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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

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

later: Mr. DANKWA (Ghana)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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 (continued) (A/44/711 and Add.1)

1. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it was essential to rationalize work system-wide by, inter alia, eliminating the duplication of tasks and concentrating efforts on top-priority areas. Better co-ordination at the intergovernmental level was also important. One pre-condition for attaining those objectives was improving the management of international organizations by enhancing the effectiveness of the Advisory Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and strengthening the role of the Secretary-General. Practical measures must be adopted in order to implement the important recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC): that was a task incumbent on Member States.

2. As for the rationalization of the activities of international organizations, administrative and budgetary co-ordination was essential to the effectiveness of activities within the system. At a time when most organizations in the system were confronted by serious financial problems, better use must be made of material and human resources and it was up to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) to assume a predominant role in that regard. The Advisory Committee had not yet made use of its full potential in that area, and that was apparent in the report of the Committee itself (A/44/711 and Add.1). Unfortunately, the report of ACABQ contained neither conclusions nor recommendations designed to ensure an economical use of resources system wide.

3. In his delegation's view, the first step to be taken in strengthening the effectiveness of administrative and budgetary co-ordination was the re-activation of the role of ACABQ in that regard. First and foremost, the Advisory Committee must formulate specific recommendations for the full implementation of Article 17 of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provided for more active participation by the General Assembly in the formulation of policy and the administrative and financial practices of the specialized agencies. Despite repeated requests by the Fifth Committee for periodic in-depth reviews of each agency, no progress had been achieved in that respect.

4. In accordance with the recommendations of CPC, practical measures would be adopted with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC (A/44/16, para. 364). At those meetings, the question of co-ordinating the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in various areas would be considered. In that connection, it was essential for the Advisory Committee to conduct an in-depth analysis of administrative and budgetary questions in all organizations of the system in various specific areas, including the question of the mobilization of available human and material resources. The analysis could be supplemented by conclusions and recommendations which should be implemented by the

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organizations of the system. That would be a practical contribution to strengthening the rationalization of inter-agency co-ordination.

5. Mr. HILL (United States of America) said that his delegation shared the views of ACABQ contained in document 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. The difficulties between WFP and FAO were unfortunate and the United Nations was to be commended on the measures it had adopted in order to resolve the controversy within the system. The recommendation contained in paragraph 38 of the report in question was particularly appropriate. For its part, his country would continue to work with other countries which participated actively in the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) in order to find a solution to the problems affecting the relationships between the two agencies. His delegation was also prepared to join in the consensus to draw the report of ACABQ (A/44/711/Add.1) to the attention of CFA and to the relevant governing bodies of FAO.

6. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) expressed agreement with the general recommendation of ACABQ concerning the working relationship between WFP and FAO. In informal consultations held on the matter, it should be borne in mind that the texts governing the working relationship between WFP and FAO set up specific procedures, and compliance with those procedures was all that was expected.

AGENDA ITEM 130: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/44/604; A/C.5/44/2, 9, 11, 17, 21 and 25)

7. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia), speaking also on behalf of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, said that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces demonstrated that the work of the United Nations in that area was highly appreciated throughout the world. Many staff members of the United Nations Secretariat were involved in peace-keeping activities in various regions of the world, often in a politically complicated environment and sometimes risking their very lives. On behalf of the countries he had mentioned, he wished to express profound gratitude to those staff members.

8. Since the establishment of the United Nations, various resolutions had been adopted and a number of measures had been taken in order to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity of the staff and achieve the widest possible geographical representation (Article 101 of the Charter). However, the current situation with regard to geographical representation was far from satisfactory and for several years, the socialist countries had expressed their concern in that connection to high-level officials of the Secretariat. It was encouraging to note that in the past two years, some progress had been achieved in terms of the number of nationals of socialist countries represented in the executive branch of the Organization. However, in qualitative terms, the situation had grown worse. The average level of nationals of socialist countries employed in

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(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

the Secretariat of the United Nations was approximately P-3. The countries which were in the worst situation, in both quantitative and qualitative terms were the German Democratic Republic and Romania. The geographical representation of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania was unsatisfactory. New and more radical measures must be adopted in order to redress the situation. The socialist countries were prepared to co-operate with the United Nations Secretariat in order to implement fully the principle of equitable geographical distribution of Secretariat posts, taking into account the interests of all Member States.

9. In General Assembly resolution 43/210, Member States had supported the recommendation by the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations to the effect that the number of posts in the Professional category should be reduced by 15 per cent and the number of posts in the higher echelons should be reduced by 25 per cent. That meant that by the end of 1989, the number of posts in the Secretariat should have been reduced by 1,381, and the total number of staff members in the Secretariat should not exceed 9,704. He asked the Secretariat to report on the steps being taken in order to attain that goal. It would seem that, in implementing the recommendation, the posts at the higher level had not been eliminated in greater proportions than those at the intermediate and lower levels, as should have been the case. In any event, the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be strictly applied to posts at the higher level.

