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at 10 a.m.
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 45th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.5/44/3/Add.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the General Assembly had decided to allocate to the Fifth Committee the additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America" (agenda item 159).

AGENDA ITEM 137: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued) (A/44/605 and Add.1 and 2 and A/44/725)

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AGENDA ITEM 134: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP (continued) (A/44/624 and 725)

2. Mr. VAHER (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, recalled that the three countries were long-standing supporters of United Nations peace-keeping efforts and were members of or observers in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations. They contributed personnel to six of the current peace-keeping operations and therefore had practical experience of the matter under discussion. The three delegations had been among those which, at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, had supported the preparation of the studies on various aspects of the administration and financing of such operations which were now before the Committee and which they found to be very valuable.

3. On the subject of economies of scale, discussed in document A/44/605, the three delegations accepted the finding that the nature and timing of most requisitions precluded economies of scale. They therefore agreed with the approach that had been taken, which consisted in seeking savings through a standardization policy and a variety of purchasing arrangements.

4. With regard to the use of civilian personnel, they endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal that interested Governments should submit inventories of individual specialists or specialized units that might be made available at relatively short notice and put forward detailed proposals on ways in which they could be deployed. Since greater civilian participation in peace-keeping operations would be a new step for the United Nations, there was a need to develop an administrative and budgetary framework governing the assignment of civilian personnel to peace-keeping operations, bearing in mind the practical and legal concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

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(Mr. Vaher, Canada)

5. The analysis of the start-up problems associated with new peace-keeping operations illustrated the difficulties entailed by the existing arrangements. The three delegations nevertheless believed that current procedures could be reformed in the interests of greater efficiency. They welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation for the establishment of a planning and monitoring group to assist the Secretary-General in forward planning with respect to logistic, budgetary and financial issues, *inter alia*. They also endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the use of expert assistance to develop procedures for enhancing the Secretariat's capacity and drawing up and costing plans for prospective operations, the application of status-of-forces agreements with host countries, the setting of realistic implementation dates for the deployment of operations and the development of audio-visual training programmes for staff members who might be assigned to peace-keeping operations, which could also be made available to Member States.

6. With regard to implementation dates, the three delegations emphasized the need to set a realistic date for the start of a peace-keeping operation and, also, for the termination of the operation. Where such dates could not be determined in advance, the regular renewal of the mandate of the operation provided an opportunity to re-examine the necessity of continuation. The three delegations proposed that the Secretary-General should study the possibility of establishing termination dates in the mandates of existing or future peace-keeping operations.

7. The three delegations felt that there might be room for more ambitious steps than those proposed by the Secretary-General to overcome some of the start-up difficulties. Preparation and training of soldiers and civilian personnel were essential to the efficiency of an operation and could help to reduce overall costs. Thought might be given to the establishment of an international training centre and an advisory team to carry out training functions within existing operations and the holding of regional and international courses and seminars. The three delegations supported the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations that Member States should establish national training programmes for peace-keeping operations for both military and civilian personnel so that they might be deployed quickly when needed. They also commended the proposal for the development of a United Nations peace-keeping manual, which would provide guidelines to Member States interested in participating in peace-keeping operations.

8. Measures to increase the efficiency of peace-keeping operations were doomed to failure unless the Secretary-General received adequate and timely financial support. That meant that all Member States had to pay their contributions in full and on time. Unfortunately, that was not the case. In the circumstances, in order to ensure that the necessary resources would be available in the initial stage of peace-keeping operations, the Secretary-General proposed an increase of \$100 million in the Working Capital Fund. While sharing the Secretary-General's concerns with respect to the operational and political difficulties which he faced in financing the start-up stage of peace-keeping operations, the three delegations considered that any expansion of the Working Capital Fund should be considered within the context of the overall requirements of the Organization. The proposed increase did not seem realistic as long as Member States failed to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time and as long as the arrears problem

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subsisted. If an increase was, nevertheless, approved, various options existed for financing it. Consideration could be given to using surplus funds remaining after replenishment of the existing Fund and of the special accounts through the payment of arrears. Alternatively, apart from payment of arrears, consideration could be given to an appeal for voluntary contributions. In that connection, the three delegations looked forward with interest to the specific proposals which the Secretary-General would doubtless be making in his report on agenda item 125 and the suggestions of other delegations. Some aspects of the question could be considered by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations at its next session.

