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

AGENDA ITEM 74

Budget estimates for the financial year 1969 (continued)
(A/7125, A/7205, A/7207, A/7236, A/7255, A/7280,
A/7304, A/C.5/1169 and Corr.1, A/C.5/1175-1179,
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L.950)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. SERUP (Denmark) commended the Secretariat and the members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the care with which the budget estimates for the financial year 1969 (A/7205) had been prepared and analysed. The systematic and methodical presentation of budget information, especially the statistical charts and summaries, gave a clearer picture of a problem which by its very nature was extremely complex.
2. It was also gratifying that the General Assembly had recognized the importance of long-term planning in budgetary procedures; as of 1969 the Assembly could therefore expect at each regular session to receive a planning estimate which would serve as a basis for the preparation of the regular budget for the succeeding budgetary period.
3. Bearing in mind the expansion of the United Nations activities in recent years, which demonstrated that the Organization was a living organism, and the corresponding increase in the cost of goods and services over the same period, the appropriations requested by the Secretary-General for 1969 appeared reasonable. The Danish delegation would support them, subject to the amendments and reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee.
4. The review of the budget required not only a study of the expenses specifically foreseen, but also of the possibility of additional expenses for which it had not been possible to make provision in the budget estimates. With regard to the estimates before it, for example, the Committee could expect to receive a number of proposals for additional office space and conference facilities at Headquarters and at United Nations duty stations abroad. With the increase in

membership since 1946, it was not surprising that the matter of office space should arise, and measures should certainly be taken to relieve the prevailing inadequacy. It was a fact, for instance, that the office space and facilities currently available to the President of the Security Council and members of the Council in general for the purpose of meetings and consultations were quite inadequate. Office space for delegations in the United Nations Headquarters building was also lacking, and the problem should be given due consideration when plans for expansion of office facilities were being drawn up. In that connexion, he looked forward anxiously to the Secretary-General's report on the installation of the mechanical voting system in the conference rooms. That technical improvement, which had been successful in the General Assembly Hall, would be most useful.

5. With regard to expenditure for salaries and wages, which absorbed a large portion of budgetary funds, he naturally agreed with those delegations which felt that it was imperative to control such expenditure by keeping the size of the Secretariat within reasonable limits. However, he found that the number of new posts requested, as modified by the Advisory Committee's recommendation, was reasonable and justified in the circumstances. On the other hand, his delegation fully endorsed the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 48, 49 and 50 of its main report (A/7207) regarding the advisability of making a survey of the deployment and utilization of staff. The survey, which should help the Secretariat to utilize existing staff more efficiently and economically, might be entrusted to a small group of competent officials, established along the same line as the group^{1/} which had carried out a survey of the Headquarters establishment in 1954. Its task would be to consider measures to ensure maximum flexibility and efficiency in the utilization of the staff and to reappraise the tasks incumbent upon the Secretariat. Since such a survey would require considerable preparatory work, it would appear reasonable to allow the Secretary-General some latitude, as he had requested, with regard to its timing; the Secretary-General also needed time to study the recommendations of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat for they would certainly be very useful to him in carrying out the survey.

6. The Secretary-General's proposal, approved by the Advisory Committee, for a 5 per cent increase in the salaries of staff in the Professional and higher categories was fully justified and his delegation would support it. He noted moreover, with regard to the salaries of General Service staff, that

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Annexes, agenda item 53, document A/2731, para. 2.

the budget estimates did include provision to cover an anticipated increase by 1 January 1969.

7. With regard to the financial situation of the United Nations, which had been described in such pessimistic terms by the Secretary-General and which threatened to deteriorate further unless there were additional contributions for peace-keeping operations, the Danish delegation could only express the hope that there would be greater response to the Secretary-General's appeal and that more countries would make voluntary contributions and thus help the United Nations to regain its financial stability and restore its solvency.

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

8. Mr. MORALES QUEVEDO (Cuba), after thanking the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee for the detailed presentation of the information relating to the budget estimates for the financial year 1969, pointed out that the United Nations budget was growing quite substantially year after year. Indeed, although the Secretary-General's estimates for 1969—\$140,520,210—showed an increase of only \$89,000 over the 1968 appropriations, it should be borne in mind, as the Advisory Committee had noted, that there were many items of expenditure for which no funds had as yet been requested and which appeared in the budget only pro memoria. That expenditure might well amount to \$10 million. In the circumstances Member States were unable to compute their contributions even approximately, since they did not know how high United Nations expenditure would be in 1969. In the view of the Cuban delegation, the financial policy of the United Nations, which was invariably reflected in requests for additional funds under the supplementary estimates, was not of the soundest. It hoped that the Secretary-General, who had indicated in the foreword to his budget estimates that he was well aware of the need to improve United Nations budgetary procedures, would be in a position to present more accurate budget estimates in future.

