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Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

**AGENDA ITEM 51**

United Nations International School: report of the Secretary-General (A/4293, A/C.5/L.593, A/C.5/L.594) (continued)\*

1. Mr. VENKATARAMAN (India) said that his delegation had always supported action taken for the benefit of the United Nations International School, whether it was in connexion with a grant-in-aid or with the question of permanent accommodation, and had been among the sponsors of the draft resolutions adopted at the previous two sessions. In its resolution 1102 (XI) and 1228 (XII), the General Assembly had recognized the continued functioning of the School as one of the important non-financial factors contributing to the recruitment and retention of international staff.

2. At the thirteenth session the Fifth Committee had noted in its report<sup>1/</sup> that members had expressed a similar view and that they had emphasized the role of the School in connexion with maintaining the international character of the Secretariat. The question of the International School was closely linked with the international character of the Secretariat and the problem of the geographical distribution of staff. The wider that distribution became, the greater the importance attaching to the School's services. The main purpose of the School was to enable the children of international civil servants making a prolonged stay abroad to receive a type of instruction which did not completely cut them off from their own country and culture. That need had been recognized by several Governments, such as those of the United States and the Soviet Union, which had set up schools for the children of their nationals living in some foreign countries. Mention should also be made of the *Lycée français* of New York, which had 500 pupils of many nationalities. The teaching provided in a given country, however valuable, did not necessarily meet the needs of children who belonged to widely different cultures and who had problems of adjustment. The International School had not, of course, solved every problem, but it was making every effort to attain the objectives it had set itself.

\* Resumed from the 752nd meeting.

<sup>1/</sup>See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 54, document A/4026, para. 2.

Thus, instruction was given in English and French, there were special classes in such languages as Hindi and Chinese, the history courses were not confined to a particular country, and the School's pupils had an opportunity to sit for the Cambridge examinations. In addition the teaching staff was such that the children were not made to feel like foreigners.

3. The Secretary-General and the Board of Trustees pointed out (A/4293) that enrolment at the School was progressively increasing, and the Secretary-General recommended measures to provide for further expansion. At present only a small proportion of Secretariat staff and of members of permanent missions sent their children to the International School owing, in part, to the high fees charged. The Secretary-General's recommendations had, among other merits, that of making it possible to grant scholarships and thus increase enrolment. Such a scholarship programme and the construction of new premises obviously entailed financial support. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, there could be no hope of support from private sources in the absence of evidence of the future continuance of the School as a self-supporting and economically viable undertaking. The School would probably be in financial difficulties throughout its period of growth. Moreover, if there had been no such school in New York, the United Nations would have been put to greater expense for the travel of children studying in their own countries. The fact that the School had to apply for a grant every year meant that it was unable to plan ahead. It therefore appeared desirable to liquidate the accumulated deficit and establish a special fund. That was the object of the Secretary-General's recommendations and of the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Ecuador, India, Iran, Iraq, Poland and Uruguay (A/C.5/L.593), which he had the honour to submit to the Fifth Committee.

4. The other draft resolution (A/C.5/L.594), presented by Argentina and the United States, differed radically from the six-Power proposal in that it did not provide for the establishment of an International School Fund or for any measure which would put the School permanently on a sound financial footing. The major part of the grant of \$75,000 provided for under that draft resolution would have to be used to cover the accumulated deficit existing at the end of the 1959-1960 school year, leaving only some \$9,000 for the scholarship programme, a sum which was clearly inadequate. Annual grants-in-aid had another disadvantage: since the school year and the United Nations financial year did not coincide, when the School reopened the Board of Trustees of the School did not know what funds would be available to it. Hence the procedure proposed by the sponsors of that draft resolution did not solve the problem for the next school year and might delay efforts to secure from private sources the funds needed for the construction of a new building. Furthermore, that draft resolution made no provision for certain outlays mentioned by the Secretary-General: capital expenses, review of teachers' salaries, etc.

5. The sponsors of the six-Power draft resolution, by allotting a role to the Board of Trustees of the School and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, had provided a guarantee that disbursements from the Fund would be made wisely.

6. He appealed to members of the Fifth Committee, especially the United States delegation, to approach the question of the International School in a more generous spirit and one more in accordance with sound administrative and financial practices. The Board of Trustees needed to be able to plan ahead and, if necessary, to obtain donations from private sources. He asked the Fifth Committee to adopt the six-Power draft resolution.

7. Mr. FOBES (United States of America) said that he fully appreciated the value and importance of the Indian representative's observations. Indeed, no delegation underestimated the role of the International School, and his delegation in particular would approach the matter in a constructive spirit.

