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AGENDA ITEM 66

Personnel questions (continued):

(a) Geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/987, A/C.5/L.790 and Corr.1 and Add.1) (continued);

(b) Proportion of fixed-term staff (A/C.5/987) (continued)

1. Mr. STUK (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that although his delegation, as it had already indicated (1028th meeting), was opposed to an unjustified expansion of the Secretariat, it was certainly in favour of creating an efficient international staff. Only if the Secretariat was genuinely international in nature could it serve the interests of all Member States impartially, and avoid being used by certain countries for their own political ends. It could not be said that an instrument of that kind yet existed. His delegation had already drawn the Committee's attention at the 1025th meeting to the way in which the Office of Public Information (OPI) publicized the views of statesmen whose actions conflicted with the spirit of the Charter while deliberately ignoring the position of those countries which condemned such actions. A similar example was offered by the Secretariat's decision to study the question of planning. The intention behind that decision was a good one, since the new countries could benefit from the planning experience of others. But the study had been conducted in countries where the State sector was of secondary importance and where there was no real planning: no detailed survey had been made of the extensive planning experience of the socialist countries, which would undoubtedly be useful to the developing countries where the State sector was steadily expanding. In such ways the views of certain political circles exercised a decisive influence on the work of United Nations bodies. The reason for that state of affairs was that in the recruitment of staff the principle of equitable geographical distribution was persistently disregarded. In various matters the Secretariat behaved as an agent of Western policy, while the socialist and neutral countries were unable even to get their quotas filled. Moreover, those persons from socialist countries who held policy-making posts were not given due opportunity to take part in the work of the Secretariat. As could be seen from the list

of staff provided by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/L.790 and Corr.1 and Add.1), in the Economic and Social Information Unit of OPI there was only 1 Soviet citizen out of a staff of 18, and the overwhelming majority of the remaining posts, including policy-making posts, were occupied by nationals of the Western Powers. Out of 31 posts in Press Services, only 2 were held by nationals of socialist countries, while United States nationals held 11. In the circumstances it was not surprising that the information supplied by OPI was tenuous. The situation was similar in other departments.

2. The whole future of the Organization was tied up with the question of equitable geographical distribution. The Byelorussian SSR could therefore no longer reconcile itself to a situation in which the places due to it were occupied by other States, which used them in order to pursue their own policy; although its quota was 10, it in fact had only 2 representatives in the Secretariat. No one denied it the right to its quota in theory, but any specific candidacy came up against an alleged lack of vacancies, usually attributed to the permanent contract system. That system was a device by which the Western Powers sought to retain the dominating position they had gained in the post-war years by securing the key-posts in the Secretariat for themselves. The United States representative, while professing support for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, had said, on the question of permanent contracts, that his Government could not accept that the careers of its nationals should be sacrificed. But why should the interests of the United Nations be sacrificed to those of individuals? The question of equitable geographical distribution had been raised repeatedly in the General Assembly since the fifteenth session, but no appreciable progress had been made. It was time for the Western Powers to show by deeds rather than words the sincerity of their often-stated desire to strengthen the Secretariat. All that was necessary was that the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as stated in the Charter, should be observed, particularly with respect to policy-making posts. If that were done, illegal operations such as ONUC would be avoided in future and the Secretariat would acquire the international character essential for its proper functioning.

3. Mr. ARBOLEDA (Colombia) said that the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/C.5/987), covering developments since 1 September 1962, showed that the Secretary-General had done his best to achieve a more equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII), and he was to be congratulated on the progress achieved. The problem of geographical distribution might not be so difficult to solve if it was not complicated by other than geographical considerations. Although the progress that had been made might not fully satisfy all countries, the objective of really equitable geographical distribution would

be achieved in time. But if he was to achieve that goal, the Secretary-General must be able to count on the support of all delegations; he had been elected unanimously to his high post and it would be unfair to leave him with the sole responsibility for the success or failure of his delicate task, without seeking to help him carry it out. It was incumbent of all delegations and, because of the nature of its work, of the Fifth Committee, to co-operate to the utmost with the Secretary-General. That could be done in two ways: first, by providing him with the funds he required to carry out his task, which should be done without losing sight of the principle of strict economy; and, secondly, by helping him to maintain the efficiency of the Secretariat, which could be done by advising him on measures to be taken in specific cases. That was a difficult task, which it might not be possible to carry out without some hurt feelings, but it was the duty of the Fifth Committee to offer constructive criticism when required.

4. In order to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General, the Committee should not merely confine itself to the budgetary and administrative aspects of the question; it must avoid any interference which would render the Secretary-General's task more difficult. Unfortunately, some delegations had no hesitation in bringing pressure to bear on the Secretary-General and his staff with a view to obtaining specific posts for their nationals. It was true that the staff could invoke Article 100 of the Charter to justify their resistance to outside interference, but it was extremely difficult for them to do so, in view of the very delicate relationship which existed between the Secretary-General and the representatives of Member States. That relationship would be much less delicate if delegations fully respected Article 100, paragraph 2, of the Charter, in which each Member of the United Nations undertook to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.