9. With regard to personnel questions, the Cuban delegation felt that the steady increase in new posts resulted from the fact that the Secretariat was applying a poor recruitment policy: it appeared to believe that new activities automatically called for new posts and failed to consider the possibility of assigning existing staff to those new tasks. However, there were some regrettable exceptions to that policy. For example, in connexion with the translation of United Nations documents into Spanish, his delegation would wish to hear the Controller tell the Fifth Committee how the 1962 staff of the Spanish Translation Section compared with its current staff, and explain what changes there had been in the workload of the section between 1962 and 1968. On the question of the increase in staff, its deployment and utilization, his delegation fully shared the view expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 48, 49 and 50 of its main report that a more rational use should be made of Secretariat staff. In addition, it wished to draw attention to the fact that the Secretariat had recruited persons hostile to the present Cuban regime; it would revert to that point in due time.

10. Many delegations had spoken of the salary increase for United Nations staff. However, it should be noted that the documentation on the subject did not include a thorough and detailed analysis, and the Cuban delegation considered that it was a problem which should be settled by permanent measures and not by proposals which alleviated the financial difficulties of certain officials, but far from guaranteed them stable purchasing power. It therefore urged ICSAB to complete its study as soon as possible. If the salaries of United Nations staff, particularly in the lower categories, were inadequate, there was a very simple way to raise them immediately. For that purpose, the Cuban Government was prepared to waive the portion of the Tax Equalization Fund due it, provided that the United States of America did the same. It was inadmissible that the United States, which for internal reasons, was afraid to sign the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, should refuse to exempt United States nationals employed by the United Nations from taxation.

11. His delegation regretted the fact that the situation with regard to the use of the working languages had not changed; Spanish was neglected not only for publications but also for working papers and official documents, which invariably came out in Spanish several days after they had been distributed in the other working languages. He wished to take the opportunity to ask whether the publication entitled Everyman's United Nations, recently published in English, would also be published in Spanish. It was a source of information on the work of the United Nations in its various fields of activity and was much appreciated by Spanish-speaking delegations.

12. As regards the documents submitted by the Secretary-General on the expansion of accommodation at Headquarters and the construction of new buildings, his delegation would oppose those plans when they were considered by the Committee. In its opinion, New York was not the best place for the Organization's Headquarters, because of the many and varied problems which certain delegations had to face due to the inhospitable attitude of the host country. The Organization should consider the possibility of decentralization by moving units from Headquarters to other places, which would eliminate the need for the expansion proposed by the Secretary-General.

13. His delegation, which for reasons of principle had always voted against the appropriations requested under section 12 for special expenses, would continue to do so and refuse to pay the share of its contribution corresponding to such expenses. It was obliged to take that position because of chapters I and IV in particular, which related to shameful pages in the history of the Organization. It would also vote against the appropriation requested under section 17 chapter IV, for the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea. It did not see how anyone could claim that the Commission was helping to rehabilitate Korea when everyone knew that it was under the control and in the service of the Government of the United States of America. It was imperialism which was responsible for the artificial division of the valiant Korean people, and acts of

harassment and espionage, as the Pueblo affair had shown, were no way to reunite the country. For all those reasons, his delegation would not be able to vote for the budget estimates submitted by the Secretary-General and would have to abstain.

Mr. Tchernouchtchenko (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) resumed the Chair.

14. Mr. WILTSHIRE (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the Committee should not work in a vacuum, ignoring what was being done and decided by the bodies responsible for the programmes, particularly the Second Committee. Consideration of the budget was not just an academic exercise undertaken for its own sake; it only had meaning if the aims the budget was meant to serve were constantly borne in mind. By allowing itself to become excessively technical and abstract, the Fifth Committee might jeopardize programmes of fundamental importance, thus frustrating the essential activities of the Organization.

15. At the twenty-second session, his delegation had expressed the view that the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee were excessive. It was therefore very pleased to find at the current session that the Advisory Committee, paying greater attention to the financial needs of the programmes, had been less severe in the reductions it recommended. There was a basic consensus between the Advisory Committee's recommendations and the Secretary-General's proposals, and the difference between them could be regarded as a defensible difference of opinion on the resources actually required on a permanent basis for executing the programmes authorized by the appropriate organs. It would seem that at the current session the Advisory Committee had not been concerned merely with financial considerations in a restrictive sense but had also taken into account the view of the many delegations that considered that the organization had an important role to play in the process of development.

16. His delegation was aware that there could be legitimate doubt that the Organization's manpower was being used to best effect. It fully shared the Advisory Committee's view on that point and strongly supported the idea of a survey on the use of Secretariat staff. It had no strong views on who should conduct it, merely hoping that it would be done by persons who would go about their task with genuinely open minds and that uniform standards would be applied throughout the survey. Perhaps before the end of the session the Secretary-General might be able to inform the Fifth Committee further on the various questions to be settled before the survey was begun. Inevitably, in evaluating jobs desk by desk the question would arise as to the importance and validity of the work on which some personnel continued to be occupied. It was worth noting in that connexion that the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, which had shown an interest in the question, considered that all programmes more than five years old should be reviewed to see whether they were still justified, the aim being to ensure the relevance of all activity in the economic and social area to present and future needs. The work of that Committee, and the survey recommended by the Advisory Committee,

might perhaps be complementary as far as activities in the economic and social field were concerned.

