the peoples of the world of the activities of the United Nations. Over the previous two years there had been an improvement in the work of the Office of Public Information, which produced booklets on a variety of subjects—particularly on *apartheid*, racial discrimination and decolonization—and which in September 1969 had begun publication of a periodical entitled *Objective: Justice*, which was devoted generally to those three topics. Recent trends had, however, done nothing to change certain general aspects of the activities of the Office of Public Information which should be improved.

28. His delegation recognized that a review and reappraisal of United Nations information policies and objectives was justified and on the whole it agreed with the approach adopted towards the problem. Nevertheless, he pointed out that, despite General Assembly resolutions 13 (I) and 595 (VI) which defined

the functions of the Department of Public Information and under which that department was the only United Nations instrument responsible for information matters, several units were currently engaged in information activities. A separate Centre for Economic and Social Information had been established and at the end of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly it had been attached to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs where it pursued activities parallel to those of the Office of Public Information. UNDP had also established its own economic information service, whose structure was parallel to that of the United Nations Office of Public Information. UNIDO and the regional economic commissions were also concerned with information activities. The multiplicity of those information bodies had given rise to an overlapping of activities and even at times to contradiction. The Office of Public Information possessed all the necessary experience in the economic and social spheres and there was no justification for a separate centre for economic and social information. His delegation also questioned the value of the study trips organized by the Centre for Economic and Social Information which were mentioned in paragraph 261 of the Secretary-General's report.

29. Since the General Assembly resolutions defining the functions of the Office of Public Information were still in force, there was no reason why the Centre for Economic and Social Information should encroach on them. It was true that the Centre was partly financed by voluntary contributions from various countries, including the Netherlands. The Minister in charge of Development Aid of the Netherlands, however, had said in the Second Committee (1269th meeting) at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly that his Government would allow the United Nations to use its contribution only when the Secretary-General had established a new relationship between the Centre for Economic and Social Information and the Office of Public Information. The representative of Canada had also pointed out that his Government had earmarked a contribution of \$60,000 for certain special information activities. If the Secretary-General accepted contributions and funds of that kind, the normal activities of the Office of Public Information should not be altered in any way as a result. His delegation considered that the Centre for Economic and Social Information, in its current form, might lead to some disorganization of the economic and social information activities of the United Nations. The Office of Public Information was perfectly capable of handling such matters itself, and, if the Centre was to continue its particular work, it should be financed entirely from voluntary contributions and should operate outside the United Nations.

30. Paragraph 217 of the report stated that the Secretary-General was prepared, as an experimental measure, to seek the strengthening and consolidation of the present system of United Nations Information Centres through the establishment of a Regional Production Bureau for Africa, with Addis Ababa as the base of operations. The report later revealed, however, that it was in fact proposed to establish a new

link between the information centres and the Office of Public Information at Headquarters which would be in addition to the network of information centres now in existence. His delegation considered that the introduction of a further intermediary of that kind might only complicate matters. The measures proposed would involve unnecessary expenditure and it would seem more logical to improve the efficiency of the existing network.

31. His delegation also questioned the advisability of establishing a post of Special Assistant within the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information and it did not share the views of the Finnish delegation on that matter.

32. The report on United Nations information policies and activities avoided the question of the geographical distribution of Professional and senior posts. While the representatives of Canada and France had stressed the importance of linguistic balance in the Office of Public Information, his delegation considered that that question had the importance of a fundamental and general principle. United Nations information activities depended in large measure on the point of view and psychology of the main officers in the Office of Public Information. It could be seen from the manning table of the Office of Public Information, however, that out of 125 Professional and senior posts, 48 were held by nationals of the United States, 9 by United Kingdom nationals, 9 by nationals from Latin American countries, 19 by nationals from African and Asian countries and only 10 by nationals from Eastern European countries. The situation was even worse in the higher echelons where such officers clearly determined the general direction of the work of the Office of Public Information. Out of 25 officers at the P-5 level and above, only 1 was a national of an Eastern European country while 9 were nationals of the United States, 4 nationals of the United Kingdom and 3 nationals of South Africa. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would attempt to remedy that abnormal situation. It fully realized that it was impossible to maintain a perfect geographical balance in each individual unit or department, but it considered that the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts should be respected as far as possible.