10. The policy of the Secretariat of reorganizing the personnel structure mainly through the natural outflow of staff members on fixed-term contracts and the redistribution of the resulting vacancies among staff members on permanent contracts had been detrimental to staff members on fixed-term contracts. The freeze, the post redistribution programme and the internal promotion system for staff members on permanent contracts had left the socialist countries in a situation of virtual discrimination. Those countries had already expressed to the Secretary-General their grave concern over the matter and over the need to comply with resolution 35/210 and had requested him to take practical measures with a view to improving the geographical representation of the socialist countries.

11. With regard to the increase in the number of staff members on permanent contracts, he said that while it was certainly advisable that the Secretariat should have skilled staff members on permanent contracts and that permanent contracts should be offered when the requirements of the post made that necessary, a reasonable relationship between permanent and fixed-term contracts would be a 50-50 ratio. Currently, the ratio was 72 to 28 in favour of permanent contracts. An excessive number of staff members on permanent contracts represented an obstacle in the way of enhancing the efficiency of the whole Organization. The socialist countries could not therefore agree to the attempts by the Office of Human Resources Management to compel young candidates who had passed their national competitive examinations to sign permanent contracts without any other options. Nor could they agree to the renewal of fixed-term contracts for staff members who no longer had the official recommendation of their Governments.

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12. Another problem which increasingly affected staff members from the socialist countries was their uneven distribution among various Secretariat units. It was therefore to be hoped that United Nations personnel policy would become more consistent so that all the regional groups would be represented more evenly in the major units of the Secretariat.

13. He expressed interest in seeing a national from one of the socialist countries promoted to the post of executive head of one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The socialist countries had also proposed that such posts should be filled by rotation. Such suggestions were quite reasonable but unfortunately had not been implemented. He hoped that in the future they would meet with the support they deserved.

14. Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said she wished to concentrate on the issue of the status of women in the Secretariat, which was of paramount concern to all three countries. The eligibility of qualified men and women to be employed in the service of the United Nations under conditions of equality was embodied in Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter, to which Member States had committed themselves and which they had reaffirmed in the context of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The slow progress in translating that principle of equal opportunity and treatment into reality for the female employees of the Secretariat had been of long-standing concern to the delegations which she represented.

15. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/C.5/44/17) was hardly encouraging. Within a few weeks of 1992, the year in which, according to General Assembly resolution 40/258 B, women were to occupy 30 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution, progress was disturbingly slow. Between 30 June 1985 and 30 June 1989, the number of women occupying posts subject to geographical distribution had increased by only 3.8 per cent, or barely half what was needed to reach the goal. It was even more disappointing that the annual rate of increase in the number of women in geographical posts was slowing; during the past year the proportion had grown by a mere 0.6 per cent. That figure looked even more meagre when it was remembered that the number of posts subject to geographical distribution represented less than one fifth of all posts in the United Nations Secretariat. Furthermore, the rate of recruitment of women had fallen; out of the 134 new appointments, only 36 were women and none of them had been appointed to posts above the P-4 level. That situation, coupled with a fall in the total number of promotions because of budgetary constraints and retrenchments, had done nothing to redress the persistent imbalance in the representation of women, especially in senior and decision-making posts.

16. Over the past few years, successive resolutions of the General Assembly, as well as recommendation 46 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts, had called for additional efforts to increase the proportion of women in senior and decision-making positions. Unfortunately such efforts appeared to have been ineffective. Moreover, the situation had deteriorated, since the proportion of

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(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

women in posts at the D-1 level and above had dropped from 7.13 per cent in 1985 to 6.65 per cent at present, with most of the drop occurring in the past year. The position with respect to representation at the level of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General was even more discouraging since the proportion of women in those ranks had fallen from 7.3 per cent in 1985 to 4.9 per cent in 1989. There had certainly been an increase in the number and proportion of women at the D-2 level, particularly during the past year, but that had not been enough to offset the downward trend in the number of women in policy-making positions. It would be helpful if, in future, the comparative data for men were included alongside the statistics for women in table 1 of document A/C.5/44/17.

17. While it was possible that the steps which the Secretariat was taking through the vacancy management system and through means other than regular recruitment and competitive examinations might go some way towards increasing the number of women in posts at the lower levels, it was clear that additional concerted measures would be needed to raise the number of women in the upper echelons.

18. It was also of concern that women from the Eastern European, African and Middle Eastern regions continued to be seriously under-represented in the United Nations. All Member States could reinforce the efforts of the Secretary-General in that direction, by nominating more qualified women candidates to the principal and subsidiary organs and encouraging women to apply for vacant posts.

