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FIFTH COMMITTEE  
29th meeting  
held on  
Monday 6 November 1989  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th 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 3.25 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary-General would make a statement to the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 3.26 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

2. The SECRETARY-GENERAL, speaking as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), said that the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission on the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories constituted the first substantive response to the General Assembly's request that the Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the question. Although the Commission had not been able to complete its work because of time constraints, ACC was encouraged by the seriousness with which the Commission had tackled such a complex task.

3. The executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system, to whom the Member States had given the responsibility of carrying out a wide range of activities and programmes, had repeatedly expressed concerns about the problems of attracting staff with the requisite qualifications to implement those programmes. Because of the steady deterioration of the conditions of service, which were no longer competitive, the problem had reached crisis proportions, to the point where the organizations had great difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Urgent remedial measures needed to be taken.

4. The practice of some Member States of making supplementary payments to their nationals who were employed by the United Nations underlined the inadequacy of the remuneration package. ACC deplored that practice and urged that it should be discontinued. In July 1989, ACC had suggested a number of reforms intended to reverse the continuing trend of deteriorating employment conditions, placing particular emphasis on the need to improve remuneration levels and employment conditions for staff serving in the field. The Commission's recommendations were a first step in the process of reform, and ACC stressed that they needed to be complemented by measures to restore the competitiveness of United Nations conditions of service and to provide for regular monitoring in order to prevent them from again falling to unacceptable levels.

5. As chief administrative officer of the United Nations, and on behalf of the executive heads of all the organizations of the system, he unequivocally endorsed the Commission's recommendation for a 5-per-cent increase in base salaries. That essential and urgent measure, which was long overdue, should be implemented in early 1990. The increase was fully justified in order to begin to restore the competitive edge of salary levels, especially in relation to the salary levels of the comparator civil service.

6. He also stressed the importance of the Commission completing over the following year its examination of the United Nations remuneration structure, which

(The Secretary-General)

had become more and more complex as a result of economic disequilibrium and currency fluctuations. As called for by the General Assembly, the Commission should continue to concentrate on the separate treatment of housing at all duty stations.

7. The other vital recommendations of the Commission were those which aimed to improve and simplify the employment conditions of staff members serving in the field. ACC fully endorsed those proposals, especially the recommendations to increase floor salary levels as an essential part of the improved field remuneration package.

8. ACC also supported the Commission's recommendations concerning the margin methodology and measures intended to simplify the post adjustment system. It also welcomed the Commission's reaffirmation of the rationale for the education grant and recalled the importance of maintaining the conditions relating to that entitlement in the remuneration package. ACC supported the proposal for biennial reviews of the level of the education grant. It also endorsed the recommendations aimed at simplifying the computation of dependency allowances and unused annual leave as well as those aimed at improving salary upon promotion and the design of the salary scale.

9. Overall, ACC stressed the importance of all the recommendations put forward by the Commission which would make United Nations conditions of service more competitive and ensure that, while retaining the link with the comparator, they did not simply replicate those of the United States civil service either at home or abroad. Comparisons between United Nations common system salaries and those of the United States federal civil service had to be treated with flexibility and an appreciation of the differences between a national and an international civil service, especially at a time when the comparator civil service was regarded as not being competitive in the national context.

10. The deterioration in United Nations conditions of service had already done considerable damage to humanitarian and development programmes, and there was now an increasing danger that the common system might break down as a result of different organizations concluding that their only option was to take independent action in matters related to the conditions of service of their staff.

11. The renewal of confidence in multilateralism had brought the United Nations to the forefront in a variety of areas. He was certain that, with support from Member States, the staff of the United Nations system would continue to respond to all challenges. It should not be forgotten, however, that all the activities being entrusted to the organizations were to be carried out by the men and women who made up their staffs. He hoped that Governments would demonstrate their renewed confidence in the United Nations system by giving favourable consideration to the Commission's recommendations. ACC was aware that a certain initial investment would be required, but was convinced that the implementation of those recommendations would be cost-beneficial to the system as a whole over the long term.

