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*Chairman:* Mr. G. G. TCHERNOUCHTENKO  
(Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic).

AGENDA ITEM 81

Personnel questions (continued):

(a) Composition of the Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/7334, A/C.5/L.942 and Add.1, A/C.5/L.962, A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3)

1. Mr. ANWARZAI (Afghanistan) thanked the Secretary-General and the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat (Committee of Seven) for the interesting document (A/7359) which they had submitted to the Fifth Committee to aid it in its study of personnel questions. Among other things, the Committee of Seven had tried to find ways in which the United Nations could obtain qualified staff. The important recommendations which it had made in that respect should be taken carefully into consideration. His delegation particularly welcomed the suggestion that a long-term recruitment plan for United Nations staff should be instituted and put into operation as a matter of priority. It felt that newly recruited staff members should be given the benefit of the experience gained by staff of longer standing. Present efforts to recruit people with the required skills from universities should be expanded. Undoubtedly, the training of staff, in the form both of job training and of mid-career refresher courses, would enhance the efficiency of the Secretariat.

2. With regard to the composition of the Secretariat, his delegation paid a tribute to the Secretary-General for the excellent quality of his report (A/7334). It had noted in particular that the changes which had taken place in the composition of the staff between 1967 and 1968 conformed to the recommendations made in General Assembly resolution 2359 (XXII) on staff recruitment policy. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to achieve a better geographical distribution, and reiterated its view that preference in recruitment should be given to candidates from inadequately represented countries. It should be borne in mind that most of them were developing countries which had only recently achieved independence. Officials from such countries would

benefit in their service with the United Nations from training in different departments, which would allow them on their return home to contribute actively to the development of their countries. Such opportunities for training should be as broad as possible.

3. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that the proportion of fixed-term staff had now reached 31.8 per cent, as against 30.6 per cent a year previously. It would support any measure which would increase the number of fixed-term contracts of short duration.

4. It was important to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. One of the aims of General Assembly resolution 2359 A (XXII) was to ensure a more equitable nationality distribution, both between the geographical regions and within each region.

5. Mr. TSURUOKA (Japan) said that the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff, about which certain doubts had been expressed, remained valid. His delegation could not agree that such a principle was necessarily incompatible with the need to ensure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity among United Nations staff. Those were the main considerations laid down for recruitment in Article 101 of the United Nations Charter. Nor did Japan share the view that the present composition of the Secretariat was the inevitable result of the faithful application of that Article. It did not believe that everything necessary had been done to explore the possibility of reconciling efficiency with recruitment from grossly under-represented countries. Japan formed part of a region—Asia and the Far East—comprising countries of widely different cultures, languages, races, social and economic structures, and religions. Great importance should therefore be attached to the principle of equitable geographical distribution within each region.

6. His delegation had studied the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/7334) in the hope of finding a substantial improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff. But it had been keenly disappointed. Certainly—and the Secretary-General should be congratulated for it—the over-all picture showed some progress, especially in that the number both of unrepresented and of under-represented countries had diminished. Nevertheless, his delegation noted with the deepest regret that the trend towards over-representation of certain Member States, which was the most important aspect of the problem, had actually become more marked during the past year. According to the table in annex III to the Secretary-General's report, 40 per cent of the 255 new appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution during the period 1 September 1967 to 31 August 1968 had gone to nationals of Member

States which had already been over-represented in 1967. His delegation would be interested to hear the Secretary-General's explanation of that situation. In contrast, some countries, such as Italy and Japan, were markedly under-represented. Thus, although the desirable number of posts for Japan was now between 48 and 67, mainly as a result of the increase in its assessment, the number of Japanese staff members subject to geographical distribution, namely 33, remained exactly the same on 31 August 1968 as it had been a year previously. His delegation could therefore only regret that the Secretary-General's efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 2359 A (XXII) had not been more effective. The Secretary-General, who was expected to take measures to remedy the situation with regard to representation, mentioned no such measures in his report. Urgent steps must be taken to prevent a further deterioration in a situation whose inequities were further apparent if the relative importance of posts at the various levels was taken into account. In that respect too, the position of Japan, which in 1967 had had one post at the level of D-1 and one P-5 post, had not changed. Of 36 posts at the P-5 level and above filled during the past year, some 50 per cent had gone to nationals of countries which were already over-represented. In that connexion, his delegation wished to stress the importance which it attached to the weighted geographical distribution of 2,000 posts, as it appeared in table 10 of annex III to the Secretary-General's report. Such a table, when coupled with the table showing unweighted distribution, was especially useful in giving an exact picture of the situation, and he wished to thank the Secretary-General for having prepared it.

