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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/7386 and Corr.1, A/C.5/L.1205, A/C.5/L.942 and Add.1, A/C.5/L.962/Rev.1, A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, A/C.5/L.965, A/C.5/L.966, A/C.5/L.968-970, A/C.5/L.972)

1. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) said that, after hearing the statement of the Secretary-General's representative (1280th meeting), his delegation realized the difficulty of reconciling apparently contradictory requirements, which were subject to a varying order of priority, as far as recruitment was concerned. The Secretary-General had indisputably sought positive solutions, and his delegation wished to compliment him on that, even though it believed that he could have taken a different approach and have adopted methods better suited to the urgency and cogency of the wishes expressed by various delegations.

2. He noted with satisfaction that the distribution of staff by region was generally satisfactory, particularly where Africa was concerned. Nevertheless, certain adjustments were desirable in view of the comparative geographical distribution as shown in annex III to the Secretary-General's report (A/7334). It should not be forgotten that the loss of a proficient civil servant was a sacrifice for the African countries, but they willingly accepted it, since they saw that it constituted

a positive and practical form of participation in international life; that was why those countries pressed for certain adjustments within the region.

3. As for linguistic balance, his delegation felt that it was not a question of granting one language or another a privileged position in an international, and therefore, by definition, multilingual, Secretariat. It was none the less true that the General Assembly, in resolution 2 (I), had defined the working languages of the Organization and it was important to ensure that those languages were placed on an equal footing, both as working instruments of the Organization and its agencies and as criteria applicable to personnel recruitment. Certainly, it was difficult to remedy in the space of a few years the accumulated errors of the past, but it was encouraging that the Secretary-General had reacted favourably to the various proposals aimed at ensuring a better linguistic balance within the Organization and Secretariat.

4. It was gratifying to note the Secretary-General's statement in paragraphs 32 and 33 of his report that staff members engaged in the preparation of documents which directly served an organ of the United Nations were able and, in fact, encouraged, to work in the language of their choice. If that practice became general, at least in the departments which were not purely administrative, it could reasonably be hoped that in a few years it would be possible to recruit staff who knew only one of the Secretariat's working languages, without that fact having any detrimental effect on the quality or efficiency of their work. The solution of the problem would be still further facilitated if the language training programme could be expanded, as the Secretary-General had, moreover, suggested.

5. With regard to that programme, his delegation believed that in its first stage instruction should be centred on the acquisition of a practical knowledge of the language concerned; that could be accomplished in thirteen weeks. However, it would be unrealistic to hope that, after such a short time, a staff member would be able to write fluently in that language without an adequate prior knowledge of it. Instruction in the drafting of a text or technical report in a foreign language should feature in the ordinary training programme, which should be reshaped to meet the new requirements. It would be a good idea to ascertain to what extent accelerated courses could be organized in locations other than Headquarters, so as to ensure better linguistic balance also in United Nations bodies which had different working languages than those of the Secretariat; that would facilitate recruitment to those organs on a non-discriminatory basis and maintain a certain continuity in the services.

6. His delegation endorsed as a whole the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 94, sub-paragraphs (f) and (g), of his report, aimed at encouraging the acquisition of linguistic knowledge. At the twenty-second session the Committee had envisaged the introduction of a language bonus which, in the view of his delegation, was not a measure that discriminated against other languages, whatever ICSAB might think. Consequently, his delegation, while maintaining its stand with regard to the language bonus, felt duty bound to support any practical steps that would help to implement General Assembly resolution 2239 B (XXII). It hoped that the Committee would favour the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 94 of his report and taken up, in their essentials, in draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5. His delegation supported the view that "knowledge of a second language" should be interpreted in a more general sense. Since it was above all a question of using the language studied for practical purposes, the language proficiency certificate should suffice as a means of confirming a candidate's knowledge; a written examination was indispensable only when the official in question was required to work in the language being studied.

7. The measures taken by the Secretary-General to make the use of the working languages more flexible and to expand the language training programme should make it possible to implement more effectively General Assembly resolution 2241 B (XXI), concerning the recruitment of staff. If that principle were to be applied equitably, the methods of giving instruction in the second language should be improved, so that those who decided to learn it would benefit extensively. Furthermore, if knowledge of a second language was regarded as desirable for the work of the Secretariat itself, consideration should be given to incentives, not as a means of discriminating against certain grades, but in recognition of increased proficiency and the desire of some staff members to improve their knowledge in the interests of the service. In some national civil services bonuses or special promotions were granted to those who had completed courses enabling them to do their jobs more efficiently. His delegation believed that the Secretariat could usefully imitate such practices, particularly as the final objective was not so much the personal interest of the staff members as that of the Organization, which needed the services of persons of the highest qualifications and competence.

