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at 4 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 61st MEETING

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

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

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COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

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

Draft report of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Parts I, II and II/Add.1, III and IV))

1. Mr. TIEWUL (Secretary of the Committee) said that the blank spaces in the draft report which represented budget amounts and other numerical data would be filled in on the basis of decisions to be taken by the Committee at the current meeting. He then drew attention to several corrections which were to be made in the report. Referring to document A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part IV), he said that in draft resolution I A, section V, paragraph 2, the words "as necessary" should be deleted. Section VIII of the same resolution should be revised to reflect the decision actually taken by the Committee. The new text would then read:

"1. Endorses the view of the Secretary-General that a single conference-servicing facility at the Vienna International Centre would represent the ideal solution from the standpoint of cost-efficiency and that a unified service operated by the United Nations would be best equipped to promote the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures with a view to expediting consultations with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other interested parties on this subject and to make practical arrangements for the establishment of a unified conference service at the Vienna International Centre."

2. In draft resolution II A, paragraphs 1 and 5, the word "voted" should be replaced by the word "approved". In draft resolution IV, the year "1988" in paragraph 2 should be changed to "1990", while in paragraph 3 (b), the dates "1990-1991" should be changed to read "1988-1989" and the reference to a General Assembly resolution should be to resolution 42/228 of 21 December 1987. In the second line of paragraph 4 the biennium referred to should be 1988-1989, rather than the one indicated in the text.

3. Mr. NINOV (Bulgaria), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report, said that part I dealt with organizational matters connected with the Committee's consideration of the agenda item and presented the results of the decisions taken by the Committee during its first reading of various sections of the budget. Those decisions had been affected by action the Committee had subsequently taken on questions relating to the proposed programme budget and by action taken on the basis of the recommendations of ACABQ regarding certain revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General and appropriations required for the implementation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its current session.

(Mr. Ninov, Bulgaria)

4. Part II set out the requirements under various sections of the programme budget for the biennium, while the addendum contained the outcome of the second reading. Part III dealt with the Committee's consideration of special subjects and part IV contained the Committee's recommendations contained in four draft resolutions.
5. He was pleased to commend the draft report to the Committee for adoption by consensus.
6. Mr. BOUR (France) said that the French text of paragraphs 20 and 25 of the draft report erroneously referred to a vote. No vote had been taken on the proposed programme budget.
7. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that paragraphs 35 and 36 did not accurately reflect the manner in which the Committee had taken a decision on the question of emoluments for members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the content of the decision itself. It was his understanding that the Committee had decided to recommend to the General Assembly that those emoluments should be payable on an exceptional basis. He therefore urged the Secretary of the Committee to review the relevant summary record and make the necessary revisions to the text of the paragraphs in question.
8. Mr. GUPTA (India) wished to know why draft resolution IV on the Working Capital Fund for the biennium 1990-1991, had been submitted to the Committee so late in the session, when most delegations were disinclined to discuss it in detail.
9. In connection with the special subjects covered in paragraphs 23 to 48 of the draft report, he recalled that the Committee's discussion of standards of air travel had been summarized by the representative of Ghana in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. As no objection had been raised to that summary, his delegation had taken it to constitute a decision of the Fifth Committee, yet the decision was not reflected in the report.
10. Mr. HALBWACHS (Programme Planning and Budget Division) replied that that decision would be reflected in the Committee's report on agenda item 122. He added that it ought to be possible to have draft resolutions on the Working Capital Fund submitted earlier in the session in future years.
11. Ms. FRIESSNIGG (Austria) said she hoped that the corrections which the Secretary of the Committee intended to make to section VIII of draft resolution I A would be reflected also in paragraph 38 of the draft report.

Paragraphs 1-9 (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part I))

12. Paragraphs 1-9 were adopted without a vote.

Paragraphs 10-17 (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part II))

13. Paragraphs 10-17 were adopted without a vote.

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Paragraphs 18-22 (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Parts II and II/Add.1))

14. Paragraphs 18-22 were adopted without a vote.

Paragraphs 23-48 (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part III))

15. Paragraphs 23-48 were adopted without a vote.

Paragraph 49 (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part IV))

16. The CHAIRMAN recalled that draft resolutions I and III had already been adopted and invited the Committee to take action on draft resolutions II and IV.

Draft resolution II

17. Draft resolution II was adopted without a vote.

18. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation had agreed to adoption of the resolution without a vote in a spirit of co-operation and compromise, taking into particular account the need for the Committee to reach decisions by consensus. His delegation had done its utmost to facilitate the broadest possible agreement, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 4-7 of General Assembly resolution 41/213. Nevertheless, his delegation continued to hold the views it had expressed in the Fifth Committee and in other Main Committees regarding the programme budget implications arising from the adoption of a number of draft resolutions adopted and the need to establish a suitable mechanism for appropriating additional resources for extraordinary expenses associated with the good offices functions of the Secretary-General, in keeping with paragraph 10 of annex I of General Assembly resolution 41/213.