17. Concerning the salary scale for staff in the Professional and higher categories his delegation found the arguments put forward in the various reports before the Committee persuasive and would support the recommendation of ICSAB, ACC and the Advisory Committee for a 5 percent increase in the basic pay of such staff. It was, however, attracted by the suggestion made by the representative of Pakistan (see 1249th meeting) regarding the establishment of a committee to examine the question of the principles that should govern the salary scale, a committee which, like the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, would be composed of representatives of Member States. The question was an extremely complex one and deserved to be thoroughly gone into and elucidated in the interests of the Organization itself. The question of the remuneration of general service staff, security staff, guides and visitors' service supervisors and manual workers should also engage the attention of the Committee. He would dwell on the matter at greater length in due course.

18. On the question of accommodation at Headquarters and Geneva and at the various regional centres, which the Secretary-General had indicated to be inadequate, he was disturbed by the prospect of a greater and greater concentration of United Nations facilities in New York, which could only lead to a greater financial burden on Member States, because they would be obliged to increase the staff of their delegations in a city where the cost of living was higher than anywhere else. In his report on the question (A/C.5/1182), the Secretary-General dealt rather casually with the possibility of relocating some units elsewhere. If it was necessary to build, as the only permanent solution to the problem of congestion in New York, it would be helpful, with reference to the possibility of relocating some units elsewhere, to be able to compare building costs, the cost of living, the rate of increase in prices and maintenance costs in the different centres. It should be noted that there was no necessity to limit the search to Geneva and the headquarters of the regional economic commissions. The United Nations and the specialized agencies had offices all over the world. Greater decentralization was undoubtedly desirable and, as the representative of Tanzania had rightly said at the 1251st meeting, the possibility should be investigated. It appeared from the Secretary-General's report that the heads of substantive departments and offices were not much in favour of the idea. He would therefore be grateful if the Secretary-General would tell the Committee just why the transfer of any particular substantive department was not in the best interest of its work or of economy. Rental of accommodation in New York might be the only short-term solution, but in the long term, more radical decentralization, at least of units such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNICEF, UNITAR and the Department of Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories, might be preferable to further construction in New York.

19. One major problem of principle facing the Committee was the issue raised by the Industrial Development Board's recommendation^{2/} that the appropriation under part V for assistance in industrial development should be increased to \$1,500,000, for 1969 and 1970, whereas the appropriation for 1968 had been \$991,400. The Industrial Development Board had made that recommendation in the light of an increasing number of requests for assistance totalling \$2,250,000. An additional argument in favour of the recommendation was that the cost of goods and services had increased by 21.6 percent over the past six years and that, as the representative of Pakistan had pointed out at the 1249th meeting, rising costs had resulted in a corresponding decrease in delivered assistance under the regular programme. His delegation was prepared to support the Industrial Development Board's recommendation but wished to stress that the increasing needs of the industrial development sector should not divert attention from the needs existing in other fields of activity covered by the regular programme. Economic development, social development and public administration were still of vital importance in the over-all process of development in the Third World, and the beneficial effects expected from an increase in resources allocated to industrial development would be seriously jeopardized if those other components of the development process were at the same time de-escalated.

20. Turning from the practical aspect of the Industrial Development Board's recommendation, he said he wished to revert to the question of principle involved, namely, whether the Industrial Development Board was entitled to make a recommendation regarding the budget appropriation for industrial development without going through the Secretary-General. In his own view, the Industrial Development Board had had no other choice. Having received requests for assistance together amounting to a sum far higher than the existing level of resources approved for industrial development, it had a duty to bring that fact to the General Assembly's attention and at the same time to submit some recommendations of its own. The Secretary-General's right to submit proposals on budgetary matters applied only within the limits of existing arrangements and did not entitle the Secretary-General to oppose any alterations in those arrangements if the programme-formulating body decided, as the Industrial Development Board had done at its second session, that the arrangements should be altered or at least discussed.

21. Those considerations led him to raise another related question, namely, whether in principle organs like the Industrial Development Board or the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination were entitled to receive any budget data for their information before the Advisory Committee. There were good grounds for arguing that, even if they had not explicitly been given that right, they had not been expressly denied it either. Nothing in the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations could be interpreted as restricting the Secretary-General's right to transmit budget data to organs other than the Advisory Committee; the Regulations merely indicated the time-

limits which the Secretary-General had to observe in submitting the budget estimates for consideration by the Advisory Committee and in transmitting them to the Member States. There were, indeed, certain factors which pointed to a more positive conclusion. For instance, the Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1367 (XLV), had invited the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, when reviewing the programmes of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, to take into account their financial implications. Thus, the aforementioned Committee was assumed to be aware of the financial implications and therefore, by implication, to have received the relevant data.

