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held on
Monday, 27 November 1989
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 48th MEETING

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

later: Mr. DANKWA (Ghana)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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 Corr.2 (English only) and A/44/16 and Add.1, A/44/684 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 29. Conference and library services

1. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that he favoured the introduction of an optical disc system, which was bound to make the work of delegations easier. With regard to the establishment of unified conference services at Vienna, he hoped that the departments concerned would be able to overcome their differences as soon as possible. His delegation was concerned to note that the Advisory Committee had found it necessary on several occasions to express its regret over the lack of information and explanations from the Department of Conference Services, particularly concerning post reductions. It appeared that the Department all too often tended to evade the scrutiny of Member States. He was therefore pleased to hear that there were plans to take a fresh look at the Department's productivity and efficiency during the biennium 1990-1991.
2. Mr. TIERLINCK (Belgium) associated himself with the comments made by the delegation of France concerning the restoration of 100 language posts and, like the Advisory Committee, was surprised that no explanation had been provided by the Secretary-General as to the reasons why he could not fully offset the additional costs arising from the restoration of those posts, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/213.
3. His delegation also shared the opinion of the representative of Japan concerning the work-load and meeting statistics. Furthermore, it regretted the absence of co-ordination between the United Nations and UNIDO with regard to reporting the estimated costs of the services that were apportioned between the two organizations. For that reason it supported ACABQ's recommendation that any recourse to the additional \$1.5 million to cover the cost of temporary assistance for meetings should be subject to the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee.
4. He agreed with the representatives of France and the Federal Republic of Germany that the optical disc system should be introduced rapidly. However, he would go along with the Secretary-General's recommendation to proceed with a more measured development of the system in order to resolve the problems inevitably encountered when introducing new systems. He hoped that the Secretary General would be able to submit a progress report to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

5. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) indicated that the Secretariat would shortly provide a written response to all the comments made by delegations. He would, however, like to reply immediately to some of the questions raised.
6. The Secretariat would be submitting a report on work-load statistics and standards to the Advisory Committee within the next few days.
7. Concerning office automation equipment, he pointed out that if the Committee took action on the proposal made by the representative of Venezuela, that matter would be dealt with in the context of consideration of the implementation of resolution 41/213. The fact that the Department of Conference Services did not follow the same procedure regarding office automation equipment as other Secretariat services had given rise to some misunderstandings. The procedures now adopted - and, in particular, the role of the Technological Innovations Board - would be explained in the document which the Secretariat was about to submit to the Committee in response to comments concerning section 29.
8. The representative of the United States had asked whether it might be possible to establish a co-operative agreement between Headquarters and the translation services at Geneva and Vienna whereby the service with the heaviest work-load could, at peak periods, send documents for translation to one of the two other services. Use had indeed been made of such an arrangement, which involved sending, in particular by fax machines, documents which had to be translated rapidly. However, that procedure was not always feasible or desirable. For example, it was preferable that documents to be distributed before a particular meeting should be translated by the translation services located in the same place as the department which had prepared them, so that the translators could consult the department when necessary. The same applied to in-session documents since the translators might need to consult the delegates. Furthermore, it would be noted that periods of work overload in New York generally coincided with similar periods in Geneva and Vienna. The way in which the calendar of conferences was drawn up obviously had extremely complex ramifications and the Secretariat would continue to do its utmost to improve the situation.
9. Replying to a comment made by the representative of the United Kingdom, he pointed out that the amount requested for 1990-1991 under the global provision was not an additional requirement and was intended to give the Secretariat some leeway for the recruitment of temporary assistance in New York, Geneva and Vienna. If the Assembly, following the Advisory Committee's recommendation, decided to reinstate in full the amount of \$1.5 million requested for that purpose, the Advisory Committee would have to monitor the use made of that amount. Specifically, that meant that in the context of the first programme budget performance report for 1990-1991, the Secretariat would account for the use made of the resources allocated for temporary assistance for meetings as a whole and not only for the amount in question. At the same time, the Advisory Committee would be informed of the Secretariat's intentions for 1991. It should be noted, however, that as the

(Mr. Baudot)

Assembly did not adopt the calendar of conferences until the end of the session, the Secretariat would have to prepare its report on the basis of its own estimates.

