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*Chairman:* Mr. Milton Fowler GREGG (Canada).

AGENDA ITEM 58

Budget estimates for the financial year 1964 (A/5440, A/5505, A/5507, A/5529, A/C.5/973, A/C.5/978, A/C.5/982, A/C.5/988, A/C.5/989, A/C.5/L.792) (continued)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. ZALAMEA (Colombia) pointed out that both the Secretary-General, in the budget estimates for 1964 (A/5505, foreword, paras. 10 and 15), and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its main report (A/5507) on the budget estimates, drew attention to the Organization's grave financial situation and to the need for a policy of containment, consolidation and austerity. While all would accept the need for such a policy, the important thing was to find the best ways of carrying it out without impairing the essentially dynamic nature of the Organization or the efficiency, competence and integrity of the staff.

2. There was no single solution to the current financial crisis, but both the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee had indicated various lines of improvement. In paragraph 17 of his foreword to the budget estimates, the Secretary-General called upon Member States to exercise a certain discipline in establishing the work programme and in paragraph 33 he pointed out that it would not be possible to maintain the relatively stable budgetary position indicated by the estimates for 1964 unless Member States co-operated in that respect. The Advisory Committee, in paragraph 64 of its report, went still further, stating that the time had come for parent organs to exercise control over the programme of meetings of their subsidiary bodies. The Colombian delegation, for its part, would accept the need for discipline, but it was anxious that the Organization's activities should not be unduly restricted or its growth inhibited. A compromise between too great stringency and too great laxity

was possible, as the Economic and Social Council had shown in its resolution 936 (XXXV) of 10 April 1963 requesting its subsidiary bodies to review the number and timing of their meetings, their programmes of work and their priorities, which had set a good example for other United Nations bodies. Colombia had stated its position on the matter at the 986th meeting of the Committee during the fourth special session of the General Assembly: growth of the Organization's expenditure was no more rapid than could reasonably be expected in the circumstances, particularly when at the national level a steady increase in public expenditure was a phenomenon common to all countries. For most Members of the United Nations their various contributions to the Organization represented a decreasing fraction of national expenditure in general and public expenditure in particular. Rigidly conservative financial criteria were likely to prove no more appropriate when applied to the United Nations than when applied to national policies, where they often represented the last weapon of prejudice opposed to the necessary growth of public institutions. Neither the budget estimates for 1964 nor the total of some \$207 million requested from the States Members of the various organizations linked with the United Nations seemed excessive, considering that those sums represented the cost of the most important mechanism for the maintenance of peace in history. The figures were, indeed, insignificant in comparison with the enormous sums spent on armaments in many national budgets. In short, his delegation, while accepting the Secretary-General's conclusions in paragraphs 59 to 61 of his foreword, believed that austerity should not lead to stagnation.

3. Another important point, which his delegation had made at the seventeenth session, was that, however urgent the need to economize, if the result of economizing was to lower the efficiency of the Secretariat, the final result might be the opposite of the original aim. The effort to save a few thousand dollars in the present could lead to a crisis in the matter of personnel which might cost a great deal more in the long run. It was also necessary to bear in mind the psychological effect of economies on the staff, who might feel that their legitimate interests were being set aside.

4. His delegation wished to congratulate the Controller and the Chief of the Budget Division on the clear way in which the estimates were presented, and particularly on the introduction of a new category of temporary posts referred to in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's foreword. As far as the permanent establishment was concerned, the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph 120 of its report that as of 30 June 1963 there had been 172 vacancies at the professional and higher levels, 114 of which were in the economic and social area. His delegation wished to ask the Controller, firstly, how many of those vacancies

were attributable to the impossibility of getting candidates with the necessary qualifications; secondly, how many of the jobs in question were now being done by other members on a part-time or temporary basis; and thirdly, since most of the vacancies were in the economic and social area, if he could break them down by activity and organization. In connexion with paragraph 38 of the Secretary-General's foreword to the budget estimates, he recalled that at the seventeenth session (946th meeting) his delegation had expressed a particular interest in the improvement of the air-conditioning system in the Headquarters basement, where working conditions were very difficult during certain months, and he would be grateful if the representative of the Secretary-General could provide information on the measures taken or under consideration to improve that situation. His delegation welcomed the proposal dealt with in paragraphs 46 to 49 of the Secretary-General's foreword for the inclusion in the estimates of an annual amount for the maintenance and expansion of facilities. Lastly, in connexion with paragraph 51 of the foreword, he suggested that the Secretary-General should explore the possibility of having publications with no short-term deadline printed in countries outside Europe and North America where the graphic arts were highly developed, in particular, the Latin American countries.