22. Assuming that budget data could be transmitted to the programme-formulating bodies, and that the integrated schedule of meetings of those bodies would enable the Advisory Committee to take into account the views of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination, it would be no more than logical to ensure that organs whose reports were studied by the latter were provided before their meetings with the budget data they needed for the preparation of their reports. The Secretary-General, in his report on the integrated schedule of meetings for programme-formulating bodies (A/C.5/1175), had discussed in detail the calendar of meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination; but it was surprising in the circumstances that he had not mentioned the problem of timing the sessions of other programme-formulating bodies—that is, bodies other than the Industrial Development Board and the Trade and Development Board—with due regard for the date of the session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Yet, that was a question that must at all costs be settled. Otherwise, the programmes of those bodies would remain in abeyance for one year pending the session at which they could be approved by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council, and for still another year pending approval of the appropriations required for putting them into effect. He regarded those points as fundamental, and would like to receive some clarification concerning them. All those organs should be given the means and the opportunity to carry out their tasks as efficiently as possible. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had stressed in its report^{3/} that, in the integrated schedule, the meetings of all programme-formulating bodies should be timed in such a way as to enable them to submit their reports to that Committee for its consideration when it addressed itself to the task of co-ordination. There appeared to have been some improvement in 1968 in the timing of the meetings of the Advisory Committee and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination since the Advisory Committee had been able at least to discuss the report of the other Committee, although it had not taken the report fully into account as it would be able to when the integrated schedule had been prepared.

23. He noted with satisfaction the establishment of an internal review group in the Secretariat, and

^{2/} *Ibid.*, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 15, annex VI, resolution 11 (II).

^{3/} See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 9, para. 23.

wished to congratulate the Controller, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and particularly the Director of the Budget Division for the initiative they had taken. The internal review group had already helped to simplify the Advisory Committee's task and would in all probability provide valuable assistance in preparing future estimates and establishing priorities.

24. The Brazilian representative had suggested that the possibility of finding new sources of income should now be explored, and the Fifth Committee should give the question the attention it deserved.

25. Before concluding, he appealed to the rich countries to show some understanding of the needs of the poor countries and to bear in mind that assistance to those countries was a practical way of applying the principles of the United Nations Charter. No one questioned the need for bringing programmes into line with resources and using resources efficiently. The need for assistance was just as pressing.

26. Mr. NASHER (United States of America), after observing that the United States public was vitally interested in the work and functioning of the United Nations, he remarked as a professional urban planner that the proposed Headquarters complex in New York was one of the best blends of forward-looking design and functional construction of its era. He congratulated the Secretary-General and his staff on the improved presentation of the budget, on the detailed analysis of work programmes by the internal review group and on the proposals for implementing General Assembly resolution 2370 (XXII). He also thanked the Advisory Committee for its extremely useful and informative report.

27. The Secretary-General, in his statement to the Committee (A/C.5/1176), had referred to the acute problem of the financial situation of the United Nations, the level of the budget proposed for 1969, the use of working languages in the Secretariat, problems connected with budget and programme review, the problem of manpower utilization, and the expansion of office space at Geneva, at Headquarters and at Santiago, Chile. The Secretary-General had said that, unless space was provided, the Organization would face the consequences of a recruitment freeze for an indefinite period; and he had also stated that he would be deciding on a precise course of action in pursuance of the recommendations made to him by the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat. The United States delegation was awaiting his proposals very eagerly, as it expected that they would help the Organization to do its job more effectively. The Secretary-General had also mentioned the need to set a level of appropriations for technical programmes at the present session of the Assembly. The United States delegation believed that technical assistance activities financed from the regular budget should remain within the agreed \$6.4 million level. As members of the Fifth Committee would be aware, it had always voted for the appropriations for technical programmes under part V of the estimates, but it believed that the major contributions for technical assistance should come from voluntary sources. Finally, the Secretary-General had made interim

recommendations regarding salaries, not only for staff in the Professional category but also for staff in the General Service, Security Service and Manual Workers categories. The United States delegation had already expressed its concern at the plight of certain categories of United Nations employees, and was glad to hear that that matter was now receiving the attention it warranted.

28. Before turning his attention to the budget estimates, he wished to express his delegation's concern about the continuing deterioration of the financial situation of the United Nations. The facts presented by the Secretary-General were truly alarming. To remedy the situation his delegation felt that in the first place all countries, large and small, should pay their assessments at the earliest possible date to alleviate the financing difficulties faced by the Secretary-General. Secondly, it was imperative that all countries which were in arrears, especially the major debtors, should pay their assessments and arrears without further delay. If all those debts were settled, most of the United Nations bonds could be paid off, the Organization's other debts could be liquidated and the Working Capital Fund could be restored. Finally, his delegation hoped that those countries which were withholding certain parts of their regular budget payments would stop that practice, because it only aggravated the problems confronting the Organization.