5. With the best will in the world, the Secretary-General was not able to accede to all the requests made by delegations regarding the recruitment of their nationals. That was, in the Colombian delegation's view, one of the main reasons for the persistence of a certain imbalance in the geographical distribution of the Secretariat staff. He had in mind the fact that Latin America was under-represented at the Director level, as had already been pointed out by the representatives of Argentina and Brazil.

6. The problem of equitable geographical distribution had become so difficult to solve because it had been complicated by political considerations. On the political question there were two schools of thought. The first was in favour of an independent career Secretariat whose members, as international civil servants, would not seek or receive instructions from any Government or other authority external to the Organization; as a corollary, they were in favour of permanent contracts. The other was in favour of increasing the proportion of fixed-term contracts; the countries holding that view felt that they could not afford to allow their qualified personnel to remain abroad indefinitely, for they were needed at home. They felt that fixed-term appointments, far from impairing the stability and efficiency of the staff, brought much-needed new blood into the Secretariat.

7. His delegation agreed that the Secretariat needed new blood. It therefore sympathised with the efforts of the newly independent countries to be represented in the Secretariat, and it would support any move to give nationals of those countries permanent contracts. Having carefully considered the arguments put forward for and against a larger proportion of fixed-term contracts, he was convinced that if fixed-term contracts became the rule, the Secretariat would cease to be an international body under a single chief administrative officer, and would become an association of government representatives appointed by and responsible to Governments. In that case, the Secretariat would no longer be a body of "international officials responsible only to the Organization" (Article 100, paragraph 1, of the Charter). He fully endorsed the views expressed by the representatives of Denmark and Canada at the 1038th meeting regarding the international character of the Secretariat and the principle that its members should be loyal to the Organization and not to any Government or other authority external to the Organization.

8. His delegation attached very great importance to the question of geographical distribution because it could adversely affect the morale of the staff and impair its efficiency. As his delegation had pointed out at the seventeenth session (955th meeting), the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff was the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, as provided in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. Recruitment on as wide a geographical basis as possible was only a secondary consideration, as was underlined by the word "también" in the Spanish text of that paragraph. Efficiency was therefore a primary requirement in the recruitment of staff and geographical distribution should be achieved without prejudice to efficiency. Efficiency was achieved in various ways. First, by appointing picked staff who met the Charter requirements, and by giving them the incentive of security of tenure within a career international civil service. For that reason new staff members should enter the Secretariat with the intention of becoming permanent international civil servants, not as officials on loan from their Governments. Staff on short-term contracts spent the first year learning their job and the second year preparing for their return home. Fixed-term contracts were therefore prejudicial to the smooth functioning of the Secretariat, for they impaired its efficiency and sapped the morale of the staff by blocking promotions for staff members with long years of service. He drew attention to Staff regulation 4.4, which provided that subject to the provisions of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, and without prejudice to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels, the fullest regard should be had, in filling vacancies, to the requisite qualifications and experience of persons already in the service of the United Nations. He welcomed the Secretary-General's statement, in paragraph 15 of his report (A/C.5/987), of his belief that there should be no impairment of the reasonable expectations of staff members for promotion.

9. For the reasons he had stated, his delegation was opposed to increasing the proportion of fixed-term contracts beyond 25 per cent and was in favour of maintaining the career character of the Secretariat as an international civil service. In conclusion, he said that the solution of the delicate problem of geographical distribution should be left to the good judge-

ment of the Secretary-General. His delegation was confident that the Secretary-General would be able to achieve more equitable geographical distribution without prejudice to the career members of the Secretariat and without impairing their morale or their efficiency.

10. Mr. KREACIC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the encouraging signs of improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff. However, the imbalance had not been eliminated and the Secretary-General should persist in and accelerate his efforts to achieve a satisfactory solution to the problem which, admittedly, was a complex one, particularly in view of its human and political aspects.

11. The fact that the proportion of fixed-term staff had reached 29.7 per cent should not be a cause for concern. His delegation had always maintained that no ceiling should be set on the proportion of staff members on fixed-term contracts. An increase in their numbers had, in particular, the advantage of permitting recruitment of staff from newly independent and developing countries which were not in a position to release highly qualified personnel on a permanent basis. Moreover, such a policy brought new life into the Secretariat, helping it to become a true reflection of the ever-changing conditions in the world.

12. There had been some improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff working for the various voluntary programmes, but further efforts should be made, by means of periodic reviews, to improve the situation in those important United Nations services. As the Secretary-General had stated, "every effort should be made, by the Secretariat and the Governments concerned, to have the Secretariat include nationals of all Member States" (see A/C.5/987, para. 3).

13. Mr. GIBSON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the improved position, with respect to recruitment, of countries and regions whose representation had been below the desirable level, even though that was necessarily accompanied by a reduction in the proportion of United Kingdom nationals employed in the Secretariat. The reason for the comparatively high proportion of staff members from the countries of Western Europe and North America was well known: those countries had long had highly-developed economies, extensive educational systems and experienced and advanced systems of administration; they had therefore been in a position to provide relatively large numbers of persons well qualified to work in the Secretariat. The developing countries had not hitherto been able to provide recruits on the same scale, in relation to their population, but would become increasingly able to do so as they developed their educational systems, expanded their economies and extended the scope of their administrations. His delegation would welcome that development, for the wider the field of recruitment and the larger the number of qualified applicants, the better the quality of the Secretariat was likely to be.