33. The Secretary-General's report should constitute a statement and a reappraisal of United Nations information policies and activities, yet it contained a number of new proposals. While his delegation supported some of the new proposals, it had reservations and, in some instances, formal objections with regard to others. It was opposed to some of the recommendations not only because they implied increased expenditure, but also because, as the Advisory Committee had rightly pointed out in its report, the report on the Office of Public Information dealt with some questions which were not solely of a budgetary nature, but which related to policies to be adopted and the basic principles governing United Nations information activities.

34. The recommendations formulated in the report should be considered in depth by the Consultative

Panel on Public Information established in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1405 (XIV) whose responsibilities included the periodic review of the United Nations information policies and programmes. He regretted that there had been no meeting of the Consultative Panel since the beginning of 1967 and he thought that the Secretary-General should consider the possibility of convening the Panel so that Member States could, through the intermediary of the Panel, express their views on the nature of United Nations information activities. He therefore proposed that, pending the conclusions of the Consultative Panel on the Secretary-General's report, the appropriations for the Office of Public Information for 1971 should be maintained at the 1970 level and that the Fifth Committee should resume consideration of the substance of the question at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

*Mr. Wershof (Canada) resumed the Chair.*

35. Mr. VAN VLOTEN (Netherlands) said that he would like to make a statement at the following meeting regarding the statement by the representative of the Soviet Union.

36. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that after the last statement on the item the Committee could decide to postpone until the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the review and reappraisal of United Nations information policies and activities. He recalled that the Advisory Committee had stated, in paragraph 15 of its report (A/8008/Add.5), that if the Fifth Committee was obliged to postpone action until the twenty-sixth session, the financial implications could be considered either by way of revised estimates for 1972 or of initial estimates for 1973.

## AGENDA ITEM 82

### Personnel questions (*continued*):

#### (a) Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)\* (A/8156, A/C.5/L.1046, A/C.5/XXV/CRP.36/Rev.1, A/C.5/XXV/CRP.37/Rev.1)

37. The CHAIRMAN, calling the Committee's attention to the revised texts (A/C.5/XXV/CRP.36/Rev.1 and A/C.5/XXV/CRP.37/Rev.1) of the proposals submitted at the 1408th meeting, suggested that the members of the Committee should confine their remarks to those two documents.

38. Mr. FAROOQ (Pakistan) said that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.5/XXV/CRP.37/Rev.1 had not yet had time to consider the amendments submitted to them and intended to meet for that purpose before the following meeting.

39. Mr. GUPTA (India) said that he thought that the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/8156) was much better than the previous