7. In view of the foregoing considerations, his delegation supported whole-heartedly the recommendations made by the Committee of Seven with a view to avoiding any further deterioration in the situation with regard to geographical distribution. In particular, it associated itself with the recommendation that a long-term plan for recruitment of staff should be instituted and put into operation as a matter of priority, and that that plan should be drawn up by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management after the widest possible consultation. His delegation was aware of the difficulties which the elaboration of such a plan would involve. Nevertheless, the proposal should be carefully studied if year after year, the Fifth Committee was not to devote a considerable part of its time to discussing the question of geographical distribution of the staff. Until the plan was instituted and put into effect, the Secretary-General should make further recruitment of nationals from countries which were excessively and chronically over-represented, only in exceptional cases. His delegation was aware that it would be unreasonable to ask the Secretary-General not to recruit from countries which were slightly or temporarily "over-represented" as a result of factors such as reduction in their assessment rate. Nevertheless, it noted that the Committee of Seven was much stricter on that point, as was shown by paragraph 73 of its report (A/7359, annex). His delegation had also taken note of the separate opinion of Mr. Morozov of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as set forth in the

appendix to that report and recognized the justice of the idea expressed in paragraph 19 thereof, to the effect that no exception should be made with regard to the appointment of citizens of countries whose quota was filled. Nevertheless, it would confine itself at the present stage to stating its intention, as from the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, of asking the Secretary-General for an explanation of each case of further recruitment from highly and chronically over-represented countries. It believed that if, in truly exceptional circumstances, it was necessary to make such appointments, staff members concerned should be given a fixed-term contract.

8. Some delegations had pointed out that certain key posts in the Secretariat were always reserved to nationals of particular countries. Without endorsing such statements, his delegation felt that if, by mere coincidence, some posts always happened to be filled by nationals of the same country, the Secretary-General should do his best not to let such coincidences recur. The recommendation of the Committee of Seven that there should be a certain mobility among the officials of higher rank, should be given serious consideration by the Fifth Committee. As a general rule, high officials should not remain for more than ten years in the same posts.

9. So far, he had directed his remarks towards the efforts that should be made by the Secretary-General. However, he did not hesitate to recognize the importance of the efforts made by Member States, especially those which were under-represented to redress the situation with respect to geographical distribution in the Secretariat. In order to assist the Secretary-General in recruiting officials from under-represented countries, those countries should try to furnish a greater number of qualified staff. To that end, it would be highly desirable to have frequent consultations between the Governments of Member States and the Secretariat. He suggested that the Director of Personnel should periodically send authorized representatives to the under-represented countries with a view to interviewing candidates.

10. Finally, he wished to say a few words on the question of gauging the qualifications of candidates for employment in the Secretariat. While the need was to recruit highly qualified staff, the problem was to evaluate those qualifications. Academic background and achievement as well as professional experience were very important. However, it would be dangerous to select candidates on the basis of the standards of one particular country, for example, the United States of America. The structure of higher education and, likewise, the requirements for academic degrees varied from one country another. Moreover, in some countries academic degrees were not considered so important as professional experience in a particular career. That was the case in Japan, for example. Candidates from such countries were not necessarily unqualified to serve in the United Nations Secretariat. He hoped that the Secretary-General would use more flexible criteria in determining the qualifications of candidates from Member States which had different educational systems and different standards for evaluating qualifications.

11. In conclusion, he looked forward to receiving a report from the Secretary-General in 1969 which would indicate that substantial progress had been made toward solving the problem of geographical distribution.

12. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation attached very great importance to the question of a proper linguistic balance in the United Nations. His delegation's position of principle on that subject had been set forth briefly during the general discussion (1241st meeting), and he wished now, while the Committee was considering the Secretary-General's report (A/7334) to explain his delegation's view in greater detail, particularly its interest in having Russian made one of the working languages in the principal organs of the United Nations.

13. The main task was to rectify the linguistic imbalance which had arisen because of certain outmoded provisions in the rules of procedure of United Nations organs and which, over the twenty-year history of the United Nations, had become increasingly at variance with today's practical requirements. The extraordinary progress of international relations, especially in co-operation in the most diverse fields, had brought about a natural expansion in the use of the official languages of the United Nations. The various organs of the United Nations held hundreds of meetings yearly, in which an ever growing number of people took part. They were no longer only diplomats, but also scientists, engineers and economists, who were not always prepared to express themselves in the languages of traditional diplomacy. It was therefore reasonable and natural for an international organization to use a larger number of languages in the normal course of its work. That should be especially true in the United Nations, which, with 126 Member States, was the most representative of the international organizations. That point of view had, moreover, been upheld in General Assembly resolution 2359 B (XXII), of 19 December 1967, which stated that the use of several languages by the United Nations could constitute not a hindrance, but rather an enrichment and a means of attaining the objectives of the Charter. Indeed, the United Nations had been founded on the principle of both the equality of its Members and the equal status of its official languages. The inclusion of Russian among those languages was a source of pride to the Soviet people and had also been a tribute to the heroic conduct of the Soviet Union in the Second World War and a recognition of its part in defeating and destroying fascism. It had been at Yalta, incidentally, where the foundations for the United Nations had been laid and the great principles of the Charter had been delineated.

14. The original distinction made between official languages and working languages had been nothing but a measure of convenience in the face of certain technical problems and the lack of enough qualified translators and interpreters at the time. Those problems had now nearly vanished, and that distinction tended to be of little practical consequence. Simultaneous interpretation of the debates in all United Nations organs was now available in all the official languages, and translation was likewise a matter of routine for the bulk of United Nations docu-

ments. On the whole, significant progress had been made towards the elimination of favouritism among languages. The use of Spanish as a working language in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and the adoption of measures to increase the use of French as a working language in the Secretariat showed that the need to improve the linguistic balance in the United Nations was generally recognized. His delegation hoped that the Member States would continue to seek a satisfactory solution to the problem of better linguistic balance. Bearing those considerations in mind, his delegation felt that it was high time for Russian to take its due place and be recognized as one of the working languages in the principal organs of the United Nations.

15. The importance of the Russian language was incontrovertible. It was the language of a country which had constantly and actively contributed to make the United Nations an effective instrument for international peace and security. It was the language of a country which participated significantly in international scientific and technical co-operation, for example, in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the exploration of space. Russian was increasingly coming to be used as a working language in international conferences. In schools and universities in an increasing number of countries, more and more students were studying the Russian language and its literature. Lastly, the number of Russian-speaking staff in the United Nations, even though the Soviet Union was far from filling its quota, was quite large and was higher, for example, than that of Spanish-speaking staff. For all those reasons, it was undeniable that Russian had every right to be on a par with the working languages. An important step in that direction had been taken in 1967 (see A/7334, para. 69) when Member States, animated by a spirit of co-operation and fairness, had requested the Secretary-General to make a study of the feasibility of making Russian one of the working languages in the principal organs of the United Nations, with the exclusion—regrettably—of the Secretariat and the International Court of Justice. His delegation felt that the time had come to take further steps in that direction.

16. Introducing a draft resolution on the subject (A/C.5/L.962) he noted that the Secretary-General's report stated that the inclusion of Russian among the working languages of the United Nations would not involve any substantial changes, since all important documents were currently being translated into Russian. The change would chiefly affect provisional summary records. However, in view of the tendency for an increasing number of United Nations organs to dispense with summary records, the volume of additional documentation involved would not be so large nor the expense so great as the Secretary-General had estimated. Those facts seemed to favour the adoption of the draft resolution.