14. His delegation did not, however, welcome the increase in the proportion of fixed-term staff, which now substantially exceeded the 25 per cent stated in 1962 by the Secretary-General to be the maximum which he regarded as desirable. The reason for the increase, as explained in paragraph 18 of document A/C.5/987, was the difficulty of recruiting on a permanent basis from countries where candidates were in short supply. His delegation appreciated the difficulties of such coun-

tries, but as they made further progress and increased their cadres of qualified personnel they would doubtless be willing to see increasing numbers of their nationals recruited to the Secretariat on a permanent basis. Meanwhile, 29.7 per cent of fixed-term posts was too high a proportion; other speakers had referred to the extra costs entailed by such contracts and to the inevitable effect on efficiency. It took time to settle down in a new job, and no organization of any kind worked by preference with short-term staff. His delegation therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's assurance that he intended to maintain the proportion of fixed-term staff at about 25 per cent; it was to be hoped that the word "about" would not be interpreted to mean "in excess of"; and that as the supply of candidates from the developing countries increased, the Secretary-General would seek steadily to reduce that percentage. The United Kingdom entirely disagreed with the view expressed by the USSR representative at the 1038th meeting that the percentage of permanent and fixed-term staff should be reversed. The reason for his delegation's preference for permanent appointments, in addition to those already stated, was that they were necessary for the maintenance of the Secretariat as an independent and impartial body, devoted solely to the interests of the United Nations, in accordance with Article 100 of the Charter.

15. In complaining of his country's under-representation in the Secretariat, the USSR representative had seen fit to attack the integrity of those staff members who were nationals of the Western democratic countries, alleging that those countries used their nationals in the Secretariat to carry out their own policies in relation to the United Nations, and that those same nationals abused their powers so as to distort United Nations policy in various directions for the benefit of their own countries. He had referred, in particular to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, suggesting that the activities of that Department were so directed as to conform with the interests of the Western countries and to promote Western economic penetration of the developing countries. Those were very serious charges, yet the staff members against whom they were levelled were neither identified nor identifiable, and so could not be present to answer the allegations. To make such charges against members of the Secretariat, without bringing any evidence or giving the persons concerned an opportunity to reply, was an abuse of the Committee's proceedings, and under any code a denial of justice.

16. It was completely untrue that the United Kingdom had ever sought to use its nationals to influence the policy of the United Nations. The United Kingdom had long maintained a tradition of an independent, disinterested civil service which could consider questions purely on their merit and give impartial advice free of improper influence, and which carried out the decisions of Parliament with efficiency and loyalty. The United Kingdom had led the way in developing that system, but it was now widely followed in many parts of the world. It was that type of civil service which the United Kingdom had always supported as the model for the United Nations Secretariat—a service free from external influence, devoted solely to the interests of the United Nations. That was the type of service approved by the vast majority of Member States, the type of service embodied in the Charter (and presumably, therefore, at one time supported by the USSR), and the type of service supported by the other Western

Governments against which the USSR had made those allegations.

17. The groundless nature of the allegations was further exposed by the fact that the United Kingdom Government had always pressed for permanent appointments to the Secretariat; there could scarcely be any more certain way of ensuring that a staff member was protected from influence by his own country than to give him a permanent appointment with the United Nations. The position of the Soviet Government was very different: all Secretariat recruitment in the Soviet Union was carried out through a government agency, which could therefore select the candidates; USSR nationals were not permitted to accept permanent appointments, and therefore had no choice, after a few years' service, but to return to state employment. The Soviet Government was thus in a position to exercise influence—if it wanted to—over its nationals in the Secretariat to an extent that could not be approached by any Western country, or indeed by any other democratic country.

18. In the matter of the integrity of the Secretariat, there were two supremely important documents: the oath which all staff members were required to swear upon their appointment—an oath which nationals of the Western countries in the Secretariat had been groundlessly accused of breaking; and Article 100 of the Charter. His Government firmly believed that the principles there expressed were right; they were in accordance with the traditions of the United Kingdom civil service, and his delegation was convinced that they must also apply to any international civil service. His Government strictly observed those principles in its relationship with the United Nations Secretariat, and would continue to do so.

19. Mr. MHEDHEBI (Tunisia) said that it was undeniable that substantial progress had been made in the efforts to achieve a more equitable geographical distribution of the staff. The Secretary-General deserved praise for the efforts he had made in what was admittedly a difficult situation. The number of staff recruited in the last three years—and particularly during 1963—had made it possible to correct, to an appreciable extent, the numerical imbalance which had been especially evident in the under-representation of the new African Member States. That imbalance had been due, not only to the rate of growth of the Organization, but also to the fact that Members' contributions had been the basic criterion used for calculating the desirable range.

20. The new criteria adopted in General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII) were more rational and less restrictive in that they gave priority to the fact of membership. The desirable direction for the Secretary-General's efforts was now more clear. In the regional distribution of posts, the percentage quota for Africa should be doubled, those for Latin America, Asia and the Middle East should be increased to a lesser extent and those for North America, Western Europe and Eastern Europe should be reduced slightly. The table in paragraph 9 of document A/C.5/987 indicated the direction in which future changes were likely.