19. The delegations which she represented could not share the optimism of the Office of Human Resources Management that the target of 30 per cent mandated by resolution 40/258 B would be reached by 1990. If the target was to be realized, even by the end of 1990, it would take vigorous pursuit of all the measures adopted to date as well as additional initiatives. She supported the proposals of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/44/17, sect. D) on ways and means to meet the target but questioned whether they went far enough. It was also surprising that there was no detailed work plan in the documentation showing how the target of 30 per cent and other objectives relating to the status of women in the Secretariat were to be achieved within a realistic time frame. She would appreciate an indication that there was a work plan in place and, if so, a summary of its main features.

20. Some gains had been recorded as a result of the two-phase action programme adopted in 1985. For example, during the past 12 months, bench-mark job descriptions had been established for the secretarial occupation and handbooks were to be issued on career paths, while increased numbers of women were entering the Secretariat after achieving success in national and internal competitive examinations. She was also heartened at the large numbers of women recruited recently for peace-keeping missions in Namibia and Nicaragua and trusted that the decision-making experience acquired by some of them during those assignments would lead to increased long-term responsibilities and career enhancement.

21. On balance, however, the implementation of the action programme had been uneven. Important elements still remained to be finished or scheduled, including the development of a computerized data base of occupational skills, the

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introduction of focal points away from Headquarters, the introduction of greater management accountability and the setting of concrete goals, including numerical targets, for each department. Such targets were not synonymous with fixed quotas but would serve as measures of the Organization's activity in advancing the status of women and recruiting suitable female candidates on merit.

22. The Secretary-General had acknowledged the need for continued impetus to improve the status of women and had appointed two women - one to serve as a focal point at the D-1 level and one to a D-2 post in his Executive Office - to monitor the situation and keep him informed. However, their respective roles had not been spelled out in sufficient detail. She would appreciate it if the Secretariat could provide the Committee with more specific information about the terms of reference of the two appointees and the interrelationship between them. She would also like further clarification of the focal point's role in ensuring follow-up to the recommendations of the Steering Committee and the nature of the support available to her for the fulfilment of her responsibilities.

23. The delegations on behalf of which she was speaking attached importance to the role of the Steering Committee and would like the Secretariat to provide more detailed information on the initiatives which it had under consideration and on the mechanisms in place to ensure adequate follow-up of those of its earlier recommendations which remained unimplemented. However, the ultimate responsibility for carrying out the mandates given by Member States, and for following up the recommendations approved by the Steering Committee, lay with the Secretary-General and the Office for Human Resources Management.

24. The Secretary-General's expectation that, once the obstacles to the full integration of women into the substantive work of the Organization had been identified and a framework put in place to ensure career advancement, the existing mechanisms and structures within the Secretariat would be sufficient to maintain continued progress towards full equality was far from being fulfilled. New efforts were needed to consolidate and complete the unfinished action programme and to develop new strategies leading to the full equality envisaged under the Charter.

25. A full and renewed commitment was required to break down the remaining structural and attitudinal barriers hampering the recruitment, retention and advancement of qualified women in the Secretariat. That process should begin at the top, but none of the three relevant statements by the Secretary-General - his report on the work of the Organization (A/44/1), and his two statements to the Fifth Committee, in October and November respectively - contained any mention of the objective of expanding the role of women in the Organization. She urged the Secretary-General to strive to secure the necessary changes through a reinvigorated action programme and requested him to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on progress in achieving the objectives of resolution 40/258 B and to provide relevant information on the matter to the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women for its comments.

26. Mr. KOUBAA (Tunisia) said that the staff of the Organization deserved full support and co-operation for the efforts, and, at times, sacrifices they were required to make in carrying out their duties. That approach, adopted by most countries at the national level, was based on the general rule that every civil servant, whether national or international, represented the institution for which he worked. As such, he should enjoy the benefits to which he was entitled in order properly to carry out his assignments. At the same time, the conduct of civil servants must be such as to strengthen the prestige, credibility and image of the institution to which they belonged. Loyalty, hard work and seriousness were also required from staff; only then could they claim better pay and improved conditions of service.

27. His country's commitment to the obligations inherent in its status as a member of the Organization did not prevent it from supporting the proposal of the International Civil Service Commission for a 5 per cent increase in base salary. He believed that such a pay increase, together with improved conditions of service for staff in the field, would enable the staff to perform their duties and encourage them to improve their work.

28. The promotion of staff was not a simple matter and should be carried out in strict compliance with the agreed procedures, including in particular those set out in General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII), which provided that promotion should be conditional upon adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second language. The purpose of that requirement was to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness on the part of staff, and greater responsiveness to the diverse nature of the membership and its linguistic needs. The fulfilment of the conditions laid down in that resolution was closely linked to the success of the language training programmes conducted by the Organization for the benefit of the staff.