5. Turning to the main report of the Advisory Committee he reserved his delegation's right to express its views on the reductions recommended by the Committee as the estimates were considered chapter by chapter. He drew attention to paragraphs 68 and 69 of the main report and to paragraph 4 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/5434) on the United Nations financial report and accounts for 1962 which referred to a certain lowering in the standards of conference servicing owing to the heavy workload imposed on a limited staff. Any factor whether of a budgetary or other nature, which adversely affected the Secretariat services was a source of profound concern.

6. As far as the public information programme was concerned, his delegation would state its views in detail in connexion with annex III to the expenditure estimates, but meanwhile, with reference to paragraph 87 of the Advisory Committee's main report, he would like to know what type of assistance it was intended to give to its Members: was it to be assistance in developing their own information media or in publicizing the work of the Organization? In conclusion, he appealed to the Committee to remember that behind the cold statistics it discussed there were real human beings.

#### First reading (A/C.5/L.792)

#### SECTION 1. TRAVEL AND OTHER EXPENSES OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (A/5505, A/5507, A/5529; A/C.5/978)

7. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to start the first reading of the budget estimates for 1964 (A/5505) and drew attention to the relevant documents. Details of the estimated requirements were summarized in document A/C.5/L.792.

8. For section 1 the Secretary-General's initial estimate in document A/5505 had been \$1,237,500. In its main report (A/5507, para. 105), the Advisory Committee had recommended an appropriation of \$1,148,100. That reduction of \$89,400 had been recom-

mended in anticipation of a decision by the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-sixth session to curtail the schedule of meetings for itself and its functional commissions in 1964, a decision which the Council had in fact taken at a later date. In the revised estimates (A/C.5/978), therefore, the Secretary-General recommended a reduction by the same amount and submitted additional requirements in the amount of \$26,000. The Advisory Committee, in its report (A/5529, paras. 35-36) recommended approval of those revised estimates. The amount proposed by the Secretary-General and recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 1 was accordingly \$1,174,100.

9. Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to paragraph 100 of the Advisory Committee's main report which stated that a saving of \$250,000 could be effected if the revised standards of travel accommodation adopted for the staff at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly<sup>1/</sup> were also applied to the travel of representatives, members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies. The payment of travel expenses for members of delegations and representatives had originally been instituted to ensure that no Government should be prevented by financial stringency from being represented at any United Nations meeting; but there had been no stipulation regarding the class of travel accommodation to be provided. In view of the Organization's present financial position, serious thought should be given to all ways of economizing; in the present instance, the Committee should draw the General Assembly's attention to the Advisory Committee's comment and submit its own views.

*The Advisory Committee's recommendation (A/5507, para. 105, and A/5529, paras. 35 and 36) for an appropriation of \$1,174,100 under section 1 was unanimously approved on first reading.*

#### SECTION 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES (A/5505, A/5507, A/5529, A/C.5/978)

10. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Secretary-General's initial estimate of \$180,200 for section 2 had been accepted by the Advisory Committee (A/5507, para. 112). In the revised estimates (A/C.5/978 para. 7), the Secretary-General proposed an appropriation of \$2,302,000 under chapter 1—United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in which the Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of \$112,000 (A/5529, para. 25). The total recommended by the Advisory Committee under section 2 was therefore \$2,370,200.

11. The estimates for section 2 did not include an estimate for the third international Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, which would be submitted after the United Nations Scientific Advisory Committee had met, early in November, to consider the question of publication of papers and of the proceedings of the Conference. That matter was dealt with in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report on that Conference (A/5491). As the Secretary-General had indicated in his statement on the budget estimates for 1964 (A/C.5/988, para. 7), the total cost of the Conference was tentatively estimated at \$1.7 million.

12. Mr. PRUSA (Czechoslovakia) expressed appreciation of the way in which the work programme for

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 62, document A/5391, paras. 52-56.

the coming year had been rearranged and rationalized. At the seventeenth session much concern had been voiced regarding the growing number of meetings to be serviced by the Secretariat. Despite appeals for restraint, the number of meetings at Headquarters and in Geneva had nearly doubled between 1960 and 1962 (see A/5507, para. 53), and there could be little doubt that 1963 would show the same trend. Urgent action was thus essential, since an over-full programme created serious problems for the Secretariat and for the Governments of smaller countries and prevented the meetings in question from yielding adequate results. That was particularly so when their success depended on prior preparatory work. It was essential to ensure that the available resources were directed toward a carefully planned programme of priorities, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 1797 (XVII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 936 (XXXV). The Council had set a good example with its decisions to reduce meetings in 1964, a biennial pattern being particularly desirable for bodies whose work required prior preparation.