8. Mr. ELIAV (Israel) said that, even if the desired geographical distribution had not yet been achieved within the Secretariat, progress had nevertheless been made in that direction. True, some countries, not all of them developed countries, were still over-represented, while others were under-represented. The problem was extremely complex and the situation did not lend itself to radical changes overnight, as had been rightly pointed out by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. Those concerned in the Secretariat should obviously make every effort to improve geographical distribution; in that connexion, he noted with satisfaction paragraph 88 of the Secretary-General's report and the

statement made before the Committee by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management at the 1280th meeting.

9. His delegation also believed that the principle of geographical distribution in the Secretariat should apply not only to the Secretariat as a whole but, as far as was possible, to every broad field of activity. On the other hand, as the representative of Australia had stated during the general discussion (1247th meeting), the performance and personality of staff members were the only criteria to be taken into consideration as far as promotion was concerned. His delegation therefore supported the recommendation made by the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat (Committee of Seven) in its report (A/7359, annex) concerning the need to revise and improve the existing system of promotion in the Secretariat, including the possibility of combining the existing Director and Professional grades into a single category with more grade levels. In particular, he endorsed the recommendation for the institution of a long-term staff recruitment plan, the implementation of which would improve geographical distribution. It would be most fitting if those recommendations were implemented as soon as possible.

10. In so far as the language question was concerned, his delegation fully shared the general desire to ensure greater equity between the official languages of the United Nations. However, on that matter, too, it seemed that flexibility and feasibility were all important. While supporting in principle draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, his delegation wondered if its provisions, especially those dealing with promotion, should not perhaps be more flexible in view of the convincing arguments that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and some of the representatives had put before the Committee. It might be possible to tone down the draft resolution by adding the words "in general" to operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b)—whereby the relevant passages would read "will in general be conditional upon" and "will in general permit"; that would be stating the Organization's policy in a practical way. The United Nations should differentiate in principle between the need to accord absolute equality in opportunity and promotion to any staff member who was proficient in any official language and the need to promote bi- or tri-lingualism, which was of course very desirable but less categorical than the former. However, even that distinction should not prevent the Committee from adopting practical, constructive and economical measures for the further implementation of General Assembly resolution 2359 B (XXII), as for instance those contained in the draft resolution.

11. Mr. DYRING (Norway) pointed out that both representatives and international civil servants who did not come from a large language group were placed at a great disadvantage. However, he realized that in order to take part in the work of international organizations it was necessary to acquire one or two foreign languages. It should not be considered a severe punishment to be required to learn foreign languages, because the person who extended his knowledge of languages benefited both his Government and himself.

12. It was in that spirit that his delegation viewed draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5. It appeared that the sponsors had approached their task with a flexible attitude and with a desire to propose measures which could gain the broadest possible support without losing sight of the aim. No one could disagree about the desirability of having international servants of the Organization who were proficient in two of the major languages used in the Secretariat. Without going into detail over the draft resolution, his delegation merely wished to say that efficiency, competence and integrity should be the decisive considerations in staff recruitment, in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Charter, and that that might at times necessitate ignoring both the principle of geographical distribution and knowledge of languages. The Secretary-General should in the last resort be allowed sufficient discretion to decide on behalf of the Organization.

13. As for the question of introducing new working languages into the Secretariat, his delegation merely wished to emphasize that every effort should be made to ensure that the chosen languages of the Organization should be as widely and effectively used as possible. That depended on not having too many languages to grapple with. For practical purposes, the Organization had chosen two languages as working languages in its Secretariat, and five official languages for its chief organs. Those languages had been chosen as working tools and not because of their greatness or value over and above other languages. The delegations of small countries such as his own had accepted the necessity for conducting business in a language foreign to them, not because their language was inferior but for the sake of economy and efficiency. They did not think it was too much to ask that language groups which were not represented among the working languages of the United Nations organs should make the same sacrifice. His delegation was neither for nor against any particular language, but wished simply to provide the Organization with a serviceable instrument of communication at the cheapest possible price. In following the proposed course of action, the Organization might be facing situations in a few years where several major language groups might be claiming a more privileged status for themselves. His delegation felt that a thorough study should be made of what those proposals would mean in terms of expenses and reduced efficiency. It would be dangerous to embark by stages upon a process which it would be difficult or impossible to halt once it had been set in motion.