29. As he had already noted in his statement on agenda item 38, the purpose of the reforms was to make the United Nations function more effectively and not simply to bring about savings or to reduce staff. Indeed, he regarded as counter-productive staff reductions that were carried out without first studying the capacity, or lack thereof, of the remaining staff to carry out the Secretariat's programmes. The question that arose in that context was whether temporary staff hastily recruited to occupy certain posts on an interim basis were capable of fulfilling the obligations inherent in their functions. Without wishing to question the rule adopted in the matter, he believed that the recruitment of temporary staff could affect the quality of the services expected. At all events, recourse to such personnel should be limited to what was strictly necessary and care should be taken to see that personnel recruited on a temporary basis were productive and competent.

30. For example, his delegation would like to obtain, if possible, further information on the position in regard to certain posts currently occupied by temporary staff while permanent staff were on mission away from Headquarters, particularly in connection with peace-keeping operations. He would also like to know whether the Secretariat had envisaged or studied the possibility of recruiting temporary staff for such occasional assignments and keeping the regular staff in their respective posts at Headquarters.

31. Mr. VILLADSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark), recalled that the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had referred to the need for stock-taking and consolidation after the turbulent years. Although, in his opinion, only the three-year reform period and not the reform process itself was coming to an end, he agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General's view in that he believed that the General Assembly should concentrate its efforts in the current year on only the most acute and important personnel questions. Accordingly, his statement would concentrate on the issues of the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the administration of justice and respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials.

32. In document A/44/604 the Secretary-General had provided information on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 43/224. The Nordic countries noted with special appreciation that their request for statistics going back five years had been complied with.

33. The improvement in the status of women in the Secretariat was of the greatest importance and the Nordic countries fully shared the views expressed in that regard by the representative of New Zealand. The United Nations was committed to the full integration of women into the political, economic and social life of various countries; that commitment must be reflected in the work of the international organizations which dealt with such matters on a global basis. Moreover, Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations clearly stated that the United Nations should place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate under conditions of equality in its principal organs, one of which was the Secretariat. Furthermore, the General Assembly had year after year reaffirmed its determination to increase the number of women in the Secretariat, and had set a goal of 30 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution to be filled by women by 1990.

34. Even if the words "by 1990" could be interpreted as meaning the end of that year, he had to conclude, with regret, that if the rate of recruitment of women did not increase dramatically in the coming months, there was no hope at all of attaining the target. The Office of Human Resources Management itself had determined that, in order to reach the goal, 150 women would have to be recruited in 1989 and 1990. Based on the experience of previous years, that seemed improbable. What was more, the relevant documentation (A/C.5/44/17 and A/44/604, sect. II E) showed that in 1989 the proportion of women had increased by only about 0.6 per cent, that the number of women at the D-1 level and above had decreased, and that the number of women at policy-making and senior management levels was pitifully low.

35. The measures that had been taken and were planned for the future should be closely monitored and vigorously pursued in the context of the 1985 Action Programme. However, as that programme would expire at the end of 1989, it was high time to start preparing a detailed plan for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat in the next five years. He noted with satisfaction that a woman had been appointed at the D-1 level to serve as the focal point for questions

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(Mr. Villadsen, Denmark)

relating to women in the Secretariat and to act as Secretary of the Steering Committee. He hoped that she would be able to carry out her difficult task under the guidance and with the full support of the Steering Committee.

36. Although the Nordic countries recognized the efforts made by the Secretary-General and by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management to carry out the mandate of the General Assembly and although they recognized the responsibility of Member States in that area, they were disappointed at the results achieved and urged that even stronger emphasis be placed on that issue during the coming year, so that substantial progress could be demonstrated at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

37. Already the previous year a number of important measures had been implemented to remedy various deficiencies in the system for the administration of justice in the Secretariat, and the Secretary-General had been requested to present by the end of 1989 a fully revised system, as proposed by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. The Nordic countries noted with satisfaction that progress had been made in the area of appeals and that a fully revised set of disciplinary rules would be promulgated as of 1 January 1990. They looked forward to receiving a report at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly on how the new system worked, on the number of cases considered by the Joint Disciplinary Committee and, if the staff associations had no objection, on the disciplinary measures taken. When the new internal redress system had been in operation for some time, for example two years, a general evaluation of its effectiveness and fairness should also be presented to the General Assembly.

38. A study of the report of the Secretary-General on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations (A/C.5/44/11) led to the regrettable conclusion that a number of Member States continued to violate their obligations under the Charter and the relevant international legal instruments. The atrocious murder of Colonel Higgins had shocked the civilized world. The Nordic countries paid tribute to that brave and dedicated official, who had fallen victim to a barbarous criminal act while serving with UNIFIL.