29. He recalled how the previous financial crisis had developed and observed that certain countries, which were in arrears in the payment of their assessments, had presumably been prepared to make substantial contributions, if the United States and other countries would refrain from pressing Article 19 of the Charter to a vote; he wished to point out that the debtors in question had not made the expected contributions. It was high time that the countries which were responsible for the financial crisis, and which had refused to assist in financing the Congo and Middle East operations, should make the voluntary contributions that were expected from them following the consensus of 1965.^{4/}

30. His delegation considered, moreover, that the Secretary-General should not for the second year in a row have used the lower range of estimates given by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts as a basis for determining the total amount of the United Nations deficit (see A/C.5/1176, para. 36). The majority of the Ad Hoc Committee had in fact considered that the higher figure was the correct one, and their opinion was vindicated by the Financial Regulations of the United Nations and the books of account of the Organization. The effect of using the lower figure was to underestimate the real obligations of the Organization. His delegation therefore sincerely hoped that Member States would not be content to disregard those unsatisfactory financial practices. It should be borne in mind that those States which met their obligations fully were finding it increasingly difficult to secure the support of their respective parliaments. Delegations should bear that in mind, if the United States view on a financial or budgetary matter was

^{4/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1331st meeting, paras. 3 and 4.

more restrictive than they had anticipated. The financial position of the United Nations, like that of any other responsible organization, could be seriously impaired by any damage done to the credit and confidence it enjoyed. Such damage would certainly be incurred if, as some had suggested, the United Nations attempted to alter unilaterally its contractual obligations on the terms of repayment of the United Nations bonds, terms which were printed on the bonds themselves. His Government, which had purchased \$76 million of the bond issue, could not agree to contribute a larger share of the total cost of bond repayment than it paid at present under the regular budget.

31. With regard to the budget estimates for 1969, he said that his delegation shared the concern expressed by many other delegations that if the budget grew at too rapid a rate the costs incurred would soon be out of proportion to the results achieved. In other words, means must be sought of reducing the budget estimates without adversely affecting the execution of programmes. The United Nations budget had doubled since 1961; if that fact was borne in mind, it became imperative to ensure that the Organization operated with maximum economy.

32. His delegation wished to associate itself with the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 39 of its main report. The result of the current practice of giving the budget estimates to Member States piecemeal was that even now no one knew what the total estimates would be for 1969. Difficult as it might be for the Secretary-General to prepare those estimates, it was certainly much more difficult for Member States to be in the position of not knowing the size of the budget that they were asked to consider. His delegation therefore added its voice to those who had urgently requested the Secretary-General to indicate in his budget estimates the total expenditure that, in his judgement, might reasonably be expected during the ensuing budget year.

33. Many Member States, including the United States, had of necessity adopted measures of extreme fiscal stringency in their own budgets. An order of priorities was established to ensure that the most important activities were carried out first. Members of the Committee would recall that it had been official United States policy since 1966 to apply the same standards of review to United Nations programmes as to United States programmes. His delegation believed that all could agree that the growth of the United Nations should be controlled by prudent and rational planning and budgeting. Those tenets of administration and management had been stressed by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, whose numerous suggestions^{5/} in the accounting, financial and budgetary fields had been unanimously approved by the General Assembly. The reconstitution of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the establishment of the Joint Inspection Unit represented a response to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, but there were many other recommendations which had not yet been implemented. Those same tenets had also been stressed by the Advisory Committee, for example,

^{5/} Ibid., Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343.

in connexion with the uncontrolled proliferation of conferences and documentation, and his delegation had been informed that they would be stressed once again in the report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat, which had not yet been circulated. With respect to the budget estimates for 1969, his delegation would support the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee, which it regarded as a minimum; it was seriously concerned, moreover, about the amounts recommended by that Committee for certain categories of expenditure.

34. In paragraph 71 of its main report the Advisory Committee expressed the hope that the Committee on Conferences would be able in the course of the current year to recommend concrete action for reducing the number of meetings and conferences for 1969 and future years. His delegation urgently desired to join other delegations in an effort to ensure that the meetings and conferences programme was in fact reduced for 1969 and that drastic steps were taken to cut the volume and cost of documentation. Recalling the statement made on that subject in the General Assembly on 8 October 1968 (1685th plenary meeting) by the Foreign Minister of Chile, he pointed out that the proliferation of meetings and conferences was not a serious problem for developing countries alone: no State had the resources for effective representation at all the meetings and conferences which were now being planned. His delegation would therefore support any measures designed to reduce the estimates for meetings and conferences, if the Committee on Conferences could suggest how that might be achieved. Furthermore, United Nations bodies should hold their meetings at their own headquarters, whether that meant New York, Geneva or elsewhere, unless there were overriding reasons for doing otherwise.