14. Mr. OUCIF (Algeria) said it appeared from the Secretary-General's report that the developing countries, and in particular certain African countries, were still inadequately represented in the Secretariat, despite the adoption of resolution 2359 A (XXII), in which the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to achieve a better geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat.

15. Indeed, two geographical areas, Africa and Western Europe, had registered an above-average increase. Nevertheless, several countries in the interior of Africa were inadequately represented. His delegation understood the difficulties which some coun-

tries faced in wishing to be represented in the Secretariat, but that did not prevent other countries from making competent and efficient people available to the Secretariat. Greater participation in the work of the Secretariat on the part of all Member States could only be beneficial, and the absence of African nationals in the higher echelons was particularly regrettable.

16. As far as the question of linguistic balance was concerned, the General Assembly, in resolution 2359 B (XXII), had invited the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure a better utilization of the linguistic abilities of the staff and a better balance among the working languages in the recruitment of Secretariat staff at all levels, and in particular at the higher level, without prejudice to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. During the twenty-second session (1209th meeting), his delegation had emphasized the fact that staff recruitment should be carried out in an objective manner and that the nationals of English-speaking countries should not be given preference. That principle should be adhered to if the Organization was to enjoy the full confidence of all its Members.

17. His delegation also wished to associate itself with the other delegations which had drawn the Secretary-General's attention to the need for more equitable use of the working languages of the Secretariat. There was at present a serious imbalance which should be rectified, so that the working languages would have equal status. In keeping with that principle, Secretariat documents should be issued simultaneously in all the languages, so that delegations would be able to participate more actively in the work of the Organization.

18. The Secretary-General should be invited once again to take certain practical steps to ensure the linguistic balance which was so necessary if the Secretariat was to be effective. Hence it would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5 which had been introduced on behalf of the sponsors by the representative of Tunisia. It would likewise vote in favour of the revised draft resolution submitted by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.5/L.962/Rev.1).

19. Mr. MORRIS (Liberia) endorsed the observations which had been made on the question, in particular by the representatives of Italy and Zambia at the 1283rd meeting. He felt that the United Nations should use its available resources chiefly in order to strengthen its peace-keeping and technical assistance operations, and not in order to expand the use of languages. There were in the world many far more urgent problems for which the Organization should try to find a solution.

20. Mr. BYKOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said, in reply to the questions put to him concerning the draft resolution presented by his delegation (A/C.5/L.965), that the aim of the proposal was to rectify in a relatively short space of time an injustice affecting one of the most important rights of States, that of participating in the functioning of the Organization. Although the General Assembly had often expressed its anxiety at the slow rate of improvement of geographical distribution in the Secretariat, the problem had not yet been solved; such a state of af-

fairs could only mar the effectiveness of the Organization's work, not to mention the fact that it was hardly conducive to confidence and understanding among States. His country had submitted its proposal at the request of several delegations which wished to see the Secretary-General take energetic remedial measures to ensure more equitable geographical distribution of Secretariat staff. The purpose of his proposal was to ensure the desirable minimum number of posts for the 32 countries which were under-represented. An attempt might be made to solve the problem through the increase in staff which had been requested by the Secretary-General for 1969. The delay of two years would give the Secretary-General time to recruit nationals of the 32 countries concerned as well as of other countries which had not attained the minimum number of posts to which they were entitled.

21. Draft resolution A/C.5/L.966, which also dealt with the composition of the Secretariat, was too weak, weaker even than the resolution adopted on the same subject at the previous session, which at least had had the merit of expressing the concern of States at the significant imbalances in the geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat. The new text did not even express that concern and did not propose any specific measures. The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had spoken at the 1282nd meeting of the need to maintain a balance between the various principles and criteria to be applied in recruiting staff members and experts. His delegation was aware of that need and was proposing specific measures to correct the imbalance characterizing the recruitment of staff members. Draft resolution A/C.5/L.966 proposed nothing of the sort and merely requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts. For ten years it had been argued that the problem could only be solved gradually, and nothing had been changed in the course of those ten years.