39. It was cause for alarm and deep concern that the number of UNRWA staff arrested and detained in the Middle East remained as high as the previous year. The Secretary-General was to be commended on his untiring efforts, which had led to the resolution of a majority of the cases and to the release of many staff members. Despite those efforts and despite the repeated appeals of the General Assembly for respect for the privileges and immunities of the United Nations staff, a large number of cases remained pending. The fact that in no case had UNRWA received adequate and timely information on the reasons for the arrest and detention of the staff members concerned gave rise to grave concern, as did the negative developments in certain old cases and the new cases which had arisen in other regions. The Nordic countries appealed most strongly to the countries concerned to live up to their international obligations.

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(Mr. Villadsen, Denmark)

40. The Nordic countries noted with satisfaction that the case of Mr. Dumitru Mazilu had been submitted to the International Court of Justice and looked forward with interest to receiving its advisory opinion.
41. In resolution 43/225, the General Assembly had recalled the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, which had been adopted without a vote in General Assembly resolution 43/173. Those minimum standards were applicable also in cases where United Nations officials were held under arrest and detention, and he would like that to be reaffirmed in the resolution to be adopted during the current session on that question.
42. Mr. OGURA (Japan) said he was sorry to have to point out once again that there had been no change in the situation with respect to geographical distribution. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/44/604), approximately 25 per cent of Member States were either unrepresented or under-represented. Japan was under-represented, with approximately 60 staff members below the lower limit of its desirable range and about 90 below the midpoint. To improve that situation, his delegation suggested that the recruitment of nationals from over-represented countries should be suspended until they were brought back within their desirable ranges; that a medium-term plan should be established to ensure that all Member States achieved their desirable ranges; that information on the number and nationality of staff members selected for promotion to the Professional category through internal examinations and of staff members promoted through other processes such as reclassification should be submitted to the General Assembly; that nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries should be permitted to apply for posts described in internal vacancy announcements; and that competitive examinations should be held for unrepresented and under-represented countries for posts at the P-1, P-2 and P-3 levels in accordance with recommendation 43 of the Group of 18. In that connection, his delegation would appreciate it if the Secretariat would provide additional information on the development of a methodology for holding examinations for entry to the P-3 level and on their introduction on an experimental basis during the biennium 1990-1991.
43. His delegation would be interested in learning from the Secretary-General about the new performance evaluation system which was expected to be introduced during 1990, in response to recommendation 50 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. He emphasized the importance of training the staff, particularly at the junior level. Performance evaluation should also be used as an instrument to determine the areas where training was necessary. His delegation welcomed the statement that increasing importance was being given to staff training.
44. Still on the subject of training, and considering the number of people who had died in traffic accidents in Namibia, his delegation wondered whether sufficient orientation or briefing had been given to staff sent there, and asked for the views of the competent authorities on that subject.

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(Mr. Ogura, Japan)

45. The number of women employed in the Secretariat had increased slightly, and the proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution stood at 26.9 per cent. In order to reach 30 per cent by 1990, without prejudice to the principle of equitable distribution of posts, the Secretariat would have to recruit about 150 women between early 1989 and the end of 1990, as the Office of Human Resources Management proposed to do by means of national competitive examinations, internal examinations and a variety of direct recruitment mechanisms. Except for contract extensions beyond the age of 60, his delegation was not opposed to those measures, provided that due consideration was given to the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts. The Secretary-General should give priority to women from unrepresented and under-represented countries.

46. Raising the mandatory age of retirement beyond 60 would be a privilege which, if granted only to women, would result in discrimination against men. The rules on retirement at 60 should be applied strictly, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 35/210 and recommendation 52 of the Group of 18. Even if the 30 per cent target was reached in the short run by increasing the mandatory retirement age for women, the solution would be only temporary and not in keeping with General Assembly resolution 40/258 B. The objective should be attained by other means; eventually the time would come to consider the statutory retirement age of 60 from the point of view of the Pension Fund, life expectancy, the composition of the staff, personnel costs and so forth. He asked how many staff members had been granted extensions of the statutory retirement age in each of the past five years, and for what reasons. He would also welcome an explanation of the scheme to enhance staff mobility based on occupational groups, which was being prepared for 1991.

47. Ms. FRIESSNIGG (Austria) said that full realization of the human potential available to the United Nations was an important element in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat. In order to attain that objective an effective career development and recruitment policy for United Nations staff was essential. Her delegation believed that the human resources management plan should include an effective training component, which would also require the appropriate budgetary resources.

48. On the subject of recruitment policy, her country was firmly committed to the principles and methods advocated in General Assembly resolution 35/210 and its annex. Competitive examinations were an objective and fair method of evaluating candidates' skills and qualifications. Moreover, by continuing to hire young Professional staff up to the level of P-3, the Secretary-General could also respond to the recommendation by the Group of 18 that the Organization should have more young Professional staff. In that context, her delegation noted with approval that national competitive examinations were among the strategies used by the Secretary-General to increase the number of women in the Secretariat.