17. He also wished to stress that the Russian language would not be accorded a favoured status, but merely put on an equal footing with the current working languages. An equal status for Russian was only fair, and it would rectify the existing imbalance. The adoption of the draft resolution would reflect the true position of Russian in the world of today and

would be a step towards the attainment of the objectives embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

18. Therefore, he hoped that the Member States would study draft resolution A/C.5/L.962 in a co-operative spirit and that they would vote in favour of it.

19. Mr. AYOUB (Tunisia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3, reflecting the views of 36 delegations, which had based it on the discussions concerning the question at the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the General Assembly and on the Secretary-General's report.

20. The preamble of the draft referred to the decisions already taken by the General Assembly on the subject, particularly paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (a), of resolution 2359 B (XXII) concerning the need to ensure a linguistic balance within the Secretariat. It stressed the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of measures recommended by the Secretary-General in his report (A/7334) by means of incentives in the matter of staff promotion in the Professional category subject to geographical distribution.

21. The purpose of the operative part of the draft resolution was to invite the Secretary-General to take certain steps, listed in paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), with a view to ensuring a linguistic balance. Under paragraph 2, knowledge of a second language would be confirmed by the obtaining of a language proficiency certificate, since the end in view was essentially to provide understanding of the written and spoken language, and the language training courses would have to be modified accordingly. Paragraph 3 indicated the languages covered by paragraph 2, namely, the official languages listed in rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Under paragraph 4, the Secretary-General would be urged to take all the necessary steps to enable all the officials who so requested to follow language courses. Finally, paragraph 5 provided that the Secretary-General would be invited to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session on the action taken on the resolution, in order to enable the Assembly to take whatever measures it might deem appropriate.

22. A number of delegations had requested the sponsors of the draft resolution to make certain amendments to the text. On behalf of the sponsors, he wished to state that all the suggested amendments would be studied with due attention, in a spirit of co-operation, on the understanding that no change was to be made in the substance. He hoped that the proposal would be favourably received by the Committee.

23. Mr. GOYER (Canada) said that it was always difficult to achieve a linguistic balance, especially among five official languages. Recognition of the existence in principle of official languages implied agreement to their use in practice. It was therefore necessary to accept the cost involved and to find ways and means by which the administrative efficiency of the Organization could be maintained.

24. He hoped that the Secretary-General's inquiries in Canada, a country which had some experience in that field, would lead to a solution of the problems. His delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution

A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3, felt that the measures it proposed would be a useful step towards improving the linguistic balance in the Secretariat. Since the twenty-second session of the General Assembly, when resolution 2359 B (XXII) had been adopted, the Secretary-General had taken a number of steps and had encountered certain obstacles, which, however, should not hinder the efforts being made to improve the situation.

25. Furthermore, the increased use of the various languages in United Nations organs, as proposed in the draft resolution, was bound to give rise to many problems. It should be borne in mind that many officials had a mother tongue which was not one of the organization's official or working languages and that, as a result, a large proportion of them might have to learn not only a second but a third language. Something must be done to ease their situation, and the most suitable way of doing so was to expand to the utmost the language courses available to such staff, so that in future they could pass more rapidly through the steps within each grade. In the Canadian civil service, it had been decided to accept candidates with a knowledge of only one of the official languages, provided that they agreed to learn the other official language, at State expense, by enrolling in the language courses for civil servants.

26. Another problem concerned members of the Secretariat who, because of the nature or requirements of their work, could not easily fulfil the conditions set out in the draft resolution. His delegation felt that the interests of such staff members should not be overlooked and that special provision should be made for them, so that they would not be bound by too strict a general rule. There again, his country's experience might be useful; senior Canadian officials were granted a year's paid leave on condition that the time was spent learning the official language other than the one they spoke. The scheme had proved valuable and of great help to his Government in achieving its aims in the field of bilinguality. It was regrettable that such a scheme, which had been considered in the Secretary-General's report, could not be carried out in the Secretariat for lack of funds.

27. The measures proposed in the draft resolution could be improved, and his delegation intended to study the entire matter more thoroughly in the light of the experience of bilingual and multilingual countries, with a view to drawing up specific proposals for achieving the objectives set. The draft resolution was none the less a step forward and a necessary stage in the progress towards a more or less satisfactory solution, and his delegation hoped that the Committee would adopt it.