10. Regarding the optical disc system, the Secretary-General had not requested an appropriation to implement that project because, at the time when the proposed programme budget was being drawn up, he had not been in a position to submit proposals in that regard. In view of the complexity of the questions raised by the project and the need to consult with the various services concerned, the Secretary-General had been able to state his position only after the publication of the report by the Joint Inspection Unit. While JIU and the Secretary-General agreed on the importance of such a system, the Secretary-General felt that it was difficult at the current stage to make detailed estimates of the potential savings. Furthermore, while recognizing that the Geneva pilot project had demonstrated the technical feasibility of using such technology, he proposed to proceed with a more measured development of the system.

11. The Joint Inspection Unit estimated the total cost of implementing the project at some \$2.5 million. The Secretary-General, for his part, believed that very precise estimates should be made of the cost of a measured development of the system. It was likely, however, that the first phase, which would mainly concern Geneva, would involve expenditures in the order of \$1 million for the biennium 1990-1991. The resources which could be made available to implement the project through redeployment within section 29 amounted to some \$200,000. The possibility of a larger transfer of resources still had to be determined in consultation with the services at Geneva. The Secretariat, therefore, was not in a position for the time being to confirm that a measured development of the optical disc system could be financed during the biennium 1990-1991 from the resources requested under section 29. However, some expenses, relating in particular to the communication aspect, could be financed from the resources requested under section 28. The Committee should perhaps give further consideration to the financing of the project in the light of the additional information to be provided by the Secretariat.

12. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) reiterated the importance that the installation of an optical disc system would have for all of the United Nations organs. However, in view of the considerable expenditure it would involve, the system should also service all the regional commissions and other duty stations, whose work was of the utmost importance.

13. The Advisory Committee had pointed out that a number of bodies which had biennialized their sessions were contemplating a reversion to annual sessions. His delegation would appreciate details on the criteria used in deciding the frequency of meetings. Meetings were of paramount importance for Member States, as they afforded them an opportunity to present and harmonize their positions. It would therefore be useful if the Secretariat could provide details on the means available to the Department of Conference Services for dealing with the resurgence of proposals for holding meetings and conferences.

(Mr. Etuket, Uganda)

14. The idea of another review of the efficiency of the Department of Conference Services was not a new one. However, it was necessary to proceed with caution, and to establish clearly the mandate of the review body and the time available to it, as well as the role which Member States would be expected to play. The lessons drawn from the review of another department - whose conclusions had not been really satisfactory - must also be taken into account.

15. He would appreciate details on the criteria on which the decision to deny interpretation services for some meetings was based. All too frequently, the explanations provided to justify the elimination of certain services for particular bodies were not satisfactory. His delegation would formulate concrete proposals on the subject at a later stage.

16. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that under the new budgetary process, departments must not be encouraged to set up what could only be called special contingency funds, merely because those departments had been unable to predict the extent of their needs and programmes. It was disturbing that the Department of Conference Services had been unable to comply with the Advisory Committee's requests for information on work-load statistics. None the less, since the lack of funds could have serious consequences, his delegation agreed with the recommendations of ACABQ to reinstate the \$1.5 million for temporary assistance for meetings - which the Department would be unable to utilize without the express prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee - and to establish a global provision of \$3.2 million under "departmental administration" for each conference centre rather than under "executive direction and management", so that the Department would have to justify any deduction against that account.

17. In principle, his delegation favoured the installation of an optical disc system for the United Nations, but like the Ugandan delegation, it believed that the benefits of such a system should be extended to other administrative units, and not just to those indicated. As the Secretariat had not deemed it desirable to include appropriations for that purpose in the proposed budget for 1990-1991, the possibility had been raised of deploying resources from other budget sections. In his delegation's view, it would be better to wait for the results of informal consultations on the matter before taking a decision.

18. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that he would appreciate precise information on how resources for temporary assistance for meetings would be affected by transferring a session of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space from Geneva to New York and, at the same time, transferring a meeting of the Human Rights Committee from New York to Geneva, on the assumption that the dates and duration of those sessions would be comparable to those of the previous budget exercise.

19. In view of the importance of the section under consideration and the fact that additional information and reports were expected, it might be more sensible to refrain from taking a final decision immediately. Instead, the question of the impact of the report on work-load statistics and standards and the question of

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(Mr. Kiachen, United Kingdom)

meeting services, including of ad hoc meetings normally serviced by permanent staff, could be reconsidered in informal consultations. He pointed out that certain meetings, particularly informal consultations, seemed to have an overabundance of interpretation services.

20. The optical disc system was also a question on which proposals were still expected and on which the Committee could therefore not decide immediately. Given the Organization's continuing financial crisis and the fact that more than half the Member States were late in paying their contributions, great caution must be exercised with respect to expenditures for equipment, in the absence of clear cost/benefit indicators and compelling evidence that savings would be realized rapidly. Lastly, referring to the reinstatement of \$1.5 million for temporary assistance, he said that in that case as well, it would be best to wait for the Secretariat's reply with respect to changing the venue of the two bodies in question.

21. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the representative of the United Kingdom, said that the Committee had decided to consider the question of the venues of the Human Rights Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space during informal consultations on section 23 and section 2A, respectively. As information on the Legal Sub-Committee was not yet available, it would be more appropriate if the information were provided in the context of informal consultations on sections 23 and 2A or, if the Committee so decided, in informal consultations on section 29.

22. Mr. BOUR (France) said that the question of the proposed optical disc system for the United Nations was vital and, as such, could not be decided officially before the question of financing for the project was settled. The question must therefore be considered in informal consultations and be dealt with in the context of the draft resolution which the Committee would adapt at the close of its debate on the budget.

23. The CHAIRMAN reiterated that the Committee had agreed at the start of the first reading that any problems which might arise would be considered in informal consultations, so that the rest of the Committee's work on the budget would not be delayed. He therefore proposed that the Fifth Committee should take note with appreciation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the proposed optical disc system contained in document A/44/684 and of the relevant remarks of the Secretary-General contained in document A/44/684/Add.1 (paras. 11 to 14), on the understanding that informal consultations would be held on the project before the second reading.

24. It was so decided.

25. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should take a decision on document A/C.5/44/24. On the basis of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/44/24) and of the corresponding ACABQ report (A/44/7/Add.4), he proposed that the Fifth Committee should: (i) approve the reinstatement in full of the additional amount

(The Chairman)

of \$1.5 million for temporary assistance for meetings. Recourse during the biennium 1990-1991 to that additional amount by the Department of Conference Services should be subject to the prior concurrence of ACABQ in the context of the Fifth Committee's consideration of the Secretary-General's first performance report for the biennium; (ii) endorse the view of the Secretary-General that a single conference-servicing facility at the Vienna International Centre would represent the ideal solution from the standpoint of cost efficiency and that a unified service operated by the United Nations would be best equipped to promote the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources; (iii) request the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures with a view to expediting consultations with UNIDO and other interested parties and to making practical arrangements for the establishment of a unified conference service at the Vienna International Centre.

26. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), supported by Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), said that he could go along with the decision, on the understanding that the appropriation in question would be taken up in the informal consultations in the light of the additional information to be provided concerning statistics and work-load standards in the Department and the estimated costs of the meetings proposed under other sections of the budget.

27. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation had asked a number of questions in informal meetings which the Secretariat had still not answered. He therefore proposed that the three elements of the decision proposed by the Chairman should be taken up in the informal consultations.

28. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as it was only the first reading, the Committee should take a decision subject to the comments made by the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan.

29. It was so decided.

30. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should take a decision on the estimates under the whole of section 29.

31. An appropriation in the amount of \$358,875,800 under section 29 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 was approved in first reading, subject to the decisions which the Committee had just taken and to the ACABQ recommendations.