9. Moreover, in respect of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, the Secretary-General proposed that his level of commitment authority should be raised from \$2 million to \$5 million and that of the Advisory Committee from \$10 million to \$20 million. With the reservation that the increased commitment authorities should be used with circumspection and with due regard to the need for cost-effectiveness, the three delegations supported the proposal in principle.

10. With regard to the reserve stock of commonly used equipment and supply items, the three delegations concurred with the reservations expressed by the Advisory Committee. They would like confirmation that such a stockpile would meet the different demands likely to be faced and that its storage would not be costly. They would not wish to see any funds spent on the storage of equipment which turned out to be unserviceable or unnecessary.

11. The three delegations supported the Secretary-General's proposals concerning voluntary contributions of supplies and services and concurred with his proposed technical guidelines relating to the treatment and valuation of such contributions. With regard to the rates of reimbursement to the Governments of troop-contributing States, they regretted that the lack of adequate data made any recommendation of a revision of the current rates impossible. They appealed to the Member States concerned to provide the necessary data. Finally, with regard to the composition of the groups of Member States for the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations, they supported the requests of the Central African Republic, Myanmar and Poland to be moved to a lower group. At the same time, they hoped that those countries whose economic situation had improved would consider moving to a higher group.

12. Ms. FRIESSNIGG (Austria) said that, in view of the success achieved by the United Nations in the area of peace-keeping, an expansion of peace-keeping operations could be expected. Guidelines for the administration and financing of such operations should therefore be established or, where necessary, improved. Her delegation welcomed the various reports on the matter submitted by the Secretary-General. Many of the proposals now before the Committee were now new. As far back as 1977, several delegations, including her own, had submitted a working paper in which they had recommended that Member States should consider establishing stand-by forces for use in peace-keeping operations and that they should organize training courses and seminars on the subject, with the help of the Secretariat.

(Ms. Friessnigg, Austria)

13. Her delegation supported the views of the Secretary-General concerning economies of scale. The Advisory Committee had recommended that a study should be made of the feasibility of establishing a Secretariat planning and monitoring group; the establishment of such a group might in the long run prove profitable and might also help to improve administrative co-ordination among the various peace-keeping operations.

14. The United Nations would increasingly find itself using civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations. That would facilitate a wider participation by Member States in such operations by States which were not in a position to provide military contingents. Moreover, the cost of those operations would be more evenly spread and efforts aimed at conflict-resolution would gain broader support. Her delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General, which had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee, that administrative procedures should be established to govern the provision of civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations.

15. The Secretary-General stated that the start-up problems faced by the United Nations when establishing a new peace-keeping operation could be encapsulated in the two elements of time and money. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal for an increase in the levels of commitment authority for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. With regard to the proposal to expand the Working Capital Fund by an amount of \$100 million, it believed that, in the light of the comments of the Advisory Committee, a decision on the proposal should not be made until detailed information was available on all the elements involved, including the various options for financing the increase. Similarly, before taking a position on the establishment of a reserve stock of equipment and supply items, her delegation would like further information, including a detailed breakdown of the costs.

16. Turning to the financial aspects of peace-keeping operations, she noted that the rates of reimbursement to the Governments of troop-contributing States had remained unaltered since 1980, while the percentage of the costs not covered by the rates of reimbursement were steadily increasing. The Secretary-General indicated in his report that since he had received incomplete data, no revision of the rates could be recommended. Her delegation appealed to the Member States concerned to provide the Secretariat with all the relevant data. The Committee might decide to consider the question at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the basis of the additional information to be provided by those States. Such a decision would be in compliance with the provisions of resolution 40/247, which stipulated that the Secretary-General should review the rates of reimbursement at least once every two years. If it proved impossible to obtain all the relevant information, other measures should be considered: for example, the Secretary-General might himself propose an increase in the rates.