22. The representative of the United States of America had tried to demonstrate that certain countries were under-represented because they themselves tended to restrict the number of their nationals who could apply for Secretariat posts. It was claimed for example, that it was the policy of the socialist countries to allow only a small number of allegedly selected candidates to apply. That was the argument put forward by the United States delegation for a long time, an argument which was completely unfounded. Every year the socialist countries presented candidates, who were apparently not eligible under the recruitment policy of the Office of Personnel. It would be paradoxical to accuse the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic of pursuing a restrictive policy when its delegation was precisely proposing measures to encourage the recruitment of nationals of under-represented countries. If there was any truth in the United States delegation's argument the Ukrainian delegation should be among those voting against the kind of text it had proposed.

23. He hoped that the draft paragraph submitted by his delegation would receive the support of the Committee. He would vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/L.962/Rev.1) concerning the inclusion of Russian among the working languages of the principal United Nations organs, since such a step could only contribute to better understanding among States.

24. Mr. SABIK (Poland) recalled that his delegation had always upheld the principle of the plurality of working languages and had therefore always supported the efforts towards proper treatment of English, French and Spanish in the Secretariat. Faithful to that principle, which derived from the universality of the United Nations implicit in the Charter, his delegation supported the inclusion of Russian among the working languages of the principal United Nations organs as a first step. In supporting that proposal, which was the subject of the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union (A/C.5/L.962/Rev.1), his delegation was motivated solely by the desire to ensure that full heed was paid to the purposes of the Charter and to place Russian on the same footing as the other working languages, in the interest of improving the efficiency of the work of United Nations organs. That efficiency was certainly not threatened at that stage by the proliferation of working languages; if that had been the case, there would not be the present concern for a better linguistic balance.

25. The arguments for including Russian among the working languages of the principal United Nations bodies were well known: Russian, which was becoming more and more widely used as a working language at international conferences, had actually become an international language; its importance in the discussions of United Nations organs showed that it played a role in the functioning of the Organization. Moreover, as had been pointed out, the original distinction drawn between official and working languages had become blurred and was no longer realistic. That was apparent from the Secretary-General's report, which indicated the great progress that had been made in eliminating distinctions between the different languages. It would seem, moreover, from the note (A/C.5/L.972) submitted by the Secretary-General on the financial implications of the proposal, that the inclusion of Russian would not entail very large additional expenditure. His delegation was convinced that the adoption of that measure would help to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

26. Mr. McGOUGH (Argentina) congratulated the Secretary-General on the extremely interesting report submitted to the Committee. The part of the report dealing with the composition of the Secretariat (A/7334, chap. 11) showed that, although the geographical distribution of the staff had become somewhat more equitable, there were nevertheless some geographical regions and, within those regions, some countries, which were under-represented. The Secretary-General should, therefore, continue his efforts to correct the imbalances which still persisted.

27. His delegation noted with satisfaction that linguistic balance was still a central preoccupation of a large number of delegations and attached great importance to the matter, because language teaching was becoming increasingly important in Argentina, as was shown by the fact that English had been taught as early as primary-school level since 1967.

28. Referring to the draft resolutions on linguistic balance, he said that his delegation had not had time to give proper consideration to the different texts submitted in rapid succession at the previous meet-

ing. He would not, therefore, comment on them for the time being, particularly since the proposals had financial implications which should be scrutinized.

29. As for draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, of which his delegation was one of the sponsors, an amendment would probably be submitted to operative paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b), and the co-sponsors, in a spirit of compromise, were studying possible changes with other delegations. It would therefore be better to postpone the vote until the following Monday.

30. Mr. NASHER (United States of America) said that his delegation had read with great interest the information compiled by the Secretary-General on the linguistic requirements demanded on recruitment and on the accelerated language training programme for staff members, particularly at Headquarters. It was clear from the Secretary-General's report that better utilization of the linguistic abilities of the staff could be achieved in a relatively short time.

31. His delegation supported the comments made by the Secretary-General on the language training programme, subject to the reservations expressed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/7386 and Corr.1), and therefore supported the additional appropriations requested. But he recalled that, at the previous session, his delegation had been unable to support part B of General Assembly resolution 2359 (XXII), which called for a language bonus for Professional staff subject to geographical distribution who were using two working languages.

32. His delegation was aware of the efforts being made at the current session by the former proponents of the language bonus, in submitting draft resolution A/C.5/L.963 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, to find a better solution to the problem, but in the final analysis his delegation would prefer the solution proposed in paragraph 94 of the report, which had the advantage of leaving the Secretary-General greater flexibility in implementing the provisions of the operative paragraph. Furthermore, while the financial implications of the draft resolution, as stated by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1205), would be high in 1969, they would likely be higher in subsequent years.