21. It was not surprising that nationals of certain regions should still be in the majority in the Secretariat. Those regions had been the first ones represented in the United Nations and had had to provide the personnel it needed when the Organization was first established. That should not be forgotten. However, the composition of the Secretariat should re-

flect, as far as possible, the present membership of the Organization to ensure both universality and efficiency. That would necessarily mean some stabilization of the number of staff from the regions hitherto heavily represented in the Secretariat in order to permit an increase in recruitment from the under-represented regions. The Secretary-General should be guided by that requirement in his recruitment efforts which, for the immediate future, would be on a smaller scale, in view of the policy of budget stabilization approved by the majority in the Committee. Since the Secretary-General would be recruiting fewer staff and would thus have less freedom of action, priority needs would have to be given first attention.

22. His delegation was even more concerned at the continuing imbalance at the higher levels of the Secretariat. The table in paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report showed that the percentage of each region's nationals employed in senior posts in the Secretariat was 10 per cent in the case of North America, 11 per cent in the case of Western Europe, 14 per cent in that of Eastern Europe and 9 per cent in that of Asia, whereas in the case of Africa it was only 6 per cent and in that of Latin America only 5 per cent. He recognized, however, that definitive conclusions could not be drawn from that comparison and that allowance should be made for movements up the promotional ladder. The Secretary-General believed that "in the meantime, . . . there should be no impairment of the reasonable expectations of staff members for promotion" (A/C.5/987, para. 15). That was a perfectly reasonable position, but an effort should then be made to increase recruitment from the under-represented regions to the Professional category and particularly to the higher levels of that category. Africa, with 55 P-1 and P-2 posts, out of a total of 105 staff members, was clearly at a disadvantage.

23. The present one-to-three ratio of fixed-term to permanent staff members reflected more the prevailing situation than a deliberate policy. It would be difficult to alter that situation appreciably, especially while a policy of containment prevailed. A proportion of the staff had to be recruited under fixed-term contracts, as certain countries offered officials to the United Nations only on that basis. There would be no particular advantage, however, in fixing the ratio of fixed-term to permanent staff members once for all, especially as staff members could transfer from one category to the other, and the Secretary-General should be left free, within reasonable but very flexible limits, to decide the ratio appropriate at any given time.

24. His delegation did not consider the present proportion of fixed-term staff in any way alarming and would not object to the figure of 29.7 per cent being exceeded, if that was necessary in order to achieve a more satisfactory geographical distribution.

25. Mr. MANSUR (Afghanistan) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/987) recorded some improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff. However, table 2 showed that some Member States which had already reached the maximum of their respective desirable ranges in 1962 had since exceeded it. To shift the existing imbalance from one country or region to another was surely to defeat the main purpose of General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII), which was to correct the imbalance.

26. His delegation did not believe that the proportion of fixed-term posts should be frozen at 25 per cent;

the Secretary-General had acted correctly in raising it to 29.7 per cent, and the increase should be continued. With regard, to regional changes in the composition of the Secretariat staff, the table in paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's report showed some improvement over 1962. While recognizing the difficulty of securing more equitable regional representation at the D-1 level, his delegation believed more rapid progress could be made in that direction by the use of fixed-term appointments.

27. Regarding the staffs of the Technical Assistance Board, the United Nations Special Fund and UNICEF, he observed that serious imbalances continued to exist although the report showed some progress; it was to be hoped that the progress would be continued. In conclusion, he pointed out that table 2 showed Afghanistan to be under-represented.

28. Mr. ALVAREZ TABIO (Cuba) recalled that the principle of equitable geographical distribution was laid down, not only in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter and in Staff Regulation 4.2, but also in a whole series of General Assembly resolutions, starting with resolution 153 (II) and ending with resolution 1852 (XVII). The present discussion had shown that interest had not abated in the question, which his delegation considered one of the most important facing the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee.

29. The progress that had been made towards improving the situation was insufficient and further steps must be taken. There were obvious obstacles to progress in that direction. The recruitment policy followed in the early years of the United Nations had produced a Secretariat with a disproportionate number of Western nationals, particularly of the United States of America. There were two ways of correcting that policy, as the Hungarian representative had pointed out at the 1034th meeting, namely, an increase in the proportion of fixed-term appointments, and the introduction of a policy whereby preference was given in recruitment to persons from under-represented countries, unless no qualified candidates could be found in those countries. He strongly endorsed both those proposals. According to some delegations, the lack of qualified personnel in some countries and the unwillingness of some Governments to release qualified nationals for permanent appointments were a further obstacle to any change in the present situation; but that was not really so. That difficulty could be overcome with co-operativeness and determination on both sides. The only real obstacle to the achievement of really equitable geographical distribution would be a disinclination on the part of the Secretary-General to apply the appropriate policy, or resistance by the countries that were interested in maintaining the present imbalance.

30. The Cuban delegation attached equal importance to the equitable geographical distribution of the staff and to the requirements of efficiency, competence and integrity laid down in the Charter, and it could not agree to the need for equitable geographical distribution being relegated to a secondary position on the pretext of ensuring that those requirements were met. There were three compelling reasons for ensuring the equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat. First, if the United Nations was to be a really international organization, it must have a staff which provided an equitable international representation. Secondly, if the Organization was to achieve its purpose of international co-operation, all countries

must be represented in due proportions in the Secretariat. Thirdly, if the Secretariat was to carry out its functions properly, there must be a careful balance in the composition of the Secretariat, so as to prevent countries in privileged positions with regard to the distribution of staff from deflecting the Organization from its truly international role.