17. The Secretary-General had drawn up technical guidelines relating to the treatment and valuation of voluntary contributions of supplies and services in the form of advances or outright grants. Her delegation supported those guidelines in the light of the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/44/725, paras. 35 to 37) to the effect that reductions of overall assessments as a result

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of voluntary contributions could only be applied when income from the voluntary contributions exceeded the unpaid assessed contributions for the operation. Furthermore, such reductions would have to take into consideration the pattern of payment by Member States of their assessed contributions. As her delegation had stated at the forty-third session, the troop-contributing States were already bearing a disproportionate share of the total cost of peace-keeping operations. The Secretary-General's proposals should in no way influence his obligation to reimburse the Governments of those States.

18. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation would have an opportunity to state its views on the item under consideration at a later meeting. It wished, however, to state at the present stage that it supported the requests of the Central African Republic, Myanmar and Poland to be moved to a lower group. It pointed out that group (d) had been created to give all those less developed countries which wished to do so an opportunity to participate in peace-keeping operations.

AGENDA ITEM 126: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS
(A/44/711 and Add.1)

Draft decision concerning the report of the Advisory Committee (A/C.5/44/L.6)

19. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany), introducing the draft decision, said that it was the outcome of informal consultations on the report of the Advisory Committee (A/44/711/Add.1) on the relationship between the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations. Some delegations had thought that the term "co-ordination" was not really appropriate in the title, for the relationship consisted essentially of comparative tables. It had been proposed that the question should be dealt with as a sub-item of another agenda item if the Advisory Committee did not expand the scope of its report. Other delegations wanted to expand the scope of the report in any case and had made proposals to that effect. It had been generally agreed that closer attention should be given to the document.

20. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of the draft decision supported the intention of the Advisory Committee to revert to its former practice of in-depth studies of individual agencies of the United Nations system every other year and invited the Advisory Committee to consider the possibility of conducting in-depth studies of administrative and budgetary aspects of topics of system-wide concern. The Advisory Committee would certainly welcome suggestions in that connection.

21. Mr. BOUR (France) drew the Committee's attention to paragraph (d), in which the wording "Decides to support" had been used in the English text adopted in negotiations. The French text should be brought into line, with the beginning of the paragraph reading "Décide d'approuver ...".

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... 22. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft decision A/C.5/44/L.6. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the draft decision.

23. It was so decided.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of item 126 (a) and he invited the Rapporteur to report the results of the Committee's work directly to the General Assembly.

AGENDA ITEMS 123 AND 124: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/44/3, A/44/6/Rev.1, A/44/7 and Corr.1 and A/44/16 and Add.1; A/44/7/Add.3; A/44/684 and Add.1 and A/C.5/44/24)

First reading (continued)

Section 15. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (continued)

25. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/44/7/Add.3), said that the report concerned the reclassification from P-2 to P-3 of four Professional posts under section 15. The Advisory Committee had been unable to entertain the Secretary-General's initial request, because the established procedures had not been observed. The Secretariat had since submitted a note expressing its regret and indicating that it would take steps to ensure that the situation would not recur. The Advisory Committee wished to stress that it would continue in the future not to entertain any requests for reclassification which had not been submitted in accordance with established procedures. Subject to those comments, it now recommended approval of the reclassification of the four posts in question. Furthermore, as the estimate was small (\$120,800), it recommended that it should be absorbed under the section. If that proved difficult, the Secretary-General could raise the question again during the consideration of the report on the implementation of the 1990-1991 budget, in accordance with established practice.

26. Mr. GUPTA (India) asked the Director of the Budget Division whether the Secretariat intended, in view of the report of the Advisory Committee, to go ahead with the reclassification of four P-2 posts to the P-3 level.

27. Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) said that her delegation supported the reclassification of the four posts. However, before taking a decision on the proposal as a whole, it would like to know whether the Secretariat thought that it would be possible to absorb the estimate of \$120,800 under section 15.

28. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) requested confirmation that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would be regarded as giving the go-ahead for the reclassifications.

29. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the posts would indeed be reclassified if the Committee accepted the ACABQ recommendations. As to the financing, the Secretariat would try, if the Committee so wished, to absorb the \$120,800 under section 15. If that was not possible, the

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(Mr. Baudot).

Secretary-General would so indicate in his first report on the implementation of the budget. Of course, it would be preferable, for reasons of budgetary consistency, for the provision for the reclassifications to be absorbed under section 15. It was for the Committee to decide.

30. Mr. GUPTA (India) said that he understood that the posts would be reclassified even if the Secretariat did not find financing for all the corresponding expenditures and that supplementary estimates would be submitted, if necessary, to the General Assembly in 1990 in the context of the revised estimates.

31. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretariat would indeed proceed in that way if the General Assembly decided not to approve the provision initially requested by the Secretary-General under section 15.

32. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that it might be possible to absorb the cost of the reclassifications, for example by making resources available under section 15 from the headings "Supplies and materials", "Communications" or "Official travel of staff".

33. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that the main thing was to reclassify the posts. As to the financing, the Secretariat had explained perfectly clearly the procedure it intended to follow, which moreover was in conformity with the established practice.

34. Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) said that she would like to be sure that the proposed procedure was in fact in conformity with the new rules on the preparation of the budget. It should be made clear whether the estimate should be governed by the guidelines for use of the contingency fund or considered in the context of the revised estimates.

35. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that if the Committee decided to add the \$120,800 to the estimates under section 15, as the Secretary-General had originally proposed, the normal procedure would be followed. On the other hand, if it accepted the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat would report on the situation in the report on the implementation of the budget at the end of the biennium. If it turned out that the \$120,800 had not been absorbed, then the provisions of the new budget procedure would be applied.

36. Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) said that it would be better for the Committee to consider the question of the financing of the reclassifications in the informal consultations. For important reasons which she had already cited earlier and which were connected in particular with the preparation of the next United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, her delegation accepted the estimates originally proposed by the Secretary-General.

37. Mr. GUPTA (India) asked for further information on whether the expenditures relating to the reclassified posts might be changed to the reserve funds, at least in part.

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38. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was prepared to take a decision on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations. However, if other delegations wished to continue the unofficial consultations, their wish should be respected. His delegation wished, however, to return to a question it had raised earlier which seemed to have remained unanswered. It concerned the statistical and computer services, for which a rate of real growth of 154.1 per cent was projected in table 15.3, D. It would be recalled that in paragraph 15.3 of its report, the Advisory Committee had referred to a supplementary appropriation of \$1,761,200 which was included in the International Computing Centre's budget under the heading of services to UNCTAD. It might also be possible, as the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had suggested, to cover the cost of \$120,800 from the funds provided under the headings "Rental and maintenance of equipment", "Communications", or "Supplies and materials", at least in part. His delegation did not think that could have prejudicial effects on the programmes.

39. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that the question raised by the Cuban representative should be considered more thoroughly in unofficial consultations.

40. Mr. BOUR (France) said he saw no need for further unofficial consultations as the information the Committee had been given was clear. The Secretariat had explained that it would try to carry out the Advisory Committee's recommendation. If that was not possible, it could request a supplementary appropriation at the end of 1991.

41. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the reserve funds could not be used to finance additional activities undertaken at the request of Member States. At the end of 1991, the Secretariat would report to the Fifth Committee on the financing of expenditures. If they had not been fully covered, it would be necessary to follow the usual procedure, that is, to take a decision during consideration of the final report on the 1990-1991 programme budget.

42. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said it was necessary to adopt a consistent position. If it was considered that the allocations requested initially had been carefully calculated, it must then be accepted that the expenditures could not be fully met from the allocations under chapter 15. From that point of view, the Secretariat should have stated that the reclassifications should be deferred. But if it was desired to reclassify the post during the current budget period, the costs involved should then be assumed. The Committee was not required to follow the advice of the Advisory Committee or the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination systematically. In the matter at hand, the discussion should be focused on the Secretary-General's initial proposals. If those seemed justified, there was no reason to refuse the appropriations requested.

43. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), recalling what he had said previously, noted that the normal procedure would be to approve the Secretary-General's initial recommendation, and to make the necessary funds available. Taking into account the comments of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and other statements, the Committee seemed to have adopted a different

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approach: to carry out the reclassifications, try to absorb the resulting costs and assess the situation at the end of the budget period. If the Committee decided to resume unofficial consultations on the question, the Secretariat would be able to provide the additional information.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would consider that the Committee had approved the reclassification of four Professional posts from P-2 to P-3 contained in chapter 15.

45. It was so decided.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would also consider that the Committee had approved the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the sum of \$120,800 covering the cost of those reclassifications should be charged to the appropriations under chapter 15, on the understanding that if such financing proved to be impossible, the Secretariat would so inform the Committee during the consideration of the report on the implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

47. It was so decided.

48. Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) said that her delegation had approved the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the understanding that there would be unofficial consultations on the question of financing the reclassifications. It was usual in the Fifth Committee that budgetary questions which raised difficulties should be considered in unofficial consultations so that it was not necessary to return to them during the second reading of the budget.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that it was necessary for almost all delegations to agree that unofficial consultations were necessary on a question before such consultations were undertaken. If unofficial consultations were held on all questions, no matter what their importance, the Committee's work would not go forward. He therefore urgently requested the Cuban delegation not to insist that unofficial consultations be held on the question of financing the expenditures relating to the reclassifications.

50. Ms. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) considered it essential that in budgetary questions the Committee should follow the procedures laid down in resolution 41/213 by trying to reach its decisions on the basis of the widest possible agreement. In the matter at hand, her delegation did not oppose the Advisory Committee's recommendation, but it considered that the Secretary-General's initial proposal was clear and that the allocation of \$120,800 he had requested was justified. That was why the question of financing those expenditures should be taken up in unofficial consultation so that the problem could be resolved before the second reading of the budget.

51. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that his delegation would have preferred that the Secretary-General's initial proposal be accepted; it would nevertheless agree to the decision that had been taken to finance the expenditure of \$120,800 from the

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(Mr. Lopez, Venezuela)

appropriations under chapter 15 on the understanding that, if that was not possible, supplementary appropriations would be requested for the purpose in 1991. However, unofficial consultations should be held on the question of eliminating the senior post in chapter 15, and it might be possible to consider the problem raised by the Cuban delegation at that time.

52. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that, as the Advisory Committee had raised its initial recommendation by approving the reclassification of four posts under chapter 15, the sum of \$120,800 requested for that purpose by the Secretary-General should, in his delegation's opinion, be added to the total appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee. In any case, the Fifth Committee should give the necessary attention to the Cuban delegation's proposal and should consider the question of the source from which the \$120,800 was drawn, taking into account the Advisory Committee's new recommendation concerning the reclassification of four posts.

53. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) wished to know whether or not the amount of \$120,800 was included in the appropriation on which the Committee was being asked to take a decision. As he understood it, the global provision requested under section 15 amounted to \$78,654,800 in view of the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the reclassification of posts and travel costs. He would, however, like the Chairman to state clearly what amounts were involved in the decisions taken by the Committee.

54. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Committee had just taken two decisions. In the first decision, it had approved the reclassification of posts proposed by the Secretary-General. Under the second, it had approved the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the cost of those reclassifications should be covered from the resources provided for section 15. The Secretariat had for its part indicated that it would endeavour to absorb the amount of \$120,800 within the appropriation already provided for section 15 but that, if that proved impossible, it would so inform the Committee during the consideration of the programme budget performance report for the biennium 1990-1991. In no event would that amount be met from the contingency fund since that fund was not intended to cover such expenditures. As the Secretariat had agreed that the cost of \$120,800 should be met from the appropriation provided, there seemed to be no need for informal consultations.

55. Ms. GOICOHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) asked the representative of the Secretary-General to confirm that it was indeed possible to absorb the amount of \$120,800 within the appropriation under section 15.

56. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that he wished to make three comments. First, when a proposal by the Secretary-General was accepted, the normal procedure was for the necessary resources to be made available to him to give effect to the proposed measure. Furthermore, the Secretariat had stated that it would do its best to absorb the expenditure of \$120,800 within the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee on the understanding that, if that proved impossible, it would indicate that fact at the end of the biennium

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1990-1991. However, it should be made perfectly clear that the Secretariat's concurrence in no way constituted a precedent on which to base future requests that other additional expenditures should be met from appropriations when that was obviously not possible. Otherwise, the whole budget planning process would be undermined.

57. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said he was not convinced that the resources recommended by the Advisory Committee would be sufficient to give effect to the Secretary-General's proposals. In that regard, he would like to raise a number of questions requiring detailed answers and he felt that it would be better for that to be done in informal consultations.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that all the necessary details would be provided during the second reading of the budget.

59. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that he would like the Secretariat to answer the question he had raised earlier. In addition, he would like to know why some expenditures connected with preparations for the next session of the Conference had been included as non-recurrent items, and not as expenditures relating to permanent activities. Clarification on that point could be provided in informal consultations if they were felt necessary. In his delegation's view, it was proper for the Committee to take a decision on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendation, since that was the customary procedure.

60. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) pointed out that, as the General Assembly was a sovereign body, its decisions could sometimes depart from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

61. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take a decision on section 15 as a whole.

62. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning section 15 (A/44/16, paras. 190-193).

63. It was so decided.

64. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of \$78,384,000 under section 15 for the biennium 1990-1991 was approved in first reading without a vote.

Section 3. Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization (continued)

65. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) requested that, as proposed at the previous meeting, section 3 should be considered after section 29 to give delegations time to determine their positions.

66. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) supported the representative of Algeria and pointed out that delegations had not yet been able to familiarize themselves with the important information submitted by the Secretariat that morning.

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67. The CHAIRMAN recalled that informal consultations on the proposed programme budget as a whole could not begin until the Committee had taken a decision on section 3 in first reading. He could agree to the proposal that section 3 should be considered after section 29 provided that he had the assurance of the delegations concerned that the Committee would indeed take a decision on the section in question.

68. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) and Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that their delegations could not make an undertaking on behalf of all other delegations. They agreed in principle that the Committee should take a decision before the commencement of informal consultations on the proposed programme budget as a whole, but they would like delegations to have the opportunity beforehand to study the documentation submitted.

69. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the Committee should consider section 3 after section 29.

70. Mr. BOUR (France) welcomed the Chairman's decision. He noted that the additional information provided that day by the Secretariat had been issued in documents with no symbol and in English only. In that regard, he would like the Secretariat to respect the principle of the parity of the official languages.

71. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the documents entitled "Additional information provided by the Secretariat" were merely notes prepared by the Secretariat to reply to delegations. They had the same status as the statements by representatives of the Secretary-General which were made available to the Committee members. He was unable to say whether it would be possible to issue them as official documents (for example, as conference room papers in the two working languages) within available resources.

72. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation did not mind whether the notes by the Secretariat were prepared in English or in French.

73. Mr. NASSER (Egypt) said that, as they were only informal documents, he would prefer the Secretariat to continue to draft its notes in English.

Section 29. Conference and library services

74. The CHAIRMAN said that the documents before the Committee concerning section 29 included the following: a report by the Joint Inspection Unit submitted under a covering note by the Secretary-General and entitled "From the optical disc pilot project at the United Nations office at Geneva to an optical disc system for the United Nations" (A/44/684), the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/44/684/Add.1) and a report by the Secretary-General on conference services at Vienna (A/C.5/44/24). The Advisory Committee's report concerning the latter document was in the process of publication and would appear as document A/44/7/Add.4.

75. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that there were few changes in the content of the programmes included under section 29 compared with the biennium 1988-1989: only some titles had been modified. Bearing in mind the nature of the activities under consideration, it was not proposed to designate priorities. With regard to the volume of extrabudgetary resources, the amounts indicated related to the Trust Fund for German Language Translation, the Library Endowment Fund and services in support of other organizations. It was intended to finance 22 posts from extrabudgetary resources. Furthermore, the Secretary-General was proposing to reclassify four Professional posts (two posts from P-4 to P-5 and two posts from P-2 to P-3), to establish six posts in the Editorial and Official Records Division, to convert two temporary recurrent posts to established posts, and to abolish 11 temporary recurrent posts. The Advisory Committee had not objected to any of those proposals.

76. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in view of the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in documents A/44/7 and A/44/7/Add.4, the total amount of the estimate recommended by the Committee under section 29 was \$358,875,800. Introducing the Advisory Committee's first report, he noted that the estimate under section 29 concerned conference services at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna; estimates for language staff and for temporary assistance for meetings were also included under sections 11-14, 18 and 19 (para. 29.5). The staffing proposals covered 2,267 permanent posts (a net increase of eight posts), including 890 language posts (para. 29.7). Taking into account the \$3.6 million allocated for the financing of joint activities, the estimate under temporary assistance for meetings amounted to \$44.3 million (para. 29.10).

77. The Secretary-General proposed to establish under executive direction and management a global provision of \$3 million. After a long debate and for the reasons given in paragraphs 29.25 to 29.27 of its first report, the Advisory Committee had initially recommended that the estimate should be provisionally reduced by one half and that the other half should be included under departmental administration, pending receipt of further information (para. 29.28).

78. The Advisory Committee had also noted that the Secretariat had made no reference to the manner in which it envisaged implementing paragraph 10 of resolution 43/213, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, concrete recommendations for absorbing the costs of the 100 language posts whose restoration it had approved. Nor had the Secretary-General provided any explanation as to the reasons why he could not fully offset the related costs (para. 29.13).

79. The Advisory Committee noted the difficulties encountered during its consideration of section 29 (para. 29.14) and explained why it had nevertheless refrained from recommending reductions to the estimates (para. 29.16). Part of the problem lay in the lack of precision in the work-load statistics. The Advisory Committee regretted that the recommendation which it had made on the subject had not been carried out and it awaited a report from the Secretariat before the end of 1989 (para. 29.22). It noted that it would be possible to reduce costs by

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staggering the meetings more efficiently and requiring the various departments to observe the time-limits for the submission of their documents to Conference Services.

80. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the estimate of \$2.9 million requested to finance the acquisition of office automation equipment (para. 29.31). On the other hand, in the absence of a satisfactory explanation of the way in which the estimate for the replacement of that type of equipment had been calculated, it recommended a reduction of \$150,500 in the estimate (para. 29.33).

81. The Secretary-General had supplied additional information in document A/C.5/44/24, and the Advisory Committee had formulated new observations and recommendations in document A/44/7/Add.4. In Part A, which concerned the possibility of establishing unified conference services at Vienna, the Advisory Committee stated that it fully shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General on that point. It believed that the United Nations was the organization best suited to assume responsibility for such services and it recommended that the General Assembly should invite the Secretary-General to reopen consultations with all interested parties as soon as possible.

82. In Part B of its report, the Advisory Committee explained the reasons why it was not fully satisfied with the additional information given by the Secretary-General. With regard to the volume of translation done at Vienna from 1986 to 1988, for example, the Secretariat had stated that the statistics given in paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/44/24 were different from those given in the draft programme budget because the latter included information on contractual translation. The Advisory Committee could not see why the contractual translation workload had not been included in the initial statistics. Furthermore, neither the United Nations nor the UNIDO draft programme budget contained any reference to the total operating costs of the joint language and documentation services, and a comparison of the figures given by the two organizations merely indicated a lack of co-ordination (paras. 8 and 9).

83. While maintaining the position stated in paragraph 29.16 of its first report, the Advisory Committee had nevertheless decided not to oppose the reinstatement of the \$1.5 million by which it had initially reduced the estimate under temporary assistance for meetings. It confirmed that the total amount of the estimate (\$3 million) should appear under departmental administration, Headquarters (para. 10). Moreover, in view of the reservations stated in paragraphs 7 and 9 of its report, it recommended that recourse to the reinstated amount (\$1.5 million) should be subject to the Advisory Committee's prior concurrence in the context of the Committee's examination of the first performance report for the biennium 1990-1991, the revised standards for conference-servicing staff, the calendar of meetings, and the clarification which the Advisory Committee awaited concerning the points raised in document A/44/7/Add.4.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.