35. His delegation advocated the immediate elimination of summary records for many bodies which did not need them. It understood that the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat had made recommendations on that subject and that specific proposals were also being considered by the Committee on Conferences. The abolition of summary records, except in cases specifically approved by the General Assembly, would make it possible to reduce by \$1 million the estimates for that purpose recommended by the Advisory Committee.

36. The Secretary-General had stated, with reference to the aim of improving the use of the working languages within the Secretariat, that he had had the opportunity to explore more fully what measures could be applied to achieve that aim and had worked out a certain number of relevant proposals. His delegation was glad to know that the Secretary-General had been able to prepare constructive proposals for dealing with that important but troublesome problem and was pleased also that various delegations were themselves seeking means of achieving the desired result without incurring the largely non-productive expenditures which would have been incurred if the language bonus per se had been put into effect.

37. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the observations made by the Advisory Committee in

paragraphs 47 to 50 of its main report concerning a careful and detailed study of the deployment and utilization of existing personnel in the Secretariat. The Advisory Committee had based that recommendation on its impression that, within the total staff available to the Secretary-General, there was an unevenness in the intensity of the use of posts. The Committee had not been able to satisfy itself beyond all reasonable doubt that further reductions in the requests for new posts could not be achieved either by a reorganization of work or a redeployment of staff. Since it did not know exactly where such reductions should be applied, the Advisory Committee had suggested that the Secretary-General should undertake a survey on the utilization and deployment of staff on an urgent basis.

38. His delegation sympathized with the Secretary-General's plea for time to allow adequate preparation of the study; preparatory work was indeed necessary, but it should be started immediately. One of the main problems would be to secure the necessary expertise, whether from outside or from within the United Nations. If effective deployment and utilization of manpower was to be assured, it was necessary to go well beyond the review made in the current year by the internal review group. It was plain that the savings which the survey was bound to produce would far exceed the cost of the survey itself, which should be started early in 1969, so that the preliminary results could be taken into account in preparing the budget estimates for 1970. The Secretary-General should begin his survey in offices where enlightened management was willing to co-operate and anxious to achieve results that could be applied immediately. Finally, the survey should not be considered as a three-stage operation (preparation, the survey itself and application of the results). It might not be possible to make any savings in certain sectors until current projects had been completed, but there were other sectors in which redeployment of staff could be started much sooner.

39. His Government considered that personnel levels could be reduced even more than the Advisory Committee had recommended. It should be possible to take some action to ensure that the probable results of the forthcoming manpower utilization study would be reflected, wherever possible, in savings in 1969 and in the lowest possible request for additional posts in 1970. To that end, his delegation would explore with other delegations the possibility of submitting a draft resolution or drafting a statement to be inserted in the Committee's report, to the effect that: first, the Fifth Committee supported the reductions in personnel recommended by the Advisory Committee; secondly, in addition to those reductions, 25 per cent of all new posts requested by the Secretary-General for 1969 should not be filled unless the Secretary-General should determine on the basis of selective manpower utilization studies, and preferably with the concurrence of the Advisory Committee, that he could not defer recruitment pending completion of the studies; thirdly, the Secretary-General should give full consideration to any reductions which might be possible as a result of the studies, in order to avoid any increase in posts for 1970.

40. His delegation was convinced that action along those lines by the General Assembly was warranted, and would not unduly restrict the Secretary-General in carrying out approved programmes. Furthermore, the Committee would thus be assured that careful study of the real manpower needs of the Organization was being undertaken and that every effort was being made to meet essential needs through available resources. Such an approach would leave it to the Secretary-General to make the final decision, preferably with the concurrence of the Advisory Committee, on whether there were grounds for dipping into the reserve pool of posts for which appropriations would be made for 1969 and whether it was absolutely necessary to request additional posts for 1970.

41. To sum up, his delegation thought, with respect to the budget for 1969 and the manpower utilization studies, that the Committee would wish to reduce further the Secretary-General's estimates for certain items and would also wish to attempt to formulate new guidelines which would enable the Secretary-General to use the results of the proposed study for the benefit of the Organization and of the Governments that financed its activities. Lastly, his delegation reserved the right to speak in greater detail during the consideration of the budget section by section.

42. Mr. GANEM (France) said that it was natural that general statements on budget estimates amounting to approximately \$150 million should include digressions on staff salaries, geographical distribution, linguistic balance and similar questions. With regard to the budget in general, his delegation wished first of all to associate itself with the comments made by the representatives of Spain, Italy, Turkey and the United States of America on the excessive number of pro memoria provisions. On the other hand, although some delegations had challenged the inclusion of a relatively small provision for the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, no reference had been made to the much larger provision requested for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine. The last time the Committee and the General Assembly had voted on that item, the appropriation had been approved, with 11 votes against and 25 abstentions.