31. There was a risk of injustice to certain countries if geographical distribution was considered on a regional basis only, for some countries within a region could be under-represented even if the region as a whole was not. The tables in document A/C.5/987 showed that such irregularities did exist. In addition, geographical distribution should not be thought of only in numerical terms; the level at which countries were represented should also be considered. Geographical distribution at the level of D-1 and above, which comprised the most responsible and influential positions, was a matter of primary importance. He urged the Secretary-General to make special efforts to improve geographical distribution at those levels where regrettably little progress had been made. That was also of particular importance in certain key departments and offices of the Secretariat, such as the Departments of Economic and Social Affairs and of Political and Security Council Affairs, the Office of Public Information, and the secretariats servicing the technical programmes, including the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and the United Nations Special Fund.

32. Another point to be borne in mind was that the views of Governments should be taken into account with regard to the recruitment of their nationals. That was essential if the composition of the Secretariat was to be really representative of the different nationalities composing the Organization. He did not mean that members of the Secretariat should be appointed by or be responsible to Governments, which would be a violation of the Charter, but that the Secretary-General should recruit his staff in consultation with Governments. The Cuban delegation trusted that he would bear that point in mind.

33. At the 1037th meeting, the representative of the United States had said that his delegation would not protest at its own representation in the Secretariat being, in that delegation's opinion, well below the desirable range and had called on other delegations to display a similar tolerance. The Cuban delegation was astonished that he should have the effrontery to make such a statement, which was not borne out by the facts, and that he should appeal for tolerance when his own delegation displayed none. Everyone knew that the present imbalance in the composition of the Secretariat was due to the disproportionate number of United States staff members; out of an establishment of about 4,200 posts, 1,631 or a little less than 40 per cent, were held by United States nationals. In addition, it was well known that the main reason why progress towards more equitable geographical distribution had been so slow was that the United States had been reluctant to relinquish its privileged position, which it used to try to direct the Organization's activities into channels which suited United States foreign policy. It was useless for the United States representative to plead that his country was below the "desirable range", or to use an artificial division of the posts subject to geographical distribution, for Cuba, like many other countries, had serious reservations about both concepts. In any event, the figures showed that the United States was enormously over-represented.

34. He agreed with other delegations that the posts subject to geographical distribution should be reviewed, with a view to the inclusion of other categories of posts. For instance, in the G-1 to G-5 categories, secretaries and clerks, the staff of the Publications Service and the Radio and Visual Services Division of the Office of Public Information, the Library, the Communications, Archives and Records Service, Registry, and Security and Safety Section of the Office of General Services, and perhaps others, might be included.

35. The increase in the proportion of fixed-term contracts, though welcome, should be greater, as fixed-term appointments were a way of achieving equitable geographical distribution more rapidly. Small countries and developing countries like his own could not afford to release their technical and administrative staff for permanent posts in the Secretariat. In any event, that would not be desirable, for if the Secretariat was to be really international, staff members must retain close links with their home countries and cultures. Unlike the United Kingdom and other representatives, he had no fear that an increase in the proportion of fixed-term contracts would adversely affect the efficiency of the staff or the continuity of its work. When the Secretariat became really international, the United Nations would have taken an enormous stride forward.

36. Mr. Mohamed RIAD (United Arab Republic) was gratified to note that the present debate on geographical distribution had so far been relatively free of the bitterness which had characterized the debates on that topic at previous sessions. Much progress had been made since the sixteenth session, when the Committee had been unable to reach agreement on any of the draft resolutions discussed. The Secretary-General's report to the Committee at its seventeenth session<sup>1/</sup> had been a step in the right direction; as his delegation had stated at the time (957th meeting), certain of his recommendations had been in harmony with the provisions of a draft resolution previously co-sponsored by the United Arab Republic. While noting with appreciation the improvements which had taken place in the geographical distribution of the staff, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 1852 (XVII) recognizing that significant imbalances continued to exist and requesting the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session on the progress achieved.

37. The report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/987) showed that commendable efforts were being made to have the Secretariat staff reflect the international character of the Organization. If the United Nations was to be a viable world organization, the structure and composition of its Secretariat must be adapted to the conditions prevailing at each successive stage of its life. The progress so far made had not been rapid enough, and there were many difficulties confronting the Secretary-General which his delegation earnestly hoped would be eliminated. Nevertheless, what had been achieved so far was in the right direction and augured well for the future.

38. His delegation was also pleased to note that significant adjustments had been made at the senior levels of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General had recognized at the seventeenth session that an ade-

quate number of junior posts did not compensate for the absence of any representation at senior levels, and many delegations had at that time expressed the hope that he would allow for the fact that certain regions were inadequately represented at the policy-making level.

39. It was also encouraging to note that the number of African staff members had increased by 29 per cent in the past year, and it was to be hoped that the percentage would continue to rise so as to afford the developing countries of Africa the opportunity to contribute fully to the work of the Secretariat at all levels. That trend should not be confined to Headquarters, but should be extended to ECA and the specialized agencies.