Section 3. Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization

32. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that during the Committee's consideration of section 3 officials of the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship had behaved in an unacceptable manner by putting pressure on certain delegations to persuade them to oppose the proposal by Algeria and some African and other countries to transfer a number of posts to the Centre against Apartheid. Those officials had even gone so far as to spread

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(Mr. Ladjouzi, Algeria)

rumours that Algeria was motivated by the desire to have one of the posts, at D-2 level, occupied by an Algerian staff member. The Algerian delegation wished to reaffirm that it had no other goal than to strengthen the struggle against apartheid and that it was not motivated by shabby considerations. Article 100 of the Charter dealt with the independence of staff members with respect to pressures from Member States, but Member States must not be subject to pressures from staff members. His delegation wished to draw the Secretary-General's attention to the need for staff members to respect both their obligations and the decisions of Member States, for otherwise they would be liable to sanctions.

33. Since the purpose of the first reading of the budget was in fact to identify the problems to be considered in the informal consultations before the second reading, his delegation was ready to accept the appropriation under section 3 in first reading, on the understanding that it reserved its final position on the appropriation until the second reading and that the decision taken in first reading would be accompanied by an express decision to consider the following five points in the informal consultations: the lack of priorities between programme elements, which meant that section 3 was not in conformity with the rules governing programme planning and the budget; the strengthening of the Department's activities in the struggle against apartheid; management problems; the question of posts; and the question of the transfer of the D-2 post to the Centre against Apartheid.

34. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that it was impossible to take a decision on the appropriation requested under section 3C without taking into account the letter of the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council in document A/44/280-S/20635. That matter must also be taken up in the informal consultations in the light of the latest developments in Namibia.

35. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation was disappointed by the lack of clearly defined priorities in the section and by the volume of resources allocated to it. It hoped that the questions of priorities and post transfers under the section could be resolved in the informal consultations.

36. Mr. AMAN (Bangladesh) said that, with regard to the proposed reclassification of a post from D-2 to D-1, he would like the Secretariat to provide further information about the products envisaged under the corresponding programme before the Committee took a final decision.

37. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Algeria concerning the five points to be considered in the informal consultations. However, she hoped that the question of the products to be envisaged under the heading of assistance to independent Namibia would also be taken up, for it was a very important matter which ought to have been taken into account in section 3C. Furthermore, her delegation had reservations concerning the appropriation for the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea.

38. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that at the present stage the Committee was not taking any final decisions on the sections of the proposed programme budget but only on the appropriations, taking due account of all the comments and reservations made by delegations. He gave an assurance that all the matters raised with respect to the section, including those raised by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Algeria, would be taken up in the informal consultations.

39. On that understanding, he proposed that the Fifth Committee, on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, should approve in first reading an appropriation of \$35,448,000 under section 3 for the biennium 1990-1991.

40. It was so decided.

41. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had stated on many occasions its opposition to the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea. That Committee's activities served no purpose and did not facilitate progress towards a settlement of the question of Kampuchea, especially since another mechanism - the Paris Conference - had been established for that purpose. His delegation had not requested that the relevant part of section 3 should be put to a vote but it wished to state that, if a vote had been taken, it would have voted against the appropriation requested for the Ad Hoc Committee.

42. Mr. Vu VAN MIEN (Viet Nam) said that, although his delegation had joined in the consensus on section 3, it must once again enter a vigorous objection against the appropriation for the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea. If the appropriation had been put to a vote, his delegation would have voted against it.

43. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation had approved the appropriations requested under section 3 in first reading on the understanding that the six issues raised by delegations would be considered during informal consultations and that the reservations expressed by his delegation would be withdrawn only if the management problems relating to that section were resolved in the course of the consultations.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its first reading of all sections of the proposed programme budget.

45. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany) asked whether the Secretariat could draw up a list of all the points concerning the proposed programme budget which were to be considered in informal consultations.

46. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the list would be made available to members of the Committee within 24 hours.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.6 and Corr.1 concerning agenda item 78 (A/C.5/44/23).