49. Her delegation was grateful to the Secretary-General for his efforts to increase the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution. Nevertheless, the decline in female staff at the Assistant Secretary-General level,

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(Ms. Friessnigg, Austria)

and even more in the D-1 category, was disturbing. Her country was pleased that a woman had been appointed as the focal point for questions relating to women in the Secretariat, and supported the Secretary-General's intention to combine the task of supervising and facilitating improvements in the status of women in the Secretariat with human resources management. The main objective should be to create conditions in the United Nations which would encourage women to join the Organization and enable them to develop their professional careers to the full.

50. Her country supported the target set by the Secretary-General in paragraph 22 of his report, of 30 per cent female staff in the Secretariat by the end of 1990, and the other steps proposed in that context. Member States, in turn, should encourage the recruitment of female staff by submitting qualified women candidates for posts available in the Secretariat, and would thus have to take preparatory steps at the national level.

51. Her delegation welcomed the upward trend in the representation of women at senior and decision-making levels in the Secretariat and throughout the world. Even so, the discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* equality in 1989 remained large. In that context she referred to an initiative by her country regarding high-level interregional consultations on women in public life, which would be adopted in the Third Committee as part of the resolution on the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

52. Her delegation shared the Secretary-General's concern at incidents in which the privileges and immunities of the international civil service were disregarded, and endorsed the view that the General Assembly's discussions on the reports which the Secretary-General submitted on behalf of ACC provided an opportunity to identify the most serious problems and take steps to remedy the situation. The strict application of international agreements on the privileges and immunities of international organizations and their staff was of the greatest importance.

53. Questions relating to personnel were closely linked to conditions of service for United Nations staff. Since ICSC had been unable to complete its comprehensive review of conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories, it would not offer a complete picture of the situation and the measures required. The United Nations must remain competitive and able to attract and retain highly qualified staff. Thus it was important to create suitable working conditions and offer appropriate remuneration. Special emphasis must be put on improving conditions for staff in the field. Her delegation firmly supported an improvement in conditions of service for United Nations staff and was favourably disposed towards all the recommendations put forward by ICSC, including the 5 per cent increase in salaries. In matters of such importance to the staff of the United Nations system generally, it was vital to reach consensus on the proposals of ICSC.

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

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55. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that, despite the encouraging results obtained in implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, efforts to arrive at an equitable geographical distribution of posts and to make proper use of the human resources available to the United Nations must continue.

56. The Group of 18 in recommendation 43, had laid down the principle of recruitment by means of national competitive examinations. His country had taken part in the examinations held in 1989 and, in view of the excellent results, recommended other Member States to take the opportunity to organize such examinations. It also acknowledged the efforts of the Recruitment and Placement Division to increase the number of women in P-3 and higher-level posts. In conjunction with that Division his country had arranged a briefing session in Budapest which had yielded a long list of female applicants for such posts. His delegation hoped that by the same time in 1990 some of those applicants would have been recruited by the Secretariat. The large number of very well qualified candidates illustrated his country's firm commitment to the goals of the Organization.

57. Nevertheless, it was regrettable that the number of posts occupied by Hungarian citizens had declined. Since the competitive examinations provided only quantitative results, efforts must be made to secure a qualitative increase, i.e. proper compensation in senior posts for the loss of one D-2 post and two P-5 posts and the retention of only one P-4 post in 1990. In that connection, his country recognized that both fixed-term and permanent contracts had their advantages and in pursuit of an optimal solution it would accept the offer of permanent contracts.

58. The Hungarian delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal, referred to in General Assembly resolution 40/258 A, to hold a competitive examination for the P-3 level and it thought that the system of national competitive examinations should be used to recruit staff at that level for posts in highly specialized areas such as econometrics, statistics, public information, etc. It also favoured the idea of monitoring newly recruited professionals who had taken part in competitive examinations until they reached the P-3 level in their careers. That would provide useful information about the fulfilment of the career and personal expectations of young professionals in the Organization.

59. Mr. GURYANOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation had carefully studied the Secretary-General's report (A/44/604) and the other documents submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 42/220 and 43/224.

60. Changes in the United Nations went hand-in-hand with changes in the Organization's administration and management, and in that respect the Ukraine supported the ideas contained in General Assembly resolution 41/213.

61. It was in favour of strengthening the authority of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer with respect to personnel questions and of the Office of Human Resources Management. The Office was responsible for recruitment of staff on the basis of efficiency and integrity and on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

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(Mr. Guryanov, Ukrainian SSR)

62. The current excessive number of permanent contracts was impeding the attainment of the goals of the reform. The number of staff members with permanent contracts should not exceed 50 per cent. The practice of giving such contracts to nationals of overrepresented countries to the detriment of the underrepresented or unrepresented countries was a cause for concern. The way to combat such practices was to offer fixed-term contracts.