8. The Secretary-General's proposals deserved close and thorough study, as did the six-Power draft resolution, which embodied their main provisions. However, they raised some important questions. First, he wondered what effect the method of financing proposed by the Secretary-General would have on relations between the International School and the United Nations. The School had been established on the initiative of Secretariat staff members, had always been an independent entity, and had never been under United Nations control; it was desirable that it should continue to be independent. If the United Nations established a special Fund from which it made periodic payments to the School for various purposes, there was a risk that it might later wish to exercise some control over the management of the School and even over the curricula. His delegation therefore wondered whether it might not be preferable to defer establishment of an International School Fund and to ask the Secretary-General and the Board of Trustees to consider the matter again.

9. Secondly, the Secretary-General had provided no detailed information concerning the use of the considerable sums which would be paid into the Fund and which would be used to liquidate the deficit as well as for other unspecified purposes. The Secretary-General's report referred very vaguely to the "provision of a generous scholarship scheme" (A/4293, para. 9) but did not indicate the amount to be devoted to that scheme or the number of scholarships which would be granted. He (Mr. Fobes) also questioned the need to pay into the proposed Fund the entire net revenue of the Gift Centre.

10. Lastly, his delegation considered it undesirable to subdivide the Organization's revenue and to allocate a particular category of revenue to a particular activity. A question of principle was involved.

11. In their draft resolution (A/C.5/L.594), Argentina and his own country had endeavoured to propose some practical measures. They recognized that the School would need continuing financial assistance for a period of five years and proposed for 1960 a grant of \$75,000, which was more than double the grant for 1959 and would both liquidate the accumulated deficit and make it possible to start an experimental scholarship programme. The Secretary-General's suggestion to establish a permanent fund would be given further consideration at the fifteenth session, at which the Secretary-

General would present a detailed report on: first, the use made of the grant of \$75,000; secondly, the use the School would propose to make of the funds provided if the Assembly approved the Secretary-General's suggestion for the use of revenue derived from the Gift Centre, and thirdly, the progress which had been made in finding permanent accommodations for the International School.

12. His delegation hoped that the Committee would adopt that draft resolution.

13. Mr. QUIJANO (Argentina) said that his delegation had always supported the International School, which produced very satisfactory results and enabled Secretariat officials to ensure for their children an education provided in their mother tongue and based on different cultures and educational systems.

14. His delegation was pleased to note that enrolment in the School and the number of countries from which the pupils came had increased substantially. It hoped that further progress would be made in that direction and agreed with the Secretary-General that the main obstacle was the level of tuition fees. On the whole, the reports before the Committee showed that the prospects for the School were good and he wished to congratulate the members of the Board of Trustees for their dedicated work.

15. In order to solve the problems faced by the School, the Secretary-General had proposed an ingenious solution which appeared, at first glance, to be acceptable in practice. However, that solution was predicated on the adoption of a final decision, the consequences of which would have to be carefully weighed, particularly from the point of view of the School's independence *vis-à-vis* the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Member States. Establishment of a permanent Fund to be maintained out of United Nations revenues constituted more than a mere administrative measure. It would give the United Nations some responsibility for the operation and the policies of the School and might make it necessary for the United Nations to intervene in the management and utilization of the Fund, as the Secretary-General himself had suggested in paragraph 10 of his report (A/4293).

16. The problem was therefore a very complex one and could not be solved in a hasty manner. It should be borne in mind that, two or three years earlier, the School's financial situation had been sound and that the large deficit of the previous year and that anticipated for the current year were due to difficulties arising from the transfer of the School to Manhattan. Furthermore, delegations had not yet had time to study carefully the Secretary-General's important proposals.

17. Bearing those facts in mind and wishing to give practical expression to its interest in the School and, in particular, to ensure the establishment of a scholarship scheme which would facilitate a further increase in the School's enrolment, his delegation had joined with that of the United States in submitting a draft resolution (A/C.5/L.594) which was similar in many respects to the six-Power draft resolution (A/C.5/L.593) and had been prompted by the same motives. The only difference was that the latter text provided for the immediate establishment of a fund into which the revenue of the Gift Centre would be paid, an arrangement which he considered undesirable at the present time.

18. He was convinced, since the general air was to place the School on a sound basis, that the members

of the Committee would be able to agree on a satisfactory solution. His delegation would give careful consideration to any compromise formula which might be put forward.

19. Mr. MATTAR (Lebanon) remarked that the various resolutions which the General Assembly had adopted on the matter left no doubt regarding the importance which all delegations attached to the sound operation and consolidation of the International School.

20. The most urgent problem was to find premises for the School after the close of the academic year 1960-1961. His delegation had no hesitation in favouring a permanent solution of the School's financial difficulties, first because the School formed an integral part of the United Nations and, secondly, because it would be difficult, if not impossible, to secure sufficient support from private donors unless it could first be demonstrated that the School was an economically viable undertaking. It was clear that the General Assembly had no intention of evading its responsibilities with regard to liquidation of the School's deficit, but the approval of an annual grant-in-aid for that purpose was not a satisfactory solution. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's suggestion, which had the advantages mentioned in paragraph 7 of the report.