33. His delegation's reservations on the draft resolution in question concerned several specific points. It seemed, in the first place, that paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (a) (ii), undoubtedly through an unintentional mistake in drafting, went beyond its purpose of ensuring increased language proficiency; in its existing form, it would inadvertently limit appointments to "fixed terms", even if a candidate had full language proficiency, or after he had attained it. That provision must be changed. Paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b) (i), should be reworded so as to permit exceptions and give the Secretary-General a certain freedom of action in cases where he considered certain exceptions to be necessary in the interest of the Organization. The reservations on sub-paragraph (b) (ii) were more important, for his delegation doubted whether the action which it recommended could really make a material contribution to achieving a better distribution of lin-

guistic skills; that action would, moreover, be very expensive. His delegation favoured a formulation which would indicate that the contemplated system would be experimental. Operative paragraph 3 gave rise to serious reservations. It would be sufficient, in order to make it acceptable, to provide that the second language, knowledge of which would be confirmed by the award of the language proficiency certificate, would be one of the working languages, and not one of the official languages, as was provided by the existing text. He would revert to the problem raised by that question at a later stage. Such were the present doubts and concerns about the draft resolution as drafted. His delegation hoped, however, that the changes which would be made in it in the course of the consultations between the sponsors and certain delegations would make it possible for his delegation to support the draft.

34. Turning to the question of including Russian among the working languages of the United Nations, he said that he would like, before examining the important administrative and financial implications of that proposal, to speak about the main problems to which it gave rise.

35. First, as several delegations had correctly pointed out, draft resolution A/C.5/L.962 was a "political" resolution having the ultimate aim of placing the Russian language on a footing of equality with the other working languages in order that it might—as its advocates suggested—reflect the Soviet Union's place in today's world. Consequently, the argument continued, the United Nations should be willing to spend whatever amount of money was required.

36. Secondly, it was clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the revised draft resolution (A/C.5/L.962/Rev.1) was a first step towards making Russian a working language of all the United Nations organs with all the attendant costs, at the earliest possible date.

37. His delegation had no quarrel with the fact that Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, were, as provided in rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, official languages of the United Nations. That was essential if the United Nations was to function effectively, and it was necessary, so that the Soviet Union could fully and equally participate in the work of the official organs of the United Nations. However, the subject before the Committee was what languages were required to carry on the day-to-day work of the Secretariat and of the other principal organs. The question which must be answered was whether the principal organs of the United Nations could and must function effectively and with reasonable cost if Russian was added to the present working languages, and whether the high cost that would be incurred by such a decision was necessary or justified.

38. An attempt must accordingly be made to discover the underlying reasons why rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provided for three working languages, namely, English, French and Spanish. The reason for that arrangement was that, of the Members of the United Nations sending delegations to the United Nations and supplying staff to its principal organs, there were 72 which used English, 28 whose basic language was French, 20 which used

Spanish, 4 which used Russian and 1 which used Chinese. It was that ratio which should guide the Fifth Committee in its decision in that matter. Regardless of prestige, power or what Members were founding Members, the Committee must ensure that in carrying out their day-to-day work, the principal organs of the United Nations did not become new Towers of Babel. The key test as a working language was efficiency and economy. While there was no doubt that Russian must be retained as an official language, perhaps for the soundly leased "power" reasons already mentioned, those reasons did not apply in so far as the working languages were concerned.

39. The financial implications of the draft resolution could be evaluated only by going beyond what immediate effects such a decision, if adopted, would have in 1969. Although all the facts were not known, enough of them were available to project with some accuracy what the cost to the Organization would be if Russian became a full working language. The present cost of the Russian language at Headquarters was \$2,300,000 a year. The additional cost of making Russian a working language of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council would be \$1,300,000 a year. If such an arrangement was extended to the Secretariat and the International Court of Justice, the corresponding cost could be estimated at \$900,000 a year. Furthermore, the use of Russian in units of the United Nations at locations other than Headquarters would certainly add another \$600,000. The total cost would therefore be about \$5 million a year. The only answer which could be given to the question whether that cost was justified for "political" reasons was that it was not. It must also be noted that those costs were direct costs, without allowance for the decreased efficiency of the staff that would result from such a measure. Another point to be borne in mind was that if Russian was included among the working languages of the United Nations, efforts would inevitably be made to do the same in the specialized agencies. Furthermore, if Russian was to be considered a working language, it would eventually be impossible to deny the same status to the other official language—Chinese. The additional costs would then no longer be just \$5 million but perhaps twice as much.