63. His country supported the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/210 and thought that its own current representation in the Secretariat was satisfactory despite the fact that more than half of the Ukrainian staff members were at the P-1 and P-2 levels. It hoped to maintain its co-operation with the Secretariat with regard to the replacement of Ukrainian staff members who were about to retire.

64. The efforts made to increase the proportion of women in the Secretariat were praiseworthy, and his delegation was ready to co-operate in that matter. It also favoured the recruitment of staff by means of competitive examinations but not the practice of awarding permanent contracts to the candidates selected by that means.

65. The Ukrainian SSR fully agreed with the Secretary-General that Governments must strictly respect the legal guarantees of staff members and their prerogatives and immunities and tolerate no discrimination on political or ideological grounds.

66. Miss MOSS (Bahamas) said that the effectiveness of any organization was directly related to the quality of the men and women who served it, and the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service was, according to Article 101 of the Charter, the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Regrettably, the existing conditions of service were affected by the uncertainties engendered by the prolonged financial crisis and aggravated by the basic weaknesses in personnel policy and by inadequate remuneration. What was needed therefore was a comprehensive revitalization and complete overhaul of the present system in order to address the range of activities in which the Organization was involved and the dramatic changes in the nature of the external environment since the system had been established.

67. Her delegation welcomed the package of recommendations submitted by ICSC, in particular the call for a salary increase of 5 per cent and for improved entitlements for staff serving in the field.

68. On the other hand, it was regrettable that ICSC had not been able effectively to address the issue of the emoluments of staff at the higher levels, for that had important implications for the supplementary payments made by Governments; it was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would submit proposals in that connection.

69. The delegation of the Bahamas wanted to have as much information as possible about the factors governing the system of desirable ranges and would like to know why such a system was not applied to the subsidiary organs of the United Nations which had special status in matters of appointments, since the staff of those organs constituted about 46 per cent of the total number of United Nations personnel.

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(Miss Moss, Bahamas)

70. The Bahamas was concerned about the lack of progress in correcting the situation of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, which included the Bahamas, and it hoped that some innovative and practical measures would be introduced to establish a balance between overrepresented and underrepresented States.

71. Despite the various international instruments aimed at improving the status of women, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, women remained underrepresented in the Secretariat, especially at the policy-making levels. Of the 42 staff members at the levels of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General, only two were women. Furthermore, it was regrettable to note that, of the 134 persons appointed in the past year, only 26.86 per cent were women.

72. The role of Governments in that respect must also be recognized, for they tended overwhelmingly to put forward male candidates. In resolution 43/224 C the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and to consider the introduction of additional measures, if necessary, in order to increase the proportion of women to 30 per cent by 1990. Given the present rate of 26.9 per cent, the 30 per cent target would presumably not be reached. It was to be hoped that the appointment of Ms. Habachy as the focal point for women in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management would go a long way towards correcting the situation.

73. The unqualified integration of women at all levels of the Secretariat could no longer be seen only as a matter of equality of rights but as a matter of necessity if the United Nations was to achieve its goals. Sufficient international plans and legal instruments were in place; what remained was to implement them.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/44/L.23 concerning agenda item 31 (A/C.5/44/25)

74. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the statement of financial implications of draft resolution A/44/L.23 submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/44/25), said that the activities covered by section I of the statement (paras. 1-7) would not give rise to any additional costs, since they had been programmed under section 3E of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

75. With regard to the activities dealt with in section II (paras. 8-10), the Secretary-General indicated that it was difficult at the current stage to estimate with any degree of certainty what resources would be required. Should a decision be reached in the course of 1990 to reconvene the Conference or to organize any other conference, he would endeavour to accommodate the requirements from within the resources programmed under sections 3 and 29 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. If those resources proved to be insufficient, the

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(Mr. Mselle)

Secretary-General would seek the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to enter into the necessary commitments. The Advisory Committee was in agreement with the procedure outlined by the Secretary-General in paragraph 9 of his statement.

76. In section III of the document (paras. 11-13), concerning the good offices of the Secretary-General, it was indicated that resources totalling \$833,600 had been included under section 3E of the proposed programme budget and that an effort would therefore be made to accommodate the activities in question from within the resources already requested. The Advisory Committee trusted that every effort would be made in order to ensure, as far as possible, that no additional resources would be required.

77. With regard to section IV of the statement (paras. 14-17), related resource requirements in the amount of \$370,100 had also been proposed under section 3E of the proposed programme budget. It was estimated that those resources would be sufficient to accommodate the activities as proposed in paragraph 13 of the draft resolution.

78. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/44/L.23, no additional appropriations would be required at the current stage under the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

79. Mr. PRODJOWARSITO (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), (whose members were Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), reaffirmed the position of ASEAN that the solution to the problem of Kampuchea lay in a comprehensive political settlement. ASEAN supported the important role of the Secretary-General in the search for a political settlement to the problem, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that connection, it fully endorsed the allocation of resources for the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea, as reflected in document A/C.5/44/25. It also supported the exercise by the Secretary-General of his good offices, and the co-ordination of humanitarian assistance programmes for Kampuchea referred to in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. ASEAN trusted that the recommendations of ACABQ on the matter would meet with the full approval of all Member States.