47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.6 and Corr.1, no additional appropriations would be required under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

48. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.6 and Corr.1, no additional appropriations would be required under sections 1, 2A, 26 or 27 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

49. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.6/44/L.5 concerning agenda item 143 (A/C.5/44/26)

50. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that under the terms of draft resolution A/C.6/44/L.5, the General Assembly would decide that an international conference of plenipotentiaries would be convened at Vienna from 8 to 26 April 1991 to consider the draft Convention on the Liability of Operators of Transport Terminals in International Trade and would request the Secretary-General to invite representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity to participate in the conference in the capacity of observers. The conference-servicing requirements were estimated at \$1,635,200. As stated in paragraph 6 of the statement (A/C.5/44/26), no additional appropriations would be required under section 29 of the proposed budget programme. On the other hand, additional resources would have to be provided to cover travel and subsistence of the Legal Counsel (\$3,100) and of representatives (\$17,100). Those costs, totalling \$20,200, would be dealt with in accordance with the procedures governing use of the contingency fund. However, as was indicated in paragraph 10 of the statement, in the event that the additional resources required could not be financed from the contingency fund, it would be the intention of the Secretary-General to reduce the attendance of staff at sessions of working and study groups and to redeploy the resources thus made available to meet those additional costs.

51. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.6/44/L.5, additional expenditure of \$20,200 would arise which would be dealt with in accordance with the procedures governing use of the contingency fund; that amount would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of all programme budget implications which would be submitted to the Assembly towards the end of the session.

52. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.6/44/L.5, an additional resource requirement would arise in the amount of \$20,200 in order to cover the travel and subsistence costs of the Legal Counsel and of representatives; this requirement would constitute an additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991 and would therefore be subject to the guidelines for the contingency fund approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/211. In the event that the additional resources required could not be financed from the contingency fund, the Secretary-General would reduce the attendance of staff at sessions of working and study groups from a total of 12 to 8 weeks and redeploy the resources thus made available to meet the travel and subsistence requirements that would arise from the adoption of the draft resolution.

53. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 64 and A/C.1/44/L.53/Rev.3 concerning agenda item 59 (A/C.5/44/36 and 37)

54. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the two statements related to draft resolutions which had been adopted by the First Committee and concerned disarmament issues. The statement of financial implications in document A/C.5/44/36 concerned draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1 on United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. Such centres had been established in three regions (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia) by virtue of General Assembly resolutions 40/151 G, 41/60 J and 42/39 D, respectively. The Secretary-General understood that the implementation of paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1 would entail the establishment under the regular budget of a post of Director (at the P-5 level) at each of the three regional centres. For reasons set out in paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/44/36, the Secretary-General proposed that the establishment of those three posts should be phased sequentially over the period 1990-1992. On that basis, he considered that the establishment of a post of Director at the Regional Centre in Africa and at the Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean, in 1990 and 1991, respectively, would entail additional expenditures amounting to \$242,600 for salaries and common staff costs. That amount would arise under section 2B of the proposed budget programme. Furthermore, additional requirements of \$82,400 would arise under section 31, offset by an identical amount under income section 1. The cost of establishing a post of Director at the Regional Centre in Asia in 1992 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

55. The statement in document A/C.5/44/37 concerned draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.53/Rev.3 dealing with the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. The Secretary-General understood that the activities envisaged in the draft resolution would make it necessary to engage three qualified

(Mr. Mselle)

consultant experts, together with the necessary support services. In paragraph 10 of the statement, the Secretary-General indicated that the fees and travel of the three experts, together with the travel and daily subsistence allowance for two staff members from the Department for Disarmament Affairs, would total \$57,800.