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(The Secretary-General)

12. With regard to pensions, ACC had noted with appreciation that the Joint Staff Pension Board had reached agreement on a balanced package of measures aimed at re-establishing the actuarial balance of the Fund. ACC fully supported that package and urged the General Assembly to consider it as a whole.

13. The Commission had also referred in its report to arrangements for the comprehensive review of pensionable remuneration for both categories of staff, to be carried out in 1990, and the monitoring of the level of pensionable remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories. Those questions had also been examined by the Joint Staff Pension Board. On the comprehensive review of pensionable remuneration, ACC had noted with satisfaction that the Commission and the Board had taken steps to bring together all those concerned in making initial proposals on the subject. It was of paramount importance that the acquired rights of staff should be fully protected. ACC had taken note of the measures recommended by the Commission with regard to the adjustment of pensionable remuneration for staff in the Professional and higher categories, and could support those measures as a one-time action which should be without prejudice to any proposal emerging from the comprehensive review of pensionable remuneration.

14. With respect to the safety and security of the United Nations staff, he stressed that he had always done and would continue to do his utmost to ensure that staff members were able to carry out their functions with the assurance of host Governments that their rights and privileges would be fully respected. It was the responsibility of Member States, individually and collectively, to ensure that staff members could perform their official duties effectively. Situations in which staff members were detained arbitrarily or without explanation or even abducted, in violation of all the relevant international legal instruments, were totally unacceptable, especially at a time when the United Nations had been assigned greater responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. He was confident that the discussions in the Fifth Committee would result in a renewed commitment by Governments to observe fully their obligations with respect to United Nations staff members in accordance with existing international legal instruments.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 3.42 p.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 2, A/44/16 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 15. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

15. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider, in first reading, section 15 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The total estimate proposed by the Secretary-General was \$78,654,800.

16. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the 10 programmes of activity provided for under section 15 of the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991 were identical to those contained in the 1988-1989 budget. Under those programmes, the Secretariat had proposed 27 subprogrammes, as compared with 28 in the previous budget. The change reflected the transfer of the subprogramme "Statistical and computer services", which was included under the substantive programme "Money, finance and development" for the current biennium, to "Programme support" in order to provide statistical services to all UNCTAD programmes.

17. The Secretariat had proposed 90 elements for 1990-1991, as against 112 in the 1988-1989 budget. The reduction was due to several factors: the subprogramme "Statistical and computer services" was no longer under one of the substantive programmes, a programme element had been eliminated from "Commodities", and activities had been regrouped. In fact, the activities of UNCTAD had increased, as indicated in paragraph 191 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) (A/44/16).

18. Approximately 900 outputs under the substantive programmes were provided for in the budget and there had been a change in the way in which outputs relating to the servicing of meetings were presented. The differences between the Secretariat's proposal for 1990-1991 and the 1988-1989 budget reflected two factors: first, substantive servicing of meetings was not repeated under each of the programmes, as it was already included under "Executive direction and management" or some other programme and, second, under the programme on "Commodities", substantive servicing had increased for certain meetings. There was also a slight decrease in the number of reports and publications: 623 in the proposed budget for 1990-1991, as compared with 675 in the biennium 1988-1989. The change reflected a more realistic approach since, in the past, the budget had made provision for a number of publications which ultimately could not be issued. In the other two output categories - support to technical co-operation activities and intermediate outputs - there were no major changes.

19. In section 15 of the budget in particular, the Secretariat had presented activities relating to "Executive direction and management" and "Programme support" in programmatic terms. The subprogramme "Administration of technical co-operation activities", included as substantive support under "Programme support" in the 1988-1989 budget, had been deleted and the activities under it had been reassigned to various programmes. Moreover, the programme "Executive direction and management" included a programme element consisting of overall policy direction for the technical co-operation activities of UNCTAD. Statistical services had become a new subprogramme under "Programme support".