28. He reserved the right to speak again, if necessary, during the discussion of the composition of the Secretariat.

29. Mr. NASHER (United States of America) thought that the two draft resolutions before the Committee could hardly be studied properly without a detailed statement of their financial implications. His delegation would therefore like the Secretariat to prepare an estimate of the cost of implementing the two draft resolutions, not only in the first year but in subsequent

years. With regard to draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3, it would be especially important to know the financial implications of operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b) (ii), concerning promotion. With regard to draft resolution A/C.5/L.962, it would be necessary to know the cost involved in using Russian as a working language in United Nations organs. His delegation would like to have that information by the following morning at the latest.

30. Mr. M. BOYE (Senegal) said that draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3 sought to put into effect the principles stated in General Assembly resolutions 2241 B (XXI) and 2359 B (XXII) on the use of the working languages. The purpose of those resolutions was still to ensure the utmost efficiency of the Secretariat, taking into account the universal nature of the Organization. To that end, it was necessary first of all to ensure an equitable geographical distribution of Secretariat posts. Some progress had been made in that field, but much still remained to be done, especially in regard to the African countries which were still under-represented. Paragraph 1 of resolution 2241 A (XXI), which said that, "as a temporary measure and under the existing conditions, increased recruitment on the basis of fixed-term contracts, especially in the case of developing countries, might help to achieve a balanced geographical distribution", had been an attempt to remedy the situation.

31. Linguistic balance was the natural and logical counterpart of equitable geographical distribution and was an important factor in increasing the efficiency of the Organization's administration. The General Assembly, by its resolution 2359 B (XXII), had invited the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to ensure a linguistic balance within the Secretariat and in particular the presence of staff using the different working languages in the services responsible for the recruitment of Secretariat staff, at all levels. In his annual report on the work of the Organization<sup>1/</sup> the Secretary-General stated that measures had been taken to bring about further improvement in the geographical distribution of the staff and in its linguistic composition, and that proposals had been worked out for the extension of the facilities for language instruction in 1969. The Secretary-General also pointed out that the General Assembly at its twenty-third session would take up further proposals relating to the broadening of the linguistic proficiencies of the staff, including the introduction of incentives.

32. His delegation, which had helped to prepare draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3, felt that it represented one such incentive and hoped that it would receive the unanimous support of the members of the Committee.

*Mr. Olivier (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

33. Mr. BYKOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the composition of the Secretariat was an extremely important problem, the solution of which would facilitate international co-operation in the Organization. Every Member State wished to be

represented in all its bodies and was convinced that its citizens were just as efficient, competent and full of integrity as those of other countries. Admittedly the situation had improved somewhat, but it was still far from satisfactory, since most staff were still recruited from countries which were already over-represented in the Secretariat. Table B in the Secretary-General's report (A/7334) showed that the number of staff from Eastern Europe had increased by only 6.3 per cent, whereas the number of staff from Western Europe had increased by much more. Out of the 199 higher posts in the Secretariat, 21 per cent were held by staff from the United States of America, 30 per cent by staff from Western Europe and only 15 per cent by staff from the socialist countries. It could not be denied that that showed a flagrant imbalance in favour of the Western countries, which was still more aggravated by the fact that staff from those countries held almost all the key posts.

34. For some years now the Secretary-General had been invited to rectify that situation, but the repeated appeals made by the Assembly in its resolutions on the question had not produced any noteworthy results. His delegation believed that the time had come to take more specific measures and therefore formally proposed the inclusion in the Committee's report of a paragraph stating that the Committee, concerned at the lack of progress made in improving the situation with regard to the geographical distribution of Secretariat staff, requested the Secretary-General to take all the necessary steps to ensure that all Member States still under-represented in the Secretariat should receive during the years 1969 and 1970<sup>2/</sup> the minimum number of posts to which they were entitled.