56. In paragraphs 12 and 13 of document A/C.5/44/36 and 13 and 14 of document A/C.5/44/37, the Secretary-General indicated that the additional costs which would arise under section 2B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 (namely, the amount of \$242,600 for the establishment of two P-5 posts and the amount of \$57,800 for consultancy fees and common staff costs) represented additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Those expenditures came under the procedures governing use of the contingency fund. In paragraphs 14 of document A/C.5/44/36 and 15 of document A/C.5/44/37, the Secretary-General indicated that he was not in a position to propose the termination, deferral, curtailment or modification of any activity in the proposed programme in order to finance those additional costs. Therefore, should it not be possible to meet the full amount of additional expenditures under section 2B (\$300,400) from the contingency fund, the establishment of the posts and the activities envisaged in the two draft resolutions might have to be postponed.

57. That being the case, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolutions A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1 and L.53/Rev.3, additional requirements totalling \$300,400 would arise under section 2B of the proposed programme budget; furthermore, additional requirements of \$82,400 would arise under section 31, offset by an identical amount under income section 1. Those additional expenditures would be dealt with in accordance with the procedures governing use of the contingency fund and would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of all the programme budget implications which would be submitted to the Assembly towards the end of the session.

58. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) recalled that his delegation had expressed reservations concerning the substance of draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.53/Rev.3, which had given rise to the statement of implications contained in document A/C.5/44/37. It would not oppose a consensus decision, but its position remained unchanged and it reserved the right to revert to that question during consideration of the consolidated statement.

59. The statement of implications contained in document A/C.5/44/36 raised a serious problem of principle. If Member States sincerely wished to reform the Organization and ensure its financial stability, the establishment of three posts under the regular budget was inopportune at a time when the target of achieving a 15 per cent reduction in the number of staff was far from being fulfilled. While his country favoured the effective functioning of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, the resources required to finance the three posts should have been drawn from other sources: the First Committee could, for example, have considered the possibility of redeployment, particularly since the activities of the centres were supposed to be covered by existing resources and

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(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

voluntary contributions. His delegation would not oppose the adoption of a consensus decision, but reserved the right to revert to the question during consideration of agenda item 38.

60. Mr. Dankwa (Ghana) took the Chair.

61. Mr. TALAVERA (Peru) said that, in the course of negotiations on the draft resolution concerning the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, all delegations had recognized the need to strengthen the centres. Some had said they would accept the draft resolution if the text was made more flexible, and it had therefore been amended to allow the Secretary-General greater freedom of action in appointing the Directors at the centres sequentially.

62. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, essentially because of its programme budget implications. The regional centres should in fact be funded by voluntary contributions, the low level of which gave rise to an impression that Member States did not consider the functioning of the centres to be a high priority. His country's position concerning the draft resolution remained unchanged, but it would not oppose the adoption of a decision on its programme budget implications.

63. With regard to the programme budget implications of the draft resolution concerning the denuclearization of Africa, his country had reservations with respect to the proposed activities and had therefore voted against that draft resolution. It would not oppose the adoption of a decision on its programme budget implications but would vote against the draft resolution when it was put to the vote at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

64. Mr. BISTA (Nepal) believed that the administration of the regional centres should be strengthened in order that they might function effectively and attract voluntary contributions from Member States and non-governmental sources. Aware of the Organization's financial difficulties, the sponsors of the draft resolution were requesting the Secretary-General to adopt the measures which he considered to be most appropriate in light of the circumstances. Given the importance of the centres, it was to be hoped that the Fifth Committee would support the establishment of the post of Director at each of the three centres.

65. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation fully supported draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1, because it was consistent with the objective of improving the functioning of the Organization and did not run counter to recommendation 15 of the Group of 18, which was supposed to be applied in a flexible manner.

66. Mr. GUPTA (India) shared the views expressed by the delegations of Uganda, Nepal and Peru. He did not see how the Secretary-General could be barred from appointing new officials to carry out new activities.

67. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1, additional requirements in an estimated amount of \$242,600 would arise under section 2B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991; furthermore, additional requirements of \$82,400 would arise under section 31 (Staff assessment), offset by an identical amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). Those requirements would constitute an additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget and would therefore be subject to the guidelines for the contingency fund approved by the General Assembly in resolution 42/211 of 21 December 1987.