ones and he fully concurred in the guidelines set out in paragraph 43. He had, however, reservations regarding the recruitment policy of the Secretariat which, in his view, did not take sufficient account of population figures. While it was true that some Asian countries were, individually, "over-represented", Asia as a region was definitely "under-represented" as was clearly brought out in table 3 of the annex to the report. It was one of only two regions below the minimum of the desirable range. He was not satisfied with the explanations given on that subject by the Secretary-General and hoped that the Secretariat would take steps to rectify that anomaly. He noted from table 2 that the desirable range for Asia and the Far East offered very little latitude; there was in fact, only a variation of 3 posts between the lower limit and the upper limit (369-372), whereas there was a variation of more than 200 posts in the case of some of the other regions. There was a danger that countries like his might suffer from an unduly rigid application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Because his country was currently over-represented, the Secretariat was no longer recruiting Indian nationals and that meant that when those Indian officials currently in the Secretariat had retired, India would suddenly find itself inadequately represented. He would like to know what the Secretary-General proposed to do to remedy that situation. Those considerations, therefore, should be kept in mind in drawing up a long-term plan of recruitment. He also felt that the principle of geographical distribution should apply not only to the Secretariat as a whole, but to each major unit. In that connexion, he could see a very definite imbalance in geographical distribution as far as the higher posts in certain fields were concerned, an imbalance which seemed to result from a deliberate policy which had already been denounced by the representative of Iraq at the 1406th meeting. That imbalance was particularly noticeable in the Office of the Controller, the Office of Personnel and the administration and management services. Between 1951 and 1961, for instance, no national of a developing country had been appointed to a senior post (P-5 or above) in those units and in 1968, of 29 officials appointed to senior posts, only 3 had been nationals of developing countries. The obvious imbalance existing between developed countries and developing countries at the higher levels of the Secretariat indicated that General Assembly resolution 2539 (XXIV) was being inadequately applied or that its purpose had been misunderstood. He hoped that the Secretary-General would take all necessary measures to remedy that situation.

40. Miss HERLITZ (Israel) introduced the proposed text contained in document A/C.5/XXV/CRP.36/Rev.1 on behalf of her own delegation and the Italian delegation.

41. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objection to women being represented at all levels of the Secretariat, including the higher levels, in accordance with the Charter. In his opinion, however, it was not a question of principle that could be settled by the adoption of a draft resolution or the insertion of a paragraph to that effect in

\* Resumed from the 1408th meeting.

the Committee's report, but it was a question of the practical application of an already acknowledged principle. Staff recruitment was the responsibility of the Secretary-General and it was for him to ensure that women were equitably represented in the Secretariat. It was not, therefore, logical to adopt a special recommendation on the subject and his delegation would abstain if the text proposed by Israel and Italy was put to a vote.

42. Mr. MSELLE (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the question was a delicate one and he proposed that, at the beginning of the text proposed by Israel and Italy, the words "expressed its concern about the" should be replaced by the words "noted the fact that there is".

43. Miss FORCIGNANO (Italy), on behalf of her own delegation and the delegation of Israel, accepted the amendment proposed by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. She pointed out, for the benefit of the representative of the Soviet Union, that the whole point of the proposed text was to request the Secretary-General to ensure that women would have access to all levels of the Secretariat.

44. Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the text proposed in document A/C.5/XXV/CRP.36/Rev.1 seemed to him more acceptable with the amendment proposed by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, but sub-paragraph (b) seemed to imply that there was at present some discrimination against women in the Secretariat with regard to the selection, appointment and promotion of staff. The Secretary-General, however, did not deserve such a reproach. The Soviet delegation would not insist that the text proposed by Israel and Italy should not be put to a vote, but it asked that its reservations should be included in the Committee's report.

45. Mr. REFSHAL (Norway) endorsed the objections advanced by the representative of the Soviet Union and proposed that, at the beginning of sub-paragraph (b), the words "To ensure" should be replaced by the words "To continue to ensure".

46. Miss HERLITZ (Israel) and Miss FORCIGNANO (Italy) accepted the amendment proposed by Norway.

47. The CHAIRMAN confirmed that the reservations of the representative of the Soviet Union would be included in the Committee's report.

48. He said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the text contained in document A/C.5/XXV/CRP.36/Rev.1, as amended.

*It was so decided.*

49. Mr. RHODES (United Kingdom), referring to operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution C contained in document A/C.5/XXV/CRP.37/Rev.1, asked whether the sponsors of the draft resolution believed that the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be applied to posts in UNDP and UNICEF in the same way as to posts in the Secretariat.

50. Mr. FAROOQ (Pakistan) said that it was not a question of imposing on the secretariats of UNDP and UNICEF the formula applied by the United Nations Secretariat, but merely of advising them to respect the principle of geographical distribution, while leaving them free to choose the formula they found most convenient.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*