13. As far as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was concerned, his Government regarded it as the most important meeting of its kind ever sponsored by the United Nations. However, the original estimate of \$1.3 million for the Conference had now more than doubled to about \$3 million and even that did not seem to be enough, in view of the fact that the Conference's scope had greatly expanded. That example showed how necessary it was that bodies which planned meetings should determine their scope from the outset, so that the Secretary-General and Member States could estimate the cost. His delegation was confident that the Secretary-General would do his best to keep the cost of the Conference down. There was room for economy in the estimates for staff costs, which accounted for nearly half of the total. As many regular staff as possible should be assigned to the Conference, particularly from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Such staff should be available since the Economic and Social Council had cancelled many of its meetings and the maintenance programme at Headquarters would greatly reduce the number of meetings there.

14. Mr. WEI (China) drew attention to the fact that the Secretary-General's estimate for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development made no provision for language services in Chinese. As Chinese was one of the official languages of the United Nations, he formally requested that translation and other services involving Chinese should be provided.

15. Mr. KIRKBRIDE (Secretariat) said that the estimates in regard to the use of languages for the Conference had been prepared on the basis of the provisional rules of procedure for the Conference,<sup>2/</sup> which had been approved by the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-sixth session. The addition of Chinese as an official language for the Conference would involve the provision of interpretation from Chinese, the translation of essential in-session documentation and the printing and publication of part of

the proceedings, and especially the Final Act. That would create additional expenditures amounting to \$30,000, on the understanding that such translation and reproduction of pre-conference documentation as was required would be carried out by the existing services at Headquarters. If that arrangement was acceptable to the representative of China, the Secretary-General would undertake to meet those minimal additional expenses within the total appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee in document A/5529.

16. Mr. WEI (China) thanked the representative of the Secretary-General for upholding the rules and practices with regard to the official languages and trusted that the Preparatory Committee of the Conference would take due note.

17. Mr. JAYASINHA (Ceylon) pointed out the need for the initial budget estimates to contain at least an approximation of all foreseeable expenditure. It would have been more helpful if the budget estimates for 1964 had contained even an approximation of the cost of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. That point had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 21 of its main report.

18. Mr. KIRKBRIDE (Secretariat) said that it had not been possible to prepare an estimate for the Conference in time for inclusion in the initial 1964 estimates, since it had been necessary for the Secretariat to await the report of the second session of the Preparatory Committee, which had been held from 21 May to 29 June 1963, and the action taken thereon by the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-sixth session. However, a detailed estimate had in due course been included in the revised estimates (A/C.5/978).

19. Mr. SOLTYSIAK (Poland) said that more consideration should be given to the possibility of reducing the appropriation under section 2 by asking some of the specialized agencies to sponsor certain conferences in their particular fields.

20. Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) said that although his country had consistently supported the idea of a conference on trade and development, it felt that the preparation of the Conference to be held in 1964 left a great deal to be desired. As a result of the substantive discussions at the seventeenth session, the time, scope and nature of the Conference had been left undetermined in a number of important respects. The appropriation which had had to be approved for the Conference at that time had therefore had little relation to reality. The scope of the Conference, as it had emerged from the work of the Preparatory Committee, had been much wider than initially expected, with the result that the original estimate had had to be nearly doubled. He realized that it had not been possible to foresee that the Conference would have five main committees holding simultaneous meetings, but he wished to stress the need for more careful preparation of conferences before estimates were submitted. He trusted that there would be no repetition of the unsatisfactory procedure that had been followed with regard to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

21. Nevertheless, he found the present estimate for the Conference acceptable and welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General would be able to absorb the

<sup>2/</sup> See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-sixth Session, Annexes, agenda item 5, document E/3799, annex 1.

additional \$30,000 required for language services in Chinese within the estimated figure.

*The Advisory Committee's recommendation (A/5507, para. 112 and A/5529, para. 25) for an appropriation*

*of \$2,370,200 under section 2 was unanimously approved on first reading.*

The meeting rose at 5.5. p.m.