40. The question of the correct proportion of fixed-term staff was not an easy one; either for the Secretariat or for Member States. While appreciating that the Secretary-General should preserve the independence of the staff, which was a prerequisite for the efficient operation of the Secretariat, his delegation believed that he should be allowed some latitude to meet the many difficulties he faced by changing the proportion of 25 per cent as need arose. The increase in the proportion of fixed-term staff to 29.7 per cent of the total should therefore be regarded as a sign of the flexibility which was needed.

41. His delegation was also pleased to note that further progress had been made in broadening the geographical composition of the staffs of the Technical Assistance Board, the Special Fund and UNICEF. It was hoped that such progress would continue, and that the grievances of certain Members regarding the appointment of their nationals to one or other of the agencies would be satisfactorily met.

42. If progress was now being made in the right direction, that was undoubtedly due to the wisdom of the Secretary-General and the co-operation of Members. There were still differences of opinion, of course, but his delegation was confident that they would not be allowed to stand in the way of further progress.

43. Mr. MANSOURI (Syria) recalled that his delegation had been one of the original sponsors of General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII), and welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/987) on progress achieved in the light of that resolution. The report showed that more had in fact been done to improve the geographical distribution of the staff than in previous years. However, there were a number of points requiring special attention. Firstly, the principle of universality demanded that every effort be made to recruit at least one national of each of the thirteen Member States as yet unrepresented in the Secretariat. Secondly, his delegation regretted to note that the Middle Eastern countries were as yet unrepresented in the senior posts (D-1 and above), and was confident that the Secretary-General would take steps to rectify the situation by appointing some of the many qualified candidates from the Arab countries to such posts. Thirdly, the appointment of a staff member from one of the Arab countries in the Middle East to serve in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General might help the Secretariat in dealing with matters concerning that area. In conclusion, his delegation believed, as it had stated at the seventeenth session, that the question of the proportion of fixed-term staff should be left to the Secretary-General, because it believed that it was one of the means of improving the geographical distribution and not an end in itself.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 70, document A/5270.

44. Mr. SANU (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian delegation had been one of the original sponsors of General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII), which set forth a number of factors to guide the Secretary-General in his efforts to achieve more equitable geographical distribution; he would examine the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/987) in the light of those factors. His delegation welcomed the efforts which had been made since the adoption of that resolution, and appreciated the progress thus far achieved in reducing the over-all imbalance. In particular, it was evident from the report that an effort had been made to take account of the factor of membership in the Organization, and his delegation hoped that before long all Member States would be represented in the Secretariat.

45. On the other hand, the report showed that there had been little change in the attitude of the Secretariat regarding the seniority of posts occupied by Africans, a matter to which his delegation attached great importance. Table 2 in the report showed that the great majority of staff members recruited from African countries were still appointed to relatively lowly posts, for the Secretariat apparently believed that those who came from under-developed countries had under-developed minds.

46. The table in paragraph 9 of the report showed that little progress had been made towards correcting the imbalance at the D-2 level and above. His delegation sympathized with the Secretary-General's concern for the promotion opportunities of veteran staff; nevertheless, it appeared that full account had not been taken of the changes in the membership of the Organization since 1950. If Member States under-represented at that level had to wait on the normal processes of promotion, as the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 15 of his report, the present situation would remain unchanged for the next ten or fifteen years. His delegation felt that a more positive attitude should be taken; in its opinion, the only solution was to introduce a system of rotation whereby a maximum total tenure of ten years was applied to posts at D-1 and above. That was in accordance with the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions presented to the General Assembly at its twelfth session.<sup>2/</sup>

47. As far as the proportion of fixed-term staff was concerned, his delegation had always believed that the Secretary-General should be given a free hand to establish a figure that would be consistent with efficiency and some continuity in tenure. In increasing the proportion of fixed-term staff to 29.7 per cent, the Secretary-General had exercised that prerogative to his delegation's satisfaction, and he hoped that the increase would continue in 1964. At the present stage of their development, when a major effort to improve economic and social conditions required the harnessing of all available human resources, the African countries could hardly afford to release their officials to take up permanent careers in the United Nations Secretariat. However, his delegation believed that a reasonable proportion of the staff must continue to be recruited on a permanent basis if efficiency was to be maintained, and hoped that the time was not too far distant when the African countries would be able to permit their nationals to seek international employment of that kind. Nigeria, for instance, had five universities, and was already sending legal experts to other parts of Africa

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, Twelfth Session, Annexes, agenda item 41, document A/3762, para. 8.

where there was a shortage of lawyers. His delegation therefore believed it would not be in the interests of Africa to set an inflexible percentage for fixed-term staff.

48. His delegation had hitherto shared the general feeling that the principle of geographical distribution should not be extended to the General Service category, and viewed with sympathy the attitude of the Secretary-General on that question. However, it now appeared that staff members at the G-5 grade were not infrequently promoted to the Professional category, and that there had always been some re-classification from year to year. Since the cumulative effects of such re-classification would be to create further imbalances in the Professional category, his delegation was now obliged to join those who had expressed the view that the principle of geographical distribution should be applied to G-5 posts. However, as his delegation had stated in the general discussion on the 1964 budget estimates (1028th meeting), the best way to provide promotion opportunities for General Service staff was not to re-classify posts but to revise the existing grade structure, as suggested by the Advisory Committee in its main report (A/5507, paras. 137-144).

49. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his delegation's conviction that the principle of equitable geographical distribution did not conflict with the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff, namely, the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity; the two parts of paragraph 3 of Article 101 of the Charter were complementary and must be considered together. His delegation was happy to note that the Secretary-General had accepted that basic principle, and was confident that he would continue his efforts to correct the imbalance which still existed in the Secretariat.

50. Mr. MARSCHIK (Austria) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/987) was, in many respects, a most satisfactory one. The number of Member States having nationals in the Secretariat had risen from 72 in 1960 to 98 in 1963. That was encouraging and reflected the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve universality in the Secretariat.

51. The inadequate representation of Africa and Eastern Europe in the Secretariat had been a matter of concern to his delegation and it therefore welcomed the trend towards an improvement in the position in that regard. The number of staff members from Africa had increased from 36 in 1959 to 105 in 1963, while the number of those from Eastern Europe had increased from 68 in 1959 to 164 in 1963. Africa had therefore reached the "desirable range" assigned to that region; although Eastern Europe had not yet done so, the figures provided showed that the Secretary-General was making every effort to remedy that particular situation. As far as the regions were concerned, only Eastern Europe and North America remained significantly under-represented and he had no doubt that the Secretary-General would continue his efforts to correct the remaining imbalances.

52. However, geographical distribution was not the primary consideration in the recruitment of staff. The paramount consideration, under the Charter, was the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Now that the desired geographical distribution had in most cases been attained, his delegation wondered whether the time had not come to place less emphasis on geographical distribution and to stress more the need to find the most

competent candidate, regardless of nationality, for each post to be filled.

53. His delegation had never opposed the inclusion of personnel on fixed-term contracts in the staff and had never attached much importance to the actual ratio of fixed-term to permanent staff members. It had always considered, however, that recruitment on a fixed-term basis should be specially justified. That might be the case, for instance, where the Secretary-General had to consider candidates unable to accept permanent appointments, such as experts whose services would be of great value to the United Nations but who were unwilling to leave their established positions permanently. Again, developing countries might find it impossible to contribute the services of their best personnel permanently to the United Nations.

54. In that connexion, the trends appeared to his delegation to be of more importance than the current figures. In particular, the trend of the ratio of fixed-term to permanent staff was beginning to cause his delegation some concern. The proportion of fixed-term staff had increased progressively, from 16.6 per cent in 1959 to 25.4 per cent in 1962. During the year ending 31 August 1963, out of a total of 176 posts subject to geographical distribution, no less than 147 non-career appointments had been made. The percentage of fixed-term staff had therefore risen, by 31 August 1963, to 29.7 per cent and, considering only the nationals of Member States, even to 30.1 per cent, of all posts. Considering only the posts subject to geographical distribution, nearly every third member of the Secretariat in that category now held a fixed-term contract. Such appointments therefore showed signs of becoming more the rule than the exception and that was a development which his delegation would certainly not welcome. The proportion of fixed-term contracts should never become such as to threaten the nature of the international civil service.

55. The question of the nature of the Secretariat was, in his view, of even greater importance than the question of ratios and geographical distribution. Hitherto the members of the Secretariat had been regarded as the anonymous civil servants who represented the Organization, whose loyalty went in the first place to the Organization and who were responsible only to the Organization. His delegation had listened with growing concern to the increasing number of speakers who had urged that staff members should remain in close contact with social and political developments in their home countries and who had complained that certain ideologies or political concepts were not adequately represented in the Secretariat or that some of its members were no longer "representative" of their countries. The basic concept underlying that approach appeared no longer to be the traditional one of the international civil servant, but rather that of the representative of a country in the Secretariat of an international organization.

56. His delegation was disturbed by that development. Were that attitude to prevail, it would basically alter not only the structure but the very nature of the Secretariat in a sense which his delegation could only view with considerable concern. Since the establishment of the United Nations it had been precisely the impartiality and independence of the Secretary-General and his staff which had created the universal esteem and trust they enjoyed, which had made possible the effective functioning of the United Nations machinery and which had also made it possible for

Member Governments, on various occasions, to entrust to the Secretary-General or members of the Secretariat important missions of observation, investigation or other assistance. That trust and confidence, however, was based on the conviction that staff members were and would act, in law and in fact, as fully independent international civil servants, responsible only to the Organization, and not representative of any particular nation or ideology. His delegation considered that nothing should be done which might, even indirectly, impair that position.