20. Another important aspect in that respect was the assignment of priorities. He had no observations to make concerning seven of the substantive programmes - programmes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 - as they contained various programme elements which had been proposed to receive highest or lowest priority, and the proposals were basically within the allowable limits. On the other hand, no component of programme 3 had been proposed to receive highest priority, nor had any component of

(Mr. Baudot)

programmes 7 and 9 been proposed to receive lowest priority. That fact illustrated one of the characteristics, or perhaps the difficulties, of the process of consultations on the preparation of the proposed programme budget. In the proposed budget presented to CPC and ACABQ, one programme element in programme 3 had been proposed for highest priority and one in programme 7 for lowest priority. When the competent body of UNCTAD had met to review the proposed programme budget, it had recommended deleting those two priority designations. The Secretariat had presented document E/AC.51/1989/CRP.2 to CPC, indicating the deletions recommended by the Working Group. CPC was in agreement with respect to the designation of priorities in those two specific programmes. It had been the Secretariat's understanding that as there had been only two elements in programme 9, it was inappropriate to assign lowest priority to either of them.

21. Estimates of extrabudgetary resources were given for the various programmes of activity. They were specified for subprogrammes of programmes 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10, respectively, generally for support to technical co-operation activities. Extrabudgetary resources were also being requested for the subprogramme "Programme support and common services", once again directly in relation to technical co-operation activities and, particularly, financing for UNDP-sponsored programmes. Consequently, it could be said that there was a certain degree of transparency with respect to the extrabudgetary resources under that section. Total extrabudgetary resources of \$34 million were expected to be available for UNCTAD.

22. The vacancy rate in UNCTAD was 0.25 per cent. That figure reflected a 3 per cent vacancy rate in the Professional category and an excess of General Service staff over the staffing table, also amounting to some 3 per cent.

23. Replying to the question from the representative of the Philippines on programme element 1.5 concerning debt problems of developing countries, he said that the output mentioned in that programme element consisted of six missions in 1990 and another six in 1991 to assist developing countries with their debt problem. The 1990 missions would be sent to Ethiopia, the Sudan, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Guyana, and the 1991 missions, to Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Burundi, Zambia, Argentina and the Philippines.

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

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended approval of an estimate in the amount of \$78,384,000 for section 15 and invited the Chairman of ACABQ to present the Committee's report.

26. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 15 was lower than the estimate submitted by the Secretary-General. As explained in paragraph 15.8 of the report, the reduction was due partly to the fact that the Advisory Committee could not consider the reclassification of four

(Mr. Mselle)

Professional posts from P-2 to P-3 because the secretariat procedures established for determining the proper classification levels of those posts had not been observed prior to their inclusion in the Secretary-General's initial estimate.

27. In paragraph 15.10 of its report, the Advisory Committee commented on the estimates for official travel of staff and recommended a small reduction.

28. In paragraph 15.12, the Advisory Committee noted that in future, requests for resources for consultants and ad hoc expert groups should be justified more clearly.

29. In paragraph 15.13 of the report, the Advisory Committee referred to the advance appropriated by the General Assembly in order that the Preparatory Commission might bring the Common Fund for Commodities into operation. The advance totalled \$1,750,500 and would have to be reimbursed to the United Nations. The sum was included in income section 2 of the programme budget for 1988-1989. In addition, the amount of \$942,000 indicated for the biennium 1988-1989 had been deleted from the revalued resource base for that object of expenditure before calculating the 1990-1991 estimates.

30. Mr. MONTHE (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that in preparing to consider section 15 of the budget as initially submitted by the Secretary-General, the Committee had had to take into account another document (E/AC.51/1989/CRP.2) which, in one form or another, had been completely different from the initial submission. That had been due to the fact that the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget of the Trade and Development Board had, in the mean time, made comments on the proposed programme of work for UNCTAD in 1990-1991, on the basis of which some programmes relating to section 15 had been revised. In view of the difficulty which that represented for the consideration of section 15 by CPC, the latter had made a general recommendation (A/44/16, para. 48) to the effect that in order to improve the consultation procedure, the General Assembly should request those intergovernmental bodies responsible for considering the work programmes of organizations of the United Nations system to hold their meetings in accordance with a calendar which would enable the Secretary-General to take into account their recommendations in the preparations of the proposed programme budget.