40. It was for those reasons that the United States delegation believed that the Soviet Union draft resolution should be withdrawn. It should not in any case be adopted. His delegation stressed that its concerns were the administrative, budgetary and management considerations inherent in the proposal. It had not approached the matter on an East-West or political basis.

41. Mr. STARK (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that before providing the representative of Peru with the clarification he had requested at the 1253rd meeting, he wished to give the Peruvian delegation the assurances for which it had asked while at the same time maintaining the general reservations which he himself had formulated at the 1282nd meeting and which reduced themselves to the following consideration, namely, that it was not possible for the Secretary-General to apply the principles governing the recruitment of staff with absolute rigour and rigidity.

42. The representative of Peru had wanted to know the Secretary-General's opinion on the possibility of deciding not to recruit any more nationals of the over-represented countries, except in special circumstances. The Secretary-General always applied, in the case of each country, the system of desirable ranges. It was not his intention to recruit any more nationals of countries which were already over-represented, except in special circumstances, which sometimes occurred: it was generally known, for example, what difficulties the regional economic commissions sometimes encountered in filling the expert posts which they had available.

43. As to whether, in the case of a vacancy, a post should be reserved for a national of the same nationality as his predecessor, there was no set rule. The main criterion was, of course, competence, in addition to the other conditions which a candidate must meet.

44. As to the number of assigned posts, he pointed out that in applying the system of desirable ranges for each country, the Secretary-General gave due attention to the relative number of posts in the various categories, so that the number of posts to which each country was entitled was weighted against that factor.

45. Mr. FAURA (Peru) thanked Mr. Stark for the information which he had just furnished and which had cleared up the doubts of his delegation. He asked that the information given by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management should be reproduced in full in the report of the Fifth Committee on that question.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION CONTAINED IN DOCUMENT A/L.556 ON AGENDA ITEM 64\* (A/C.5/1208)

46. The CHAIRMAN called upon the Committee to consider the note (A/C.5/1208) by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of a draft resolution (A/L.556) dealing with the recommendations made by the United Nations Council for Namibia in its report.<sup>1/</sup> The Secretary-General estimated that implementation of the provisions of the draft resolution would necessitate an additional appropriation of \$90,000 under section 17 of the budget for 1969.

47. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that the estimate was intended to cover, *inter alia*, the establishment of an office in Africa and the cost of the meetings to be organized with the representatives of the Namibian people. With regard to those meetings, it should be noted that the Secretary-General based himself on the principle that all members of the Council would participate. The Advisory Committee recalled that an amount of \$184,600 had

\*Question of Namibia:

- (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;
- (b) Report of the United Nations Council for Namibia,
- (c) Appointment of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, agenda item 64, documents A/7338 and Corr.1 (issued separately).

already been requested under section 17, chapter VII (United Nations Council for Namibia and United Commissioner for Namibia), of the budget estimates for the financial year 1969 (A/7205), and that the amount was intended to cover travel costs.

48. The Advisory Committee therefore believed it possible to reduce the expenditure substantially but, in view of the difficulty of arriving at an accurate estimate of that expenditure, the Committee thought that the financial implications of the draft resolution in question could be estimated at \$65,000, without taking into account any decisions which the General Assembly might subsequently adopt concerning the special training programmes for Namibians.

49. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Rapporteur should inform the General Assembly direct that, if it adopted draft resolution A/L.556, an additional appropriation of \$65,000 would be required under section 17 of the budget for 1969.

*It was so decided.*

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS I AND II SUBMITTED BY THE SECOND COMMITTEE IN DOCUMENT A/7383/ADD.1 ON AGENDA ITEM 34\*

50. Mr. BANNIER (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee was faced with a delicate procedural problem which urgently required a decision by the Fifth Committee. In the course of the day the General Assembly was to take up, in plenary meeting, part II of the report (A/7383/Add.1) of the Second Committee concerning the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, paragraph 14 of which contained two draft resolutions on which the General Assembly would have to reach a decision. Rule 154 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure provided that no resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretary-General shall be voted by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations". The Advisory Committee, which had just been informed that the financial implications in question were estimated by the Secretary-General to amount to some \$100,000, was unable to deal immediately with that estimate and to report thereon to the Fifth Committee. He therefore proposed, in view of the urgency of the matter, that the Fifth Committee should, as an exceptional measure agree to waive rule 154 and inform the General Assembly that the adoption of the draft resolutions in question would involve expenditure of the order of \$100,000, it being understood that the definitive amount of the appropriations for that purpose in the budget for 1969 would subsequently be brought to the General Assembly's attention after the Advisory Committee had reported thereon to the Fifth Committee.<sup>2/</sup>

\*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development:

(a) Report of the Conference on its second session;

(b) Report of the Trade and Development Board.