35. At the present time, 32 nations were still under-represented and decisive measures should be taken to rectify that injustice. In view of the number of new posts approved for 1969 and the number of posts that were still vacant, it was clear that it would be easy to achieve that objective during the year 1969 alone. His delegation was asking for the operation to be spread over a period of two years because it was aware of the difficulties facing the Secretary-General and believed that he should be given some latitude. However, his delegation categorically rejected the argument that it was difficult to recruit qualified staff in the under-represented countries. That argument had no foundation in fact and was only put forward to perpetuate the existing unacceptable situation. It was time to adopt the necessary measures to normalize the situation, and in particular to finally ensure the implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

36. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) fully endorsed the remarks of the Japanese representative, thereby indicating his delegation's disappointment with the lack of results produced by the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure better geographical distribution of staff. His delegation would await with great interest the results of the study that the Japanese representative had asked the Secretariat to submit to the Committee in 1969.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 1, chap. XV, sect. A.

<sup>2/</sup> The text of the proposal was subsequently circulated as document A/C.5/L.965.

37. He wished to draw the Committee's attention to one aspect of the question of the composition of the Secretariat and staff recruitment, namely, the age of retirement, which was referred to in the report of the Committee of Seven (A/7359, annex, paras. 122 to 129). There was no uniform rule on the subject and the retirement age varied in the different bodies of the United Nations: in the United Nations it was 60 years and could be extended in some exceptional cases; in IBRD it was 65 and in other organs 62. Two observations could be made: first, it was difficult, especially in certain specialized services such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to find sufficiently qualified candidates to fill important posts that became vacant, and secondly, the holders of those posts were, in most cases, recruited 8 or 10 years before they reached retirement age, which meant that they had to retire after only a few years of service. Obviously there could be no question of the Committee taking a decision on the retirement age at the current session when it had not had time to study the report of the Committee of Seven; however, he wished to make a formal proposal that the Committee should request the Secretary-General to suspend the existing rule fixing the retirement age at 60 for the year 1969, while waiting for the General Assembly to reach a decision on the question based on the report of the Committee of Seven and all the other aspects of the problem which might be brought to its attention by delegations.

38. Apart from those considerations, he wished to express support for those delegations which had asked that at the twenty-fourth session the Committee should take up the report on the composition of the Secretariat not at the end of November but at the beginning of October at the latest, so that delegations could have time to study it in detail. He hoped that the reasons for the delay in the submission of the report at the current session would not recur at the following session; at all events, the report should be submitted to the Committee at the right time even if incomplete.

39. Turning to the draft resolution introduced by Tunisia on behalf of several countries (A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3), he said that the presence among the sponsors of his country, and of other countries whose language was neither a working language nor an official language of the Organization, should be duly noted; those countries were not motivated by prestige but by considerations of a practical nature, namely, the smooth functioning of the Secretariat and the efficiency of staff who had to work in a language other than their own. It was obvious that, even if a diplomat could be expected to know more than one language, the same was not true for specialist staff. An imbalance existed, and presumably would continue to exist for a considerable time yet, in the use of the working languages in the Secretariat. Such a situation created difficulties for countries whose language was neither a working nor an official language, since qualified candidates were, as a result, even less easy to find. Thus, in New York, for example, a person who did not have a perfect knowledge of English could not hope to receive favourable consideration for a United Nations post. The draft resolution of which his country was a sponsor had the merit of dealing with

three questions raised by the Secretary-General in his report, namely, recruitment, language instruction and promotion. His delegation, for its part, did not believe now, any more than it had the preceding year, that a language bonus would help to solve the problems.

40. With regard to the draft resolution submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.5/L.962), his delegation appreciated that, for reasons of prestige, it was important for the Soviet Union to have Russian as one of the working languages of the main organs of the United Nations, but his delegation was not convinced that it would be in the interests of the majority of Member States that had to be catered for. It appeared, moreover, that the additional expenditure involved, approximately \$1.7 million, could not be justified by considerations of prestige. But obviously, if the countries concerned were prepared to bear the financial burden themselves, his delegation would have no objection to Russian being included among the working languages of the main organs of the United Nations.

*Mr. Tchernouchchenko (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) resumed the Chair.*

41. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) hoped that the draft resolution introduced by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/L.962) would meet with the Committee's approval. Russian should be included on a level with English and French among the working languages of the principal United Nations organs because of its growing importance as a cultural medium, the development of the teaching of Russian throughout the world and the importance of the Soviet Union's role as a great world Power. It was pertinent to note that English and French were spoken in a large number of countries because in the colonial past the inhabitants had often been in the position of having to learn the language of the colonizing Power.