43. The views expressed during the general discussion of the budget estimates for 1969 seemed to fall into three main categories. First, some countries, including those in Eastern Europe, considered that the reduction of approximately \$2 million recommended by the Advisory Committee was not enough and that the estimates should in fact be reduced by \$4 million. The same States were also opposed to the creation of additional posts. Others, especially the developing countries, feared that some of the savings would impair the activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNIDO or UNCTAD. Others, and indeed the majority of the Committee's members, shared the views of the Advisory Committee.

44. On strictly budgetary matters, there had only been a few original and constructive proposals; but that had certainly not been due to a lack of documentation. The Committee was overwhelmed with the volume of documentation, detailed annexes and tables, which had unfortunately been distributed very late.

The Advisory Committee itself had not had all the necessary documents at its disposal when it had prepared its report.

45. Though there was a tendency in most countries for parliamentary bodies to delegate their powers of decision to functional committees, it would be wrong to assume automatically that what was good for a single country was equally good for an international organization which would soon consist of 126 sovereign and equal States. In 1966 the Ad Hoc Committee of experts had proposed a partial solution to facilitate a serious and thorough-going examination of the budget. It had suggested that all the organizations should have a biennial budget cycle, so that estimates could be prepared in greater detail and considered at greater length. The General Assembly, by adopting resolution 2370 (XXII), had taken one tentative step in that direction. ILO, which was about to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, had decided to prepare a biennial budget but to retain its Annual Conference to enable representatives of Governments, employers and workers to exchange views. All delegations to the United Nations would obviously follow that experiment with interest; he hoped the United Nations would adopt the same course in the early years of its second Development Decade, which would not entail any amendment of the Charter.

46. Some constructive proposals had, however, been made. The Czechoslovak delegation had urged the various committees and sub-committees to dispense with summary records, a measure which would obviously save a great deal of expenditure. The Brazilian representative's suggestion, which had been referred to by many delegations, was also particularly interesting. Efforts should be made to discover new revenue-producing activities; in that connexion, he was glad to note that the Secretary-General had been engaged in negotiations with the Swiss Government with a view to concluding an agreement similar to that which had been signed with the United States of America on the Postal Administration at Headquarters.

47. His delegation thought that it might be possible to make more direct use of the Joint Inspection Unit by asking it to take on limited tasks, such as investigating what use was being made of the computers already available to the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Renting computers was expensive and it should be possible to avoid some duplication of work and to arrange for staff members to do some of the relatively easy tasks which were at present being done by computers.

48. His delegation like that of the United States of America, earnestly hoped that the number of new posts in 1969 would be reduced even more than the Advisory Committee had recommended. The Office of Personnel should lay stress on the quality and efficiency, rather than the number of staff members and experts.

49. Subject to those reservations, his delegation would not oppose the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee.

50. Mr. TILAKARATNA (Ceylon) recalled that the Secretary-General had asked the General Assembly

to give renewed attention to the problem of finding effective ways of remedying the precarious financial situation of the Organization and enabling it to meet its obligations. In 1966 the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts had estimated that \$36 million to \$38 million would be required for that purpose, but since then the situation had worsened and the minimum requirement was now \$47 million to \$48 million. His delegation was well aware of the differences of principle and policy which had so far frustrated all efforts to restore the Organization's solvency, but it deplored the fact that the compromise solution of voluntary contributions had produced practically no results during the past three years. The Fifth Committee had a special responsibility to seek ways and means of resolving that issue, and his delegation therefore wished to associate itself with other speakers who had appealed to Member States, especially those which were in a position to make voluntary contributions, to place the interests of the Organization above their considerations of principle.

51. He wished to pay a special tribute to the Advisory Committee for drawing attention to several important aspects of the budget estimates. In particular, the Advisory Committee had thought fit to stress the fact that the Secretary-General's request for 607 additional posts in 1969 would raise the total strength of the staff from 7,833 to 8,435. It had pointed out that staff costs represented the major element in the perennial growth of the budget, and it had concluded that a staff increase of that magnitude was not warranted or necessary. His delegation completely endorsed the views of the Advisory Committee, which believed that only 461 additional posts were needed. Consideration should be given to two important aspects of that matter. First, the various requests made by the Secretary-General with a view to implementing an increasingly heavy work programme should be examined critically. He realized that the Fifth Committee was concerned essentially with financial control and administration, but wished to point out that the staff increases requested every year were related partly to a proliferation of programmes. In view of the gap between the developing and the developed countries, such proliferation appeared to be inevitable in certain fields, such as economic and social development. Efforts made to bridge the gap had been so ineffective that the transition from the first to the second Development Decade had been described as passing from a decade of disenchantment to a decade of despair. Organs dealing with economic and social development, such as the Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD and UNIDO, undoubtedly had urgent needs, but there were other areas of United Nations activity where there was an acute need for a proper assessment of priorities and co-ordination of efforts, to avoid overlapping and duplication and, most important of all, for a critical evaluation of requirements themselves. That was by no means an easy task, but his delegation felt that one could not fairly evaluate the problem of staff increases without first considering the reasons for the increases.