<sup>2/</sup> See documents A/C.5/1206 (note by the Secretary-General) and A/7413 (report of the Advisory Committee), circulated subsequently. See also the 1291st meeting.

51. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take that the Committee accepted the proposal of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, having regard to the circumstances and to the fact that, of the two draft resolutions in question, one had been unanimously adopted by the Second Committee, while the other came from the Trade and Development Board.

AGENDA ITEM 74

Budget estimates for the financial year 1969 (continued) (A/7125, A/7205 and Corr.1, A/7207, A/7236, A/7255, A/7280, A/7304, A/7336, A/7337, A/7339, A/7340, A/7341, A/7351, A/7356, A/7359, A/7366, A/7367 and Corr.1, A/7373, A/C.5/1168, A/C.5/1169 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1175-1179, A/C.5/1182, A/C.5/1183, A/C.5/1185, A/C.5/1186 and Add.1, A/C.5/1187-1189, A/C.5/1200, A/C.5/L.943, A/C.5/L.948, A/C.5/L.950, A/C.5/L.960)

Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses (continued)\*\*  
(A/7336)

52. Mr. YUNUS (Pakistan) said that, in order to be able to conclude its discussion of the definition of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses by dealing with the report (A/7336) of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with full knowledge of the facts, the Fifth Committee had the right to expect full and complete information to be submitted to it, irrespective of the complexity of the problem. While appreciating the efforts of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat, his delegation thought that the one document submitted to the Committee left it in the dark concerning a number of important points.

53. He had certain observations to make. First of all, the question of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses should be approached from the point of view of the effects of the proposed new procedure on the work of the programme-formulating bodies and on the preparation and administration of the United Nations budget. As the Advisory Committee pointed out, the definition of those expenses was part of the new budgetary concept characterized by the idea of the planning estimate. Under that new procedure the programme-formulating bodies were called upon to define their work programme two years in advance and then to adhere to it. The uncertainties and needs for adjustment created by the passage of time could be rectified through the supplementary estimates procedure. But the Advisory Committee's proposals sought to shut the door. The programme-formulating bodies would thus find themselves in a strait jacket, being obliged to say what they wanted two years ahead of time and to wait until the next budgetary period if something occurred in the meanwhile, unless, of course, the new element could be certified to be such as to lead to serious detriment to the United Nations. Since that exception would normally relate to political matters, the new procedure outlined in the Advisory Committee's report, would be a solid block in the way of requests for supplementary appropriations in social and economic work programmes. True, the Fifth Committee had been told

\*\*Resumed from the 1280th meeting.

that the new procedure was neither meant to curtail the freedom of the programme-formulating bodies nor to deprive the Secretary-General of his freedom of action. What aim did the new procedure pursue? And what exactly was the criterion for certifying serious detriment? Serious detriment was a matter to be determined by Member States under the parliamentary procedures of the United Nations. Hence the question might legitimately be asked what was to become of the sovereign powers of Member States in respect of work programmes legislated by them, if the Secretary-General was supposed to certify whether a danger existed in respect of a new request. Furthermore, even if Member States accepted that position, the Secretariat could only certify that the work programme in question, or an item of it, had been duly authorized by the programme-formulating body concerned, which alone was competent to determine the relevant priorities. Therefore the reservations expressed in 1967 by the developing countries concerning the planning estimate seemed to apply also to the procedure proposed by the Advisory Committee. Either that proposal should be modified, or the function of certifying whether serious detriment to the United Nations would result if any item of the work programme was postponed until the following legislative period should be exercised by the programme-formulating body concerned.

54. Passing to the definitions of "unforeseen related expenses" and "unforeseen new expenses", which seemed to replace, respectively, what had formerly been called "unforeseen expenses" and "extraordinary expenses", he thought that the words themselves were less important than the new procedures contemplated which were described in paragraphs 24 to 30 of the Advisory Committee's report. That was where the real change lay. But a basic concept discussed in paragraph 23 deserved some attention, namely, that, since the budget was approved a few days before the start of the budget year, programmes qualifying for appropriations must already exist on paper. From that the conclusion was drawn that a subsidiary body whose work programme was too vague to enable the General Assembly to make even an *ad hoc* appropriation should not be entitled to seek funds under the terms of the resolution on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. But there was more than just a subsidiary body's work programme as a whole which could be vague. What happened to those items which were perceived some time after the budget estimates and planning estimate had been made? According to the Advisory Committee's report, it seemed that, since supplementary funds could be sought only for unforeseen emergency expenses, those items could no longer be provided for in a current budgetary period, at least so far as economic and social activities were concerned. What happened then to the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its summer session? The problem would only be compounded when the planning estimate, and especially the proposed biennial budgetary cycle, were put into effect.