19. In adopting the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 without a vote, the General Assembly had taken a step towards the full implementation of the recommendations of the Group of 18, and his delegation expected that the new budgetary process would continue to be improved and strengthened so that the broadest possible agreement could be reached among Member States with regard to the content and level of the budget.

Draft resolution IV

20. Draft resolution IV was adopted without a vote.

21. Mr. BOUR (France), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, noted that the new budgetary procedure was a key element of the reform envisaged in General Assembly resolution 41/213; the budget for 1990-1991, which the Committee had just adopted by consensus, was one of the tangible results of that process. The Twelve had consistently supported that process by encouraging the Secretary-General in his efforts to rationalize and restructure the Secretariat and by providing financial support to offset the financial uncertainties that threatened the United Nations. They were pleased to note that the budget had been

(Mr. Bour, France)

approved by consensus, and regarded that as proof of the broad support enjoyed by the Organization. The new budgetary procedure had become an operational reality which must be continued and strengthened, particularly if transparency was to be enhanced. In addition a mechanism for setting priorities and incorporating them into the budget must be developed.

22. It was unfortunate that certain aspects of the reform had not been implemented as successfully as the budget process; efforts must be continued in all areas to enhance the effectiveness of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. The new climate which had developed in recent years and was reflected in the unanimous adoption of all resolutions and decisions by the Fifth Committee was a testimony to the confidence which Member States placed in the Organization's capacity to take up the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.

Paragraph 49 as a whole (A/C.5/44/L.15 (Part IV))

23. Paragraph 49 as a whole was adopted.

24. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the consensus decisions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and on the two related resolutions under agenda items 38 and 124. While it was true that the proposed appropriations were well below the outline figure adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-third session, that was attributable to savings arising out of currency fluctuations. The experience gained during the current session had not dispelled uncertainties with regard to the assessment of the outline figure. More information and greater experience were required if the future limits of the flexibility of the new budget process were to be properly assessed, particularly with regard to the functioning of the contingency fund.

25. There was need for greater transparency in the revised estimates document, and the various components affecting those estimates must be better identified. In future it should be made perfectly clear that the resources needed for the contingency fund were additional to the previously accepted budget outline.

26. Owing to the non-payment or delayed payment of assessed contributions, the financing of the Organization's activities would once again be placed in jeopardy. General Assembly resolution 41/213 therefore had yet to be fully implemented.

27. Mr. NASSER (Egypt) said that his delegation wished to record its satisfaction that, for the first time since the establishment of the United Nations, the proposed programme budget had been adopted by consensus. While that was an important step in the development of the new budgetary process, the new climate of co-operation that was emerging in the Organization was of even greater significance.

28. Mr. HILLEL (Israel) said that his delegation had already registered strong opposition to the allocation of sums in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 for a number of activities that were directed against Israel and that did not in any way contribute to peace and security in the Middle East region.

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(Mr. Hillel, Israel)

29. Anti-Israel activities instigated by the Palestine Liberation Organization continued to receive generous financial support and sponsorship from the United Nations. The various committees and departments that purported to explain the Palestine issue had become a tool in a world-wide anti-Israel campaign organized and financed by the United Nations. At a time when cutbacks were required in many areas of major importance to the international community, additional funds were being allocated to such bodies as the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and the UNCTAD Special Economic Unit (Palestinian People).

30. The seminars, exhibitions, encounters and conferences on the question of Palestine sponsored by the United Nations in various parts of the world and the publications prepared and distributed at enormous cost by the Department of Public Information constituted a continuing campaign against his country. In view of the difficulty which the Organization was having in meeting current commitments, particularly those relating to relief assistance, vital development projects and peace-keeping operations, such budgetary appropriations were entirely out of order. His delegation therefore opposed the allocation of the sums required for non-productive and harmful activities relating to the Palestine issue. Had there been a vote on the adoption of the proposed programme budget, his delegation would have voted against those appropriations.

31. Ms. GOICOHEA ESTENDOZ (Cuba) said that the statement made by her delegation at the Committee's 60th meeting following the adoption of the revised estimates also applied to the adoption of the proposed programme budget.

32. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) expressed the hope that the adoption of the proposed programme budget without a vote would help ease the financial crisis of the Organization and strengthen the role of the Secretary-General in the budgetary process. The time had come for a balanced application of reform measures that took account of the concerns of all Member States. His delegation would, in future, have no difficulty with comparisons between the outline figure and the programme budget. It must, however, be made clear that the outline figure did not constitute a ceiling for the expenses of the Organization.

33. As noted in annex II to General Assembly resolution 41/213, efforts made to reach agreement without a vote on all administrative and budgetary questions in the Committee did not constitute renunciation of the right to vote, which was enshrined in the Charter and in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

34. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) expressed satisfaction that the Committee had been able to adopt the proposed programme budget by consensus despite the financial crisis.

35. The opposition expressed by one delegation to activities relating to the question of Palestine indicated that that delegation's concept of the financial crisis