52. He had listened with interest to the statement made by the representative of Australia (1247th

meeting). Without entering into political and economic considerations, which were more appropriately the concern of the Committees dealing specifically with problems of that kind, his delegation wished to emphasize that any survey of the staff situation should be preceded by an evaluation of the current methods of work programme implementation. He welcomed the introduction and application by the United Nations family of Organizations of an integrated system of long-term programme planning which would certainly lead to a better utilization of available resources. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had an important role to play with respect to work programmes in the economic, social and human rights fields, having regard to the budgetary requirements of those programmes, and the establishment of the internal review group was also a step in the right direction. The combined skills of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee would make it possible to undertake a more critical and exhaustive evaluation of programmes in relation to available resources and staff.

53. In view of the difficulty of evaluating work programmes and the time needed for evaluation, the immediate task was to consider the present deployment of staff in the light of the remarks made by the Advisory Committee, which was far from convinced that the present system of staff utilization, and in particular the implementation of the system throughout all sectors of the Secretariat, was fully consistent with the essential requirement of optimum use of available resources. According to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, there seemed to be some unevenness in the intensity of the use of posts and there seemed to be room for a reorganization or redeployment of existing staff in order to improve the situation. The Advisory Committee had recommended that the Secretary-General should undertake a detailed study, preferably desk by desk, of existing personnel, their deployment and utilization. The Secretary-General had given his assurance that such a study would be undertaken in a few months' time. The delegation of Ceylon felt that the study should take into account several seemingly unrelated but nevertheless important aspects, such as the application of the principles set forth in Article 101 of the Charter, the present system of permanent and short-term contracts, the role of the working languages and even the arguments repeated year after year by some delegations which held that the "desirable number of posts" should be considered from the qualitative rather than the quantitative standpoint. Instead of making cuts every year in requests for additional posts, the Committee should try to find solutions which would help to create better working conditions and at the same time contribute to a better use of resources. With regard to the principle of geographical distribution, it was clear that the paramount consideration in recruitment was the need to recruit staff possessing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. The principle of geographical distribution was only a corollary of that criterion.

54. In his delegation's view, the Secretariat of the future should have a multitiered structure. In the lower

tiers, most staff members should preferably be recruited at post-university age and should be obliged to acquire a knowledge of the working languages within a specific period. At that level the principle of geographical distribution would present no problem since the criteria of competence and efficiency would have already been taken into consideration. The staff members concerned might be appointed to posts at the lower Professional levels, but should be able to rise to higher positions rapidly if their capabilities warranted it. The Secretariat would thus have, as its base, a large and genuinely international group of staff members who would not be beset by ethnic or language problems. For the higher tiers, on the other hand, the solution would be less easy. For them, some degree of flexibility would be needed, as it would be futile to apply too strictly the criteria of language or geographical distribution. It was at that level that the principles expressed in Article 101 of the Charter should be strictly applied: quality should take precedence over geographical distribution, and the Secretary-General should be able to select the most suitable candidates, untrammelled by political or financial considerations.

55. Member States reacted to the situation in different ways. Some of them considered that current recruitment methods led to a brain drain which was harmful to their national development programmes, while others feared that their nationals would lose their specifically national characteristics during their period of service in the Secretariat. Others wished to transplant their own culture into the Organization. However unreasonable those reactions might seem, they did undoubtedly raise genuine problems which could not be solved unless the Secretary-General was free to recruit as he wished, with the principal objective of selecting the most efficient, competent and reliable staff members from the 125 Member States.

56. Unlike the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, his delegation felt that the time had come to suggest changes in the composition of the Advisory Committee which, like the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and other expert bodies should be now enlarged to accommodate the wishes of the increasing number of Member States that were anxious to participate in its work. The status of expert should not be regarded as the privilege of a chosen few. When the resolutions establishing the various Committees had been adopted, the Organization had had only two thirds of its present membership. His remarks were in no way intended as a reflection on the Advisory Committee, which his delegation held in high esteem. On the other hand, the principle of geographical distribution would have no meaning unless it was applied not only on a regional basis but also on the basis of equality within regions. The only solution was to ensure that all Member States wishing to share some of the responsibilities of running the Organization, were given the opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, that had not yet occurred, and the inequity was further aggravated by the fact that the composition of most of the bodies concerned

was still based on the narrow criteria prescribed in the original resolutions that had brought them into being. His delegation considered that the time had come to adopt a set of specific rules which would

ensure a fair rotation of responsibilities among all Member States, both large and small.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.