57. Mr. ROSHCIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) rejected the United Kingdom representative's allegation that the Soviet delegation had accused the Secretariat of partiality without justifying the charge. What the Soviet delegation had stated, more exactly, was that the Western countries, which occupied a dominant position in the Secretariat, acting through their representatives on the staff, used the Secretariat for the pursuit of their own policy, inducing it to follow a certain political line in violation of the Charter and to decide questions which were outside its competence, being the sole responsibility of the Security Council. In its statements at the 1022nd and 1038th meetings, his delegation had adduced a variety of evidence to support that statement. For example, it had shown that under the regular programme of technical assistance in 1961-1962, 164 experts had been sent to the developing countries from the United States of America, 99 from France, 90 from the United Kingdom and only 6 from the USSR, despite the fact that the Soviet contribution to the project was twice as large as that of the United Kingdom. Under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, on the other hand, hundreds of Soviet experts were sent to the developing countries. The reason was simple: contributions to the Expanded Programme could be made in national currency, so that the Soviet Union was in a position to influence the selection of experts, whereas contributions to the regular programme were in United States dollars and the Soviet Union therefore could not exercise such influence. Thus the figures clearly showed that where there was no offsetting influence, the Secretariat acted in a partial manner in the recruitment of experts. Another example that had been given was that of the Congo operation. Hundreds of Secretariat members subject to geographical distribution had been dispatched to ONUC, together with United States generals and colonels, as members of the civilian staff, but not one Soviet national.

58. It had been pointed out that the Secretariat was still recruiting staff from countries which were over-represented. The case had been cited of South Africa, whose nationals had risen in number from 13 to 15 although its desirable range was 8 to 9. The reason for such cases was not that the qualifications required were so high that staff could not be recruited elsewhere, but merely that some countries were in a position to influence recruitment policy. That was particularly true of the United Kingdom. The result was that new Members and others were unable to get their nationals into the Secretariat. In addition to South Africa and the United Kingdom, Belgium, New Zealand and Spain had been cited as examples of over-represented Western countries.

59. The Soviet delegation had also referred to the fact that in the United Nations missions which had been sent to various countries, and which had an important political function, over two-thirds of the considerable number of Secretariat staff assigned to them had come



from countries belonging to NATO and other Western military alliances, whereas none had come from the socialist countries. It had pointed out further that many categories of staff had been left out of the statistics on geographical distribution. They included staff on missions, attached to expert committees, working on technical assistance and Special Fund programmes, and so on. There were over 30 D-2 officials running programmes in the economic and social field financed from extra-budgetary sources, none of them from a socialist country, who were all excluded from the tables on geographical distribution. Thus the figures given by the Secretariat were distorted. Similarly, attention had been drawn to the fact that of 35 posts at the Under-Secretary level, only 2 were held by nationals of socialist countries and 10 by nationals of neutral countries.

60. The Soviet delegation had gone fully into the question of fixed-term contracts and had justified its position in detail, pointing out that staff who spent their whole time in the United States, using United States sources in the preparation of reports and so on, were bound to lose their connexion with their mother country.

61. That was some of the evidence which the Soviet delegation had given in support of its charge of partiality. All the points it had raised were quite specific and were based on figures to be found in the documents before the Committee. If the charges were unfounded, it should be a simple matter for those concerned to refute them. They had not done so. It was therefore quite false to state as the representative of the United Kingdom had done that the Soviet delegation was abusing its position by making unjustified charges. It would have been failing in its duty if it had not drawn attention to such anomalies.

62. Mr. MKATTE (Tanganyika) said that the United States representative's statement at the 1037th meeting that fixed-term contracts should not be used as a form of sabbatical leave for officials of Member States had been insulting and unworthy. The sabbatical leave system was an invention of the colonial Powers and did not exist in the Tanganyikan civil service.

63. Mr. BARRATT (South Africa) said that the Soviet representative had cited the figures for South African staff in an attempt to show that the so-called Western countries were over-represented in the Secretariat. A

glance at the section "Africa" in table 2 of document A/C.5/987 would show that Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and the United Arab Republic were all just as over-represented as South Africa, if not more so. Similarly, the section "Europe (Eastern)" showed Czechoslovakia and Poland to be in the same position. There seemed to be no good reason, therefore, why the Soviet representative should have singled out the case of South Africa, unless he was attempting to introduce political considerations into the discussion. It should be stressed, moreover, that the South African Government, unlike the Soviet Government, had nothing to do with the appointment of its nationals to the Secretariat.

64. Mr. BAUTISTA (Philippines) said that at the 1038th meeting the Soviet representative had lumped the Philippines together with Belgium, France, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom as examples of over-represented countries. The position of the Philippines, however, was in no way comparable to that of the other countries mentioned. As could be seen from the section "Asia and the Far East" in table 2 of document A/C.5/987, the Philippines had no one in the Secretariat higher than P-4, and, indeed, apart from one Burmese at the Under-Secretary level, there were no South East Asians in senior posts. A comparison with the section "Europe (Eastern)" showed that the Philippines was certainly no better off than Czechoslovakia and Poland. Yet South East Asia was recognized as a distinct cultural region, blending East and West in Asia. The United Kingdom representative had asserted that there was a limited supply of suitable candidates for senior posts from the developing countries. But the performance of those countries, and of the Philippines in particular, in special bodies and functional commissions of the United Nations was a good indication that their nationals were fully capable of meeting the standards of efficiency, competence and integrity required of the staff.

65. Mr. PSCOLKA (Czechoslovakia) said that his country had not made any complaints about the proportionate number of its nationals in the Secretariat. If it had urged the need for equitable geographical distribution, that was because some regions and some countries were still under-represented. It might, however, ask for the data on Czechoslovakia to be corrected in the case of one staff member who should not be included in the Czechoslovak quota.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.