31. With regard to the general problem of co-ordination that affected the budget as a whole, the Committee had also recommended (para. 190) that the co-ordination and coherence of section 15 of the budget should be enhanced so that the activities under that section would be mutually complementary with other sections.

32. In view of the fact that the question of resources was fundamental to the implementation of many activities proposed under section 15, the Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to attract additional resources, otherwise it would be very difficult to deal with the heavy work-load. That explained the recommendation in paragraph 191 of the report.

(Mr. Monthe)

33. In paragraph 192, the Committee had recommended that the usual flexibility should be demonstrated in implementing General Assembly resolution 41/213 in order to avoid any negative impact on the programmes.

34. Lastly, taking into account the revisions to the programme budget proposed in document E/AC.51/1989/CRP.2, the Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should approve the programme narrative of section 15 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 as revised.

35. Mr. GUPTA (India) observed that the Advisory Committee had stated that it would examine further the question of the four posts in the Professional category the reclassification of which from P-2 to P-3 was requested by the UNCTAD secretariat (A/44/7, para. 15.8). In re-examining the programme narrative, his delegation had come to the conclusion that each of those posts was connected with specific activities proposed for the biennium. For example, one of the posts, relating to the programme on the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, was connected with activities in preparation for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and with the work programme related to the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries. In the case of the programme on the transfer of technology, the expertise of P-3 level staff was necessary for the methodological work of preparing technology indicators relating to programme element 1.3. Similarly, in the programme on manufactures and semi-manufactures, two P-3 level posts were necessary in order to carry out effectively the work programme on the liberalization of trade in the services sector. In the opinion of the UNCTAD secretariat, that required a high level of experience and specialization.

36. The work done by UNCTAD in the field of the liberalization of trade was probably one of the two or three most important activities in the economic sphere for a large number of developing countries. His delegation, like many others, had expressed its concern on previous occasions at the reduction in the number of posts in that vital sector of the United Nations Secretariat. It could not understand why the Secretariat had not succeeded in submitting the proposals to the Advisory Committee in the usual form, with the result that the reclassification had had to be postponed.

37. Mr. GROSSMAN (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to place on record its objection to the programme of activities and resources allocated under section 15 to the Special Economic Unit on Palestine. The programme was an unjustified demonstration of partiality, which in no way contributed to the settlement of the current conflict in the Middle East. Although his delegation would not press for a vote on the allocation for that activity, that did not mean that it had changed its position of principle on the question.

38. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the opposition of the Advisory Committee to the reclassification of four posts in the Professional category from P-2 to P-3 because secretariat procedures established for determining the proper classification levels of those posts had not been observed, said that, while his



(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

delegation understood perfectly well the concern expressed in that respect by the representative of India, it wished in any event to ask the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division whether the secretariat procedures had been observed subsequently and what was the current situation with regard to those procedures.

39. Mrs. GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ (Cuba) noted with concern the reduction in the real growth rate of section 15 of the budget, particularly in view of the fact that in the next biennium the Secretariat was to carry out activities relating to the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

40. In paragraph 15.7 of its report (A/44/7), the Advisory Committee had rightly observed that the Secretary-General's proposal to abolish one Assistant Secretary-General post in the UNCTAD secretariat was not explicitly identified in table 15.5 of the proposed programme budget. Although her delegation was well aware that the question of the abolition of that post would be dealt with in informal consultations, it considered that the pertinent information had not been submitted in the most appropriate form, since table 15.5 gave the impression that the proposal had already been accepted.

41. She shared the concern expressed by the delegation of India at the Advisory Committee's recommendation not to approve the reclassification of four posts in the Professional category from P-2 to P-3 as well as that delegation's views on the importance of those posts. She would also like to hear the Secretariat's reply to the questions raised by the representatives of India and Japan.

