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**GENERAL  
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MEETING**

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AGENDA ITEM 84

Personnel questions:

- (a) Composition of the Secretariat: reports of the  
Secretary-General (A/5841, A/6077; A/C.5/  
L.842)

1. Sir Alexander MacFARQUHAR (Under-Secretary—Director of Personnel) stated that the principle of the geographical distribution of United Nations staff had never been questioned since the establishment of the Organization. The Charter of the United Nations provided that recruiting should be on as wide a geographical basis as possible, a principle which applied to all elements of the United Nations.

2. In 1962, the General Assembly had endeavoured to find the appropriate formula for appraising the "desirable range" for each Member State and to determine the scope of application of that formula. The Secretary-General's conclusions on the subject, submitted in that year,<sup>1/</sup> had been approved by the General Assembly, and the formula he had proposed was still being applied. For professional posts which did not require any special knowledge of languages, the desirable range for each Member State was computed on the basis of three factors, instead of merely on the basis of assessment for the budget, that method being no longer satisfactory because of the increase in the number of Member States, many of which were assessed at the minimum rate. The three factors in question were: first, the fact of membership or sovereignty, which was recognized by a desirable range of one to five nationals from each Member State—the Secretary-General was aware

that some Member States would be unable to fill the range immediately, but believed that no country should be considered "over-represented" if it had no more than five of its nationals on the staff; secondly, population—a "float" of 100 posts had been reserved for regional distribution on the basis of population; it had not been deemed proper to apply the criterion of national population, as distribution on that basis would be much more unequal, if only for the reason that four Member States accounted for more than one-half—55 per cent—of the total population of Member States; and thirdly, the scale of assessment, which was applied to the residuum of posts in an assumed staff strength of 1,500. Table B in the Secretary-General's reports to the nineteenth session (A/5841) and the current session (A/6077) showed the progress that had been made on the basis of the new formula.

3. One of the consequences of the application of the new formula had been that the desirable range for the African region had been doubled. Moreover, as the membership increased, the formula was adjusted automatically. Thus, in 1962, when the United Nations had had 104 Members, the weight of the factor of assessment had dropped from 100 to 59 per cent; with the number of Member States reaching 117, that factor would go down further, to 54 per cent. Hence some Member States found that the "desirable ranges" applicable to them declined to the benefit of new Member States, whose "desirable ranges" were gradually rising.

4. The new formula made it practicable to move to the goal set by the General Assembly with regard to geographical distribution. It should be stressed, however, that in practice no formula could take the place of the discretion and common sense of the chief administrative officer of the United Nations. He hoped the Committee would find that, owing to the application of the new formula, satisfactory progress had been made in geographical distribution. The Secretary-General had endeavoured to fill as quickly as possible the posts in the desirable range for each Member State; he had also borne in mind the need to improve distribution at the highest Secretariat levels as well as in the lower grades.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

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