42. The inclusion of Russian among the working languages would help to strengthen the bonds between the international community and the Soviet people and, by encouraging study of the language, would contribute to greater knowledge and understanding of the Soviet Union, its institutions, history and customs. His delegation did not regard as excessive the additional cost which would be incurred by a decision to include Russian among the working languages of the principal United Nations organs—a decision which should be taken unanimously.

43. His delegation might have been able to support draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3 but for some reservations concerning operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b) (ii), and operative paragraph 3. It felt that it was wrong to make the promotion of officials from one grade to another conditional upon knowledge of a second language. Knowledge of languages was not necessarily a guarantee of the ability and competence of officials, and should not therefore be a determining factor in promotion. The measure proposed with that end in view did not take into account the observation made by ICSAB on the question of the language allowance, referred to by the Secretary-General in his report (A/7334), namely, that it would be difficult to find an equitable solution to the question of paying such a bonus to officials

whose mother tongue was a working language and those who had no such advantage. For those reasons, he would request a separate vote on the paragraphs and sub-paragraphs on which he had expressed reservations; if they were adopted, his delegation would be obliged to vote against the draft resolution as a whole. He therefore hoped that the sponsors would be able to take his observations into consideration.

44. Mr. KIRKBRIDE (Secretariat) replying to the questions raised by various delegations concerning the financial implications of the two draft resolutions before the Committee, said that the financial implications of the draft resolution introduced by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/L.962) were indicated in paragraph 86 of the Secretary-General's report (A/7334), which was based on the assumption that the organs concerned would be the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council; the Secretariat would be glad to have confirmation on that point from the representative of the Soviet Union. However that might be, the Committee had not yet received the observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions regarding the financial implications.

45. Operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b) (ii), of the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3) would have financial implications. Its adoption would have a cumulative effect and would involve additional expenditure, but it was difficult to give figures of any value. That was because there were many factors and considerations involved; for example, in most cases officials left the Organization having reached a fairly high step in their grade, whereas officials replacing them were generally recruited at a lower step, and every year there were changes in grade resulting from promotions. Moreover, the effects of the proposed provision would not be felt until 1972, and it was difficult to know at the present time what the situation would be then and, in particular, the number of officials to whom the provision would apply. Another consideration was that there might be changes in the structure of the staff before 1972.

46. He hoped the Committee would understand the Secretariat's difficulties in the matter; perhaps the Secretary-General would be able to give Member

States an approximate estimate of the additional costs entailed by the adoption of the sub-paragraph in question at a later date.

47. Mr. RHODES (United Kingdom) said that his delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's difficulties. While hoping that his observation would not be interpreted as an attempt to shelve the question, he nevertheless wished to point out that the Fifth Committee, as a financial organ of the United Nations, could not decide on a measure in ignorance of its financial implications. It would certainly be very useful for the Committee to have at least an approximate estimate of the additional cost resulting from the decision it was called upon to take. That estimate should obviously cover the joint draft resolution as a whole, not just operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b) (ii). It would be useful in particular to know whether the financial implications of the resolution in question corresponded to those projected by the Secretary-General in his report (A/7334). The draft resolution involved the teaching of more than three languages, whereas the Secretary-General's report mentioned only three languages. Moreover, the report stated that the proposed accelerated training courses would be attended by selected officials: he wondered whether that would be possible if promotions were to be made conditional upon knowledge of a second language. His delegation would like further information on the various points it had raised.

48. For the time being he would not make any observations on the draft resolution introduced by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/L.962), but would await the Soviet Union delegation's confirmation of the assumption on which the Secretary-General's estimate of the financial implications was based.

49. Mr. NASHER (United States of America) associated himself with the United Kingdom representative's observations, which coincided with his delegation's feelings as he had expressed them at the beginning of the meeting. It was essential that the Committee should have before it the most accurate possible estimates of the financial implications of the proposals on which it was to decide.

*The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.*