42. Her delegation would also like to hear the Secretariat's views on the doubt expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 15.10 of its report, as to whether UNCTAD had the capacity to undertake all the travel proposed in 1990-1991. The fact that in the next biennium the preparatory work for the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development would have to be carried out would also have to be taken into account.

43. Mr. SHEK (Israel) said that he wished to place on record his delegation's reservations concerning the allocation of resources for the Special Economic Unit, a matter to which it would probably refer in greater detail in connection with the second reading of the programme budget.

44. Mr. ABDULLAH (Iraq) said that his delegation agreed with the amounts allocated to activities relating to the Palestinian people, particularly those relating to the economic situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories and all the activities relating to the economic growth and development of the Palestinian people. Any assistance and support given to programmes and activities of that type would help to achieve a peaceful solution to the question of the Palestinian people.

45. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his country was particularly interested in the activities of UNCTAD. It was therefore concerned by the low rate of growth in its resources and supported the recommendations in paragraphs 191 and 192 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. It also endorsed the statement made by the representative of Iraq concerning the activities of UNCTAD in relation to the Palestinian people. In addition, it echoed the question posed by the representative of Japan and would like to know if the procedure used had been changed. The posts in question were connected with programmes that were of prime importance and high priority for the developing countries and for the least developed, island and land-locked developing countries. With regard to paragraph 15.13 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), Morocco wished to know why no resources were being requested for fellowships.

46. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that he was concerned by the reduction in resources for UNCTAD. With regard to the four posts in the Professional category that it was proposed to reclassify from P-2 to P-3, it was surprising that certain aspects of the established procedures had not been observed. ACABQ had not been able to consider the merits of the cases in question, which was a pity because the matter was an important one. His delegation would like to know why it had not been possible to observe the procedural formalities and whether there was any possibility of solving the problem in 1989, especially in view of the fact that the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be held in 1990.

47. Mr. KALBITZER (Federal Republic of Germany) asked if the missions sent by UNCTAD to certain countries to investigate debt problems were covered by its mandate. It was his understanding that such bilateral missions came under the mandate of the International Monetary Fund.

48. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) associated himself with those speakers who had asked for more information about post reclassifications. With regard to the part of section 15 on programme support, he asked for clarification as to whether the implementation of the subprogrammes of the statistical and computer services and the programme support and common services was centralized in administrative units. He also wished to know what the procedure was for the acquisition of equipment, especially data-processing equipment. In that regard, he noted with satisfaction that, although there were substantial increases for the acquisition of furniture and equipment, the replacement of automated office equipment and the rental and maintenance of equipment, expenditures on external printing and binding had been reduced. That meant that one item offset the other, which indicated correct policy.

49. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked for clarification of the procedures adopted by the Secretariat with regard to the duties of ad hoc expert groups and consultants. ACABQ had pointed out that there was no clear indication of some of the aims of the consultancy services. Perhaps the Secretariat could in future include, in that part of the programme, a description of the projects entrusted to experts. For example, with regard to the transfer of technology, his delegation wished to know if there were groups of experts charged with such projects in countries needing assistance.

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(Mr. Garrido, Philippines)

50. The Chairman of CPC had drawn the Fifth Committee's attention to paragraph 48 of its report, relating to the holding of meetings in accordance with the proposed calendar. UNCTAD and all the other organizations should conform strictly to that calendar, unnecessary expenditures would otherwise be incurred for travel and conference services. In another connection, he also asked for clarification regarding paragraph 15.6 of the first report of ACABQ.

51. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) regretted the negative rate of growth in section 15 of the proposed programme budget. He also fully endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 192 of the report of CPC, concerning the importance of avoiding negative impacts on the implementation of programmes. One worrying aspect that emerged from the reading of the proposed programme budget was that, although the General Assembly attached high priority to the UNCTAD programme, that body's contribution to the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development was not clear. Nor was it clear what was being referred to in paragraph 15.9 of the report of ACABQ when it spoke of "some linkage" between the reclassification of three extrabudgetary posts to the D-1 level and the abolition of four regular budget D-1 posts. There appeared to be a tendency to replace regular budget posts by posts financed with extrabudgetary resources. Whatever the purpose of such changes, he would be grateful if the Secretariat could provide explanations for them. In conclusion, his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Cuba concerning paragraph 15.7 of the report of ACABQ.

52. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Kuwait) expressed concern at the low level of resources allocated to activities concerning the Palestinian people, whose immense suffering placed an obligation on organizations such as the United Nations to render every possible assistance in order to secure peace in that area of the world.

53. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) endorsed the comments made by the Chairman of CPC about the problems that arose when the valuable observations of intergovernmental bodies were submitted to CPC too late. In that connection, it was worth recalling that the Economic and Social Council had approved a decision that CPC should meet later, in May, which would help to alleviate the problem.

54. With regard to the resources available under section 15, the United Kingdom knew that that section was one of the main substantive programmes financed by the regular budget. There was a reduction in the proportion of general resources under the regular budget compared with the biennium 1988-1989. With regard to the treatment of non-recurrent items, his delegation would like to hear the Secretariat's comments on the sum of \$569,400 shown in that section.

55. ACABQ noted in paragraph 15.3 of its report that the total amount shown did not reflect the totality of regular budget resources devoted to UNCTAD. Substantial additional resources were included under sections 28D and 29. An estimate of \$1,761,200 was proposed for the computing requirements of UNCTAD, using the International Computing Centre's facilities. It was surprising to see a significant real increase in section 15D. The real percentage growth in support for statistical and computer services was 154.1 per cent. A real growth of

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(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

33.2 per cent was also recorded in section 15B, Executive direction and management. Those increases had caused general concern, which was reflected in the report of CPC.

56. With regard to posts, paragraph 15.8 of the report of ACABQ noted that the Secretariat had not followed established procedures in determining the proper classification levels of certain posts. The problem of the classification and redistribution of posts in the Secretariat had been raised in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts, in the context of the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. With regard to the tendency to transfer the costs of certain posts from the regular budget to extrabudgetary resources, it might be considered that if those posts were concerned with activities financed out of extrabudgetary resources, it was logical that they should be financed in the same way.

57. Paragraph 15.6 of the report of ACABQ showed concern at the reference in the proposed programme budget to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which ACABQ found unclear. Paragraph 15.12 of the same report mentioned consultants and ad hoc expert groups. The Secretariat's comments on those two points would be welcome.

58. The overlap between the new subprogramme on debt and development under the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the related activities of UNCTAD had already been mentioned in connection with section 6 of the proposed programme budget. That was an area where it was necessary to ensure that there was no duplication of activities.

59. Mr. McBARNETTE (Trinidad and Tobago), referring to the recommendation contained in paragraph 15.8 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/44/7) that the request for the reclassification of four posts from P-2 to P-3 not be approved, noted that one of the posts corresponded to activities for least developed island developing countries and he asked how those activities would be affected if the recommendation was approved. He supported the statements made in that connection by the representatives of Cuba and Morocco. He would like the Secretariat to clarify the statement in paragraph 15.6 concerning the contribution of UNCTAD to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

60. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that, given the importance of UNCTAD's activities, there should be an increase in expenditure under section 15. Concerning the abolishment of one Assistant Secretary-General post in UNCTAD, it had been agreed that the matter would be taken up again in informal consultations. The question of the reclassification of four posts from P-2 to P-3 and of the contribution of UNCTAD to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development should also be dealt with in informal consultations. He endorsed the comment made by Uganda concerning paragraph 15.9 of document A/44/7, and the question put by Morocco concerning why no funds had been requested for fellowships, grants and contributions for the period 1990-1991.

61. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the points raised by various delegations, said, concerning the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the request for the reclassification of four posts (A/44/7, para. 15.8) not be approved, that at the time the proposal was made, due to lack of time and the large number of units involved in determining the appropriate levels of classification, certain technical rules had not been complied with. Since those rules had now been complied with, he thought the Fifth Committee would be in a position to approve the proposal.