68. The Secretary-General was not in a position to propose the termination, deferral, curtailment or modification of any activity in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 in order to cover the costs relating to the establishment of the post of Director at the two regional centres concerned in the event that the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.63/Rev.1. In the event that the additional resources required could not be financed from the contingency fund, the establishment of the posts might have to be postponed, as provided for in the guidelines for the use of the contingency fund adopted by the Assembly in resolution 42/211.

69. It was so decided.

70. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that Venezuela had supported the draft resolution and agreed that the centres must be strengthened. His delegation had joined in the consensus in the Fifth Committee but considered it a matter of concern that the contingency fund was to be used, since an attempt could have been made to find a different solution.

71. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A.C.1/44/L.53/Rev.3, additional requirements in an estimated amount of \$57,800 would arise under section 2B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. Those requirements would constitute an additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget and would therefore be subject to the guidelines for the contingency fund approved by the General Assembly in resolution 42/211.

72. The Secretary-General was not in a position to propose the termination, deferral, curtailment or modification of any activity in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 in order to cover the costs relating to the activities enumerated in section C of document A/C.5/44/37 in the event that the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution. In the event that the additional resources required could not be financed from the contingency fund, the activities in question might have to be postponed, as provided for in the guidelines for the use of the contingency fund adopted by the Assembly in resolution 42/211.

73. It was so decided.

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).

74. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the expansion of peace-keeping operations over the past two years had led to an increase in the overall cost of the operations, which was now around \$760 million per year, or about the same as the net annual regular budget of the Organization. That made it even more important that a sound financial basis should be guaranteed for United Nations peace-keeping activities, and that the operations should be carried out in the most effective manner. For the Nordic delegations, the most important question relating to United Nations peace-keeping activities was therefore the financial basis for the operations in question. In that connection, they noted with concern the slow collection of contributions and the fact that unpaid contributions for ongoing operations currently amounted to \$570 million. That put an additional heavy and unreasonable burden on the troop-contributing countries. The Nordic countries contributed almost 30 per cent of the total number of peace-keeping troops, and were involved in all the ongoing operations. The Nordic delegations were pleased to note that a growing number of Member States had indicated that they were willing to participate in the operations.

75. The Nordic countries agreed that the levels of commitment authority provided to the Secretary-General and to the Advisory Committee in respect of unforeseen and extraordinary expenses must be raised. Furthermore, in order to meet pre-implementation and other immediate costs, the Secretary-General had suggested that the Working Capital Fund should be expanded by an amount of \$100 million so that the cost of the start-up phase of peace-keeping activities could be met. The Nordic delegations were of the view that peace-keeping arrears should not be used for expanding the Fund; instead, an additional assessment of Member States should be considered. Another possibility would be for the Secretary-General to consider earmarking a portion of the Fund for peace-keeping operations. Moreover, in order to solve start-up problems, the Secretary-General suggested that a reserve stock of equipment and supply items should be established. While the Nordic delegations agreed that there might be a need for such a stock, they endorsed the Advisory Committee's view that the Secretary-General should develop the idea further for future consideration. The proposal in question was also linked to the Secretary-General's proposal (A/44/605, para. 43 (c)) on the inventory of resources that could be developed and maintained by Member States where matériel and other supplies and services were concerned. With regard to voluntary contributions in kind, they should not replace assessed contributions from Member States but should, rather, be deducted from the total amount to be paid by Member States, taking account of the status of the collection of assessed contributions and the legal obligations connected with peace-keeping operations. In general, the Nordic delegations agreed with the conclusions reached by the Secretary General and the Advisory Committee concerning the economies of scale that could be achieved.

76. Like some other delegations, the Nordic delegations were disappointed at the Secretary-General's conclusion that he should not recommend a revision of the current rates of reimbursement to Member States contributing troops. As proposed

(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

by Austria, the Fifth Committee should take a decision to consider the rates of reimbursement further at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of additional information.

77. The issue of civilian personnel provided by Governments must be approached with caution, and duplication of functions must be avoided. Lastly, on the issue of the composition of the groups of Member States for the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations, the Nordic delegations saw no need for any major review, although they did support the change in status requested by three Member States.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.