21. His delegation considered that the School's curriculum should include the teaching of Arabic. There were, in New York, about a hundred families connected with the United Nations whose mother tongue was Arabic and, as indicated in appendix II of the report by the Board of Trustees (A/4293, annex), Arabic was one of the languages spoken by the School's pupils. A decision to provide instruction in Arabic at the International School would be in accordance with the wish of the General Assembly that the School should be made available to the children of the greatest possible number of persons associated with the United Nations. He had therefore transmitted to the Secretary of the Committee the text of two amendments to the six-Power draft resolution which would ensure that end. He hoped that they would have the Committee's support, and he intended to vote for the six-Power draft resolution, if so amended, as it corresponded more to his delegation's point of view than the draft submitted by the representatives of Argentina and the United States of America.

22. Mr. MICHALOWSKI (Poland) observed that, although the quality of the instruction provided by the School and the atmosphere prevailing in it gave ample cause for satisfaction, its premises and facilities left much to be desired. A visit he had recently made to the School had left him with a most unfavourable impression. The United Nations had a duty to assist the Board of Trustees in its heroic efforts to improve the School's financial position and to secure the necessary funds to construct new permanent premises.

23. His delegation would therefore vote for the six-Power draft resolution. Taking into consideration how the Gift Centre had been established and how it was being managed, it would seem infinitely more logical to use its profits to constitute a Fund to give the School the necessary assistance than to pay them into the United Nations budget. Moreover, in view of the especial difficulty encountered by junior officials in sending their children to the International School, the text to be adopted by the Fifth Committee should, at the very least, provide for the establishment of a modest scholarship programme.

24. In conclusion, he pointed out that adoption of the six-Power draft resolution would provide Member States—which so often expressed their desire to work for future generations—with a unique opportunity to give meaning to that somewhat shop-worn phrase.

25. Mr. LAWRENCE (New Zealand) said that no one questioned the usefulness of the International School or the value of its contribution to the international community of the United Nations. In that connexion, it was of particular interest to note the increase in both the number of pupils and the number of countries from which they came. All delegations also concurred in recognizing that the School must become a self-supporting and economically viable undertaking. His delegation wondered, however, whether it would be wise or desirable to adopt the Secretary-General's proposal, which would, in effect, amount to including a portion of the School's expenses in the regular United Nations budget. That solution would leave unresolved the basic issue, which was that the International School should become an economic undertaking in the strict sense of the term. It was, moreover, unlikely that, having once included the School as an item in the regular budget, delegations would be prepared to remove it. His delegation suggested that the Secretary-General and the Board of Trustees should first examine the other possibilities and report to the Assembly at its fifteenth session.

26. While fully appreciating the reasons why the Board of Trustees wished to maintain fees at a reasonable level, particularly for the children of junior staff, his delegation thought that the first task of the Board was to place the School on a business-like footing. Despite the reduction in its deficit, the School would probably again not be in a position to balance its budget for some time. Moreover, costs had been rising and would continue to rise, and the problem of the level of salaries payable to the teaching staff must also be faced. Quite apart from the possible establishment of a Fund, it was apparent that either income must be increased or expenditure reduced.

27. Because of the need to develop the School still further, it was obviously difficult to reduce expenditures; however, consideration might be given to the possibility of excluding the cost of meals from the fee of \$800, which, at the present level of enrolment, would save about \$35,000 annually.

28. Alternatively, consideration might be given to an increase in fees, which, despite rising costs, had remained unchanged for the past two academic years. Such an increase would appear justified in view of the fact that many private schools in the metropolitan area charged up to 35 per cent more than the International School. It was the responsibility of Governments to meet the educational expenses of the children of staff members of delegations through the payment of appropriate allowances. In the case of Secretariat members, that was a responsibility of the United Nations. His delegation would be prepared to consider sympathetically the possibility of increasing the education grant to cover, either in full or for the greater part, such an increase in fees. In fact, if a further contribution to the International School were to come from the regular budget, his delegation would much prefer to see it charged to section 7 (Common staff costs). It might also be possible to increase fees and education grants only with respect to children attending senior school, which would not create any additional difficul-

ties for young staff members. His delegation was aware that an increase in the education grant at Headquarters might create an anomalous situation with regard to United Nations offices elsewhere; nevertheless, it seemed, in the circumstances, perfectly justifiable to adopt a system—comparable to the post adjustment system on salaries—which would make it possible to vary the amount of the education grant depending on the costs of study in different areas.

29. He thought that the School's Board of Trustees might examine other possibilities and submit a report at the next session showing the financial repercussions of an increase in fees of varying amounts throughout the whole school or in those of the senior school only. At the moment, he would find it difficult to support the last preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 2 of the six-Power draft resolution. Although the draft resolution submitted by Argentina and the United States was closer to the position of his delegation, he would, for the reasons already indicated, have a reservation regarding operative paragraph 3.