62. With regard to the concerns expressed by the Delegations of Morocco and Algeria concerning paragraph 15.13 of document A/44/7, he pointed out that there had been no deletion of resources for fellowships, grants and contributions since those resources had never figured explicitly in UNCTAD's budget.

63. Regarding the concern expressed by several delegations concerning zero growth, he said that, compared with the negative growth of 0.4 per cent overall, the figure for UNCTAD was quite favourable; furthermore, there was a significant growth in extrabudgetary resources and the 10.6 per cent reduction in posts was smaller than the reduction in the Organization as a whole.

64. Replying to the question from the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the estimate for non-recurrent items, he said that that sum corresponded to the expenses of the eighth session of UNCTAD.

65. Replying to the questions put by the representative of Venezuela, he said that detailed information concerning the acquisition of electronic equipment would be submitted in a special document.

66. With regard to the comments made by the delegation of the Philippines and others concerning resource requirements for consultants and ad hoc expert groups (A/44/7, para. 15.12), he pointed out that, since provision for those services had to be made long in advance, sometimes as much as three years in advance, there was a tendency to repeat explanations which corresponded to earlier years. Although there was undoubtedly a need to improve the presentation of the budget, if too many details were given the document would become excessively long and complicated.

67. Concerning the point made in paragraph 15.6 of document A/44/7, the task force unit would co-ordinate the various programmes of UNCTAD.

68. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) asked what was the magnitude of resource requirements for the activities of the task force unit mentioned in paragraph 15.6 of document A/44/7 and what was UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

69. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Uganda and, supported by Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines), pointed out that the content of paragraph 15.6 could also be considered in informal meetings.

70. Mr. GUPTA (India), supported by Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) and Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that, since the technical difficulties standing in the way of the reclassification of four posts (A/44/7, para. 15.8) had disappeared, as Mr. Baudot had just explained, the Committee could proceed to approve that proposal.

71. Mr. HILL (United States of America) said that his delegation would prefer to discuss the issue in informal consultations before deciding not to follow the recommendation of ACABQ.

72. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) supported the proposal by the representative of India that the recommendation of ACABQ not be accepted, since the reasons that had prompted it to make that recommendation no longer existed. Accordingly, he did not think that there was anything to discuss in informal consultations.

73. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he would have to consult his colleagues in ACABQ in order to determine whether the technical requirements for the classification of those posts had indeed been fulfilled. He wished it to be clear, however, that ACABQ had not rejected the reclassification; it simply had not considered it because procedures had not been followed. If the Fifth Committee so desired, ACABQ would be able to consider a Secretariat report on developments since the ACABQ reviewed the initial estimates of the Secretary-General at its spring session.

74. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that there was a difference between what the Secretary-General had recommended and what the Advisory Committee had recommended and that it was due in part to the existence of a procedural difficulty. The Secretariat had indicated that the procedural difficulty had been resolved and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had pointed out that, in that case, the Advisory Committee would have to pronounce itself on the reclassification and not on the procedure. The thing to do, therefore, was to defer a decision on that section until the report of the Advisory Committee was available, as had been done on other occasions when a decision on some sections of the budget had been deferred pending receipt of the relevant report from the Secretariat.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection to the proposal just made by the representative of Venezuela, he would defer a decision on section 15 until the outcome of the deliberations of the Advisory Committee on that particular issue was known.

76. It was so decided.

77. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation firmly supported the decision just adopted on the basis of the proposal made by the representative of Venezuela. However, that brought to two the number of sections concerning which a decision had been deferred in first reading, and he would like to know when they would be taken up again.

78. The CHAIRMAN said that that particular issue would be taken up again as soon as the Advisory Committee completed its deliberations on the subject; he hoped that that would be before the Committee completed its first reading of the programme budget. With regard to the other section to which the representative of the United Kingdom had referred, he would ask the Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

79. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) pointed out that the other section he had referred to was section 3, concerning which a number of substantive difficulties had arisen. He did not wish to give the impression that his delegation had a special interest in approving a particular figure in first reading. However, the delegations which had expressed doubts on section 3, had had an opportunity to consider the additional information provided by the Secretariat, and therefore that section should be taken up again as soon as possible.