55. The whole approach to the matter of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses therefore needed further examination in order to ward off the dangers inherent in the planning estimate procedure.

56. Moreover, the new procedures proposed by the Advisory Committee might result in the Secretary-General's taking steps not consistent with sound budgetary practice. If, for example, some unexpected occurrence took place at the beginning of the financial year, the Secretary-General, since he would be barred by virtue of paragraph 30 of the Advisory Committee's report from requesting supplementary appropriations, might prefer to avail himself of the resolution on unforeseen expenses instead of meeting the new expenditure within the approved appropriations, lest he be unable later in the year to provide for genuinely additional expenditure for which he could not invoke the provisions of the resolution on unforeseen expenses. If he was later asked to certify that he was unable at that early stage to meet the unforeseen new expenses or the unforeseen related expenses from within the approved appropriations, he would find himself in a dilemma: if he did furnish the certification and the appropriation later ran short, he would be left with no further recourse; if he did not furnish the certification and savings were later made, he would be in just as difficult a position. That dilemma should not be forced on the Secretary-General.

57. Again, account had to be taken not only of the Secretary-General's reactions but of the procedures of the Advisory Committee itself. Cuts in appropriations imposed by the latter—quite legitimately, of course—were often based on imprecise estimates or vague opinions. If the Advisory Committee recommended excessive cuts the Secretary-General would find himself in a difficult budgetary situation.

58. It was of course proposed, in order precisely to allow the Secretary-General some flexibility, to include in the budget a special appropriation line of \$300,000 or \$400,000. It would appear that the Advisory Committee had chosen that recourse in order to put an end to requests for supplementary appropriations, except where there was a risk of serious detriment to the Organization. In view of the uncertainties already pointed out, however, the Pakistani delegation felt that to fix a special appropriation line for urgent expenses within such limits was not a very precise or sound way to administer the budget. Moreover, since the special appropriation line would probably be used to offset the Advisory Committee's cuts, it was by no means clear what degree of flexibility it would give the Secretary-General. In point of fact that proposal by the Advisory Committee was tantamount to admitting the need for supplementary estimates.

59. Another feature of the new procedure proposed by the Advisory Committee was that where the Secretary-General could under the existing procedures take certain necessary action, for instance in respect of staff salaries and allowances, he would in future have to inform the Advisory Committee whether he could absorb the additional costs within existing appropriations or, if he could not, request the Committee's prior approval under the resolution on unforeseen expenses. But such action by the Secretary-General, it should not be forgotten, was governed by General Assembly resolutions, which he merely put into effect. It would seem that that discretion of the Secretary-General was not to apply to expenditure which was manifestly covered by standing instructions of the General Assembly.



60. It also had to be remembered that under the supplementary estimates procedure, which was a device to provide for the errors inevitable in all projections, it was possible to deal not only with cases in which appropriations were exceeded, but also the reverse. If it was allowed that circumstances might result in expenditure being smaller than had been foreseen, it was logical to allow also that supplementary appropriations might be justified.

61. Lastly, the Advisory Committee's report made no mention at all of regulation 3.8 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, which provided that "supplementary estimates may be submitted by the Secretary-General whenever necessary". Operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution annexed to the report sought to modify regulation 3.8 by making the submission of requests for supplementary estimates subject to the terms of the resolution relating to unforeseen expenses, thus giving the Advisory Committee the last word. Since the General Assembly alone

could vote appropriations, the purpose of the resolution on unforeseen expenses was simply to allow for the fact that the General Assembly was not in continuous session; if it were, the resolution would have no point. When the Assembly was in session it could consider any request by the Secretary-General. The amendment to the Financial Regulations proposed by the Advisory Committee modified the powers of the General Assembly and therefore required legal analysis and that being so, it would perhaps be well to request an advisory opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs.

62. For those reasons the Pakistan delegation was most hesitant to support the Advisory Committee's report. It felt that delegations needed more time and more information before they could declare their positions on the basis of full knowledge of all the relevant considerations.

*The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.*