30. Mr. QUAO (Ghana) said the Secretary-General's report showed that some progress had been made that augured well for the future. He expressed his admiration for the Board of Trustees and the teaching staff of the School, who were carrying out their work with skill and devotion in spite of the difficulties besetting the School. It was true that the transfer of the School to Manhattan had led to increased enrolment, but at the end of the 1960-1961 school year new premises would have to be found, unless the New York City authorities allowed the School to continue to use former Public School 82. In any case, permanent premises for the School would have to be found close to Headquarters.

31. Although the real deficit had been reduced, the School's financial situation was still a major problem. Unfortunately the fees charged were too high for some families. As the Secretary-General had emphasized (A/4293, para. 4), it could not be "expected that an institution such as the International School, designed to meet the special needs of an international community, could hope in the near future to pay its way fully at any reasonable level of fees". From time to time the General Assembly had approved a grant-in-aid for the School to enable it to overcome its financial difficulties. It would be better to consider means of permanently ensuring the financial stability of the International School, and he therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's suggestions in paragraphs 7 to 11 of his report. The Secretary-General said that the primary purpose of his proposal was to ensure that the School in New York would be economically self-sufficient for a reasonable period of time (*ibid.*, para. 9). The continuing Fund that it was proposed to establish would have the advantage of reducing the fees, which would attract a larger number of pupils and make it possible at last to plan for the future. The idea of a continuing Fund was all the more acceptable since the Secretary-General proposed to work out detailed arrangements for the management of the Fund. He therefore hoped that the Committee would approve the Secretary-General's proposals, which had been embodied in the six-Power draft resolution (A/C.5/L.593).

32. Mr. HAMILTON (Director of Personnel) assured the Lebanese representative that the School was fully aware of the need for instruction in additional lan-

guages such as Arabic, that more could not be done in that respect because of financial stringency or inadequate demand, and that the Secretary-General would bring the Lebanese proposal to the attention of the Board of Trustees of the School. He asked the Lebanese representative if he would withdraw his amendment, so that the General Assembly would not appear to be issuing instructions to the School about its curriculum.

33. Mr. MATTAR (Lebanon) remarked that he was satisfied by the assurances given by the Secretary-General's representative, and withdrew his proposed amendment.

34. Sir John CARMICHAEL (United Kingdom) said he could not regard the financing of the International School as a United Nations responsibility. It should be remembered that the General Assembly had subsidized the School only in exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer of the School to Manhattan. The Secretary-General had stated that the fees received would not suffice to balance the School's budget for the current year and had proposed that the net revenue arising from the operation of the United Nations Gift Centre, which amounted to some \$145,000 a year, should be used to finance the School. If United Nations revenue were reduced by that amount, the contributions of Member States would have to be correspondingly increased. In view of the financial effects of the proposal on the United Nations budget the Committee should have had the views of the Advisory Committee. The direct allocation of specific receipts to a specific item of expenditure was not sound budgetary practice.

35. The International School's fees were in fact lower than those charged by similar schools in the New York area; that was an anomaly in view of the fact that the International School's expenses were higher than those of a public school. The fees should therefore be brought more into line with those charged at other schools, and to meet its responsibilities towards its staff, the United Nations should consider the possibility of increasing the education grant. It was to be regretted that the Committee had not received the Secretary-General's report and recommendations sooner. He himself would approve of a grant-in-aid of \$75,000 for the School for 1960; during the next year the level of the school fees and of the corresponding grants should be reviewed. The United Kingdom delegation could not support the draft resolutions before the Committee, although the text submitted by Argentina and the United States appeared to be less objectionable.

36. Mr. EL HAKIM (United Arab Republic) thought that the sponsors of the two draft resolutions, both of which had the same purpose, might be able to agree on a common text if they were given the opportunity. He therefore proposed that the debate on agenda item 51 should be adjourned until the following day.

*It was so decided.*

#### AGENDA ITEM 43

Supplementary estimates for the financial year 1959 (A/4308, A/C.5/807, A/C.5/L.574) (*continued*)\*\*

37. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/807) contained the second part of the supplementary estimates and a draft resolution on the supplementary estimates for 1959,

\*\* Resumed from the 742nd meeting.

whose adoption was recommended by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/4308).

38. Mr. SOKIRKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked for a separate vote on sub-paragraph 3 (a) of the Advisory Committee's report.

*Sub-paragraph 3 (a) of the Advisory Committee's report (A/4308) was adopted by 40 votes to 9, with 7 abstentions.*

*The Advisory Committee's recommendations (A/4308, para. 10) with respect to the second part of the supplementary estimates were adopted by 49 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.