#### Section 16. International Trade Centre

80. The CHAIRMAN said that the total estimate proposed by the Secretariat for that section amounted to \$15,400,800. Of that amount, 50 per cent represented the United Nations share less contributions from miscellaneous income, while the other 50 per cent represented the GATT share.

81. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the programme of activities in the areas of trade promotion and export development under section 16 was structured around 12 subprogrammes, as it had been during the biennium 1988-1989. In that connection, he drew attention to the recommendation by CPC (A/44/16, para. 195) on merging subprogrammes 1 and 8 and extending the scope of subprogramme 4. If that recommendation was accepted by the Fifth Committee, the Secretariat would have no technical difficulties in implementing it.

82. The number of programme elements was the same as in 1988-1989 and the number of outputs was also roughly the same, which showed that there was a high degree of continuity in programme structure. That did not mean, however, that the programmes, subprogrammes and outputs had not been subject to minor modifications which reflected changing problems and needs.

83. It had been proposed that high priority should be given to two programme elements and low priority to four programme elements: that proposal covered nearly 10 per cent of all resources, and CPC had made no specific comments about those priorities.

84. The estimate of extrabudgetary resources totalled \$78 million, a much higher figure than that requested under the regular budget (only \$15 million). Section 16 contained detailed information about the utilization of those resources. A total of 51 posts were to be financed from extrabudgetary resources, whereas 62 posts had been financed with such resources during the current biennium.

85. Currently vacant were one P-5 post and one P-2 post which were funded from the regular budget; because those posts were financed jointly by UNCTAD and GATT, there had been no reduction in posts under section 16.

86. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the total proposed budget for the International Trade Centre for the biennium 1990-1991 amounted to \$31,402,800. The United Nations and GATT would each contribute \$15,400,800, and the balance of \$600,200 would be met from miscellaneous income. In paragraph 16.4 of its report (A/44/7) the Advisory Committee explained how the miscellaneous income had been calculated, and in paragraph 16.5 it explained the \$289,800 decrease in miscellaneous income.

87. In the last line of paragraph 16.5 of the report, "1988-1989" should read "1986-1987". In paragraph 16.8, "general temporary assistance" should read "temporary assistance for meetings".

88. The CHAIRMAN said that the Chairman of CPC had asked him to inform the Fifth Committee that he had no information to add to that contained in paragraphs 195 and 196 of the CPC report (A/44/16), which accurately reflected the existing situation.

89. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked the Secretariat to provide the estimated maintenance cost of the International Trade Centre (ITC) building; he also wished to know what would happen if the Centre did not contribute to the reserve set up for maintenance of the building, mentioned in paragraph 16.9 of the Advisory Committee's report.

90. Mr. HALBWACHS (Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that rental and maintenance costs for the ITC building were given in paragraph 16.9 of the ACABQ report. He was currently unable to answer the second part of the question just raised.

91. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 195 and 196 of the CPC report.

92. It was so decided.

93. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the appropriation for section 16.

94. An appropriation in the amount of \$15,400,800 under section 16 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 was approved in first reading without a vote.

#### Section 17. Centre for Science and Technology for Development

95. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the thrust of the Centre's programme of work was slightly different from the previous year, which explained a number of changes that would appear in written form. High-priority project proposals accounted for roughly 30 per cent of all resources, with lower-priority proposals accounting for approximately 5 per cent. That was due to the fact that in a highly reduced programme it was difficult to apply the 10 per cent rule.

/...



(Mr. Baudot)

96. The appropriate bodies, including ACABQ, would be asked to submit a new, more realistic estimate of extrabudgetary resources.

97. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 199-202 of the CPC report.

98. It was so decided.

99. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the appropriation for section 17.

100. An appropriation of \$4,174,200 under section 17 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 was approved in first reading without a vote.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.