80. Mr. CHAI SIRIVUDDH (Democratic Kampuchea) said that the consideration of the continuation of the activities of the International Conference on Kampuchea under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 was meant to facilitate the search for a comprehensive political settlement to the question of Kampuchea and, in that connection, he drew attention to the first part of paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/44/25.

81. The current situation in Kampuchea presented various features that made possible a comprehensive settlement to the dispute between that country and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam that would bring about a lasting peace. Despite the

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(Mr. Chai Sirivuddh, Democratic Kampuchea)

delaying tactics employed by Viet Nam to prevent a genuine solution to the problem of Kampuchea from being reached, the international community and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in particular, felt a pressing need for an end to the conflict. In accordance with that aspiration and in the context of the International Conference on Kampuchea, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference had dispatched a number of important missions during the period 1988-1989 (A/CONF.109/15, para. 12).

82. As part of the effort to find a peaceful settlement, the Paris Conference on Cambodia had been organized, at which the United Nations Secretary-General had expressed his support and hope for the emergence of a new Cambodia that was free from all external interference.

83. A political solution to the conflict flowed from the general principle that the world must not revert to anarchy. That necessitated circumscribing and eliminating the policy of aggression by strong States against weak States and promoting increased respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the case of Kampuchea, the complexity of the international and regional political situation had been created and was maintained by the Government of Viet Nam, which should contemplate the common approach developed by the modern States in the region with a view to establishing a lasting peace in South-East Asia, an approach that was reflected in successive resolutions of the United Nations.

84. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country had consistently opposed the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea because it considered that they were not useful and would not help to bring about a comprehensive settlement to the situation in Kampuchea. The Soviet Union had expressed its objections to the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee at the current juncture, when new international machinery had been brought into being under the Paris Conference on Cambodia. Consequently, if the financial implications of the draft resolution were put to a vote, his delegation would vote against them. The fact that it had not pressed for a vote on the draft resolution should not be interpreted as reflecting any change in the Soviet Union's fundamental position with regard to the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee.

85. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/44/L.23, no additional resource requirements or programmatic changes would arise at the current stage under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

86. It was so decided.

87. Ms. GOICOHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) said that her delegation would have preferred it if the minimum period of 48 hours prescribed for the preparation of statements of programme budget implications had been observed and if document A/C.5/44/25 had been submitted to delegations sufficiently in advance. Her delegation wished the

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(Ms. Goicochea Estenez, Cuba)

Journal to indicate whenever the Fifth Committee would be taking up the programme budget implications of specific draft resolutions. In the event, although the programme of work indicated in the Journal had been orally amended at the morning meeting, delegations had not been informed in time. Some delegations might have problems with the section to be taken up and might need to obtain instructions in order to take a decision. Consequently, she hoped that the Secretariat would take note of Cuba's suggestion and concerns so that that procedure would not be repeated in the future.

88. Her delegation noted with concern that the Committee was approving the earmarking of resources under the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991 under a section on which a decision had not yet been taken; it should be recalled that at the morning meeting the Committee had decided to defer consideration of the section in question. Specifically with regard to the financial implications of the draft resolution, her delegation's position on the problem of the Cambodian State was well known and had been set forth in the General Assembly on numerous occasions. Consequently, while her delegation had not opposed the approval of the financial implications of the draft resolution without a vote, her delegation wished to place on record its reservations with regard to the appropriation of any resources whatsoever for the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Kampuchea. Had the matter been put to a vote, her delegation would have voted against.

89. Further, she pointed out that the position which her delegation had taken with regard to that specific allocation of funds did not mean that Cuba considered that the relevant articles of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly relating to decisions on administrative and budgetary matters should not continue to be applied.

90. Mr. VU VAN MIEN (Viet Nam) said that positive developments had taken place with respect to the peaceful settlement of the question of Cambodia, including the International Conference that had recently been held in Paris. While the Paris Conference had not produced a comprehensive political settlement, it had created a favourable climate which must be maintained. Draft resolution A/44/L.23 did not fully or substantively reflect the positive developments with respect to the question of Cambodia. Nor was it a genuine contribution to the achievement of a viable political settlement. His delegation was, therefore, opposed to the resolution and would not support its financial implications. Now that the Paris International Conference on Cambodia had come into existence, his delegation would be even more opposed to provision of any resources under the budget for the activities of the so-called International Conference on Kampuchea and its Ad Hoc Committee, as referred to in document A/C.5/44/25. Had the draft resolution been put to a vote, his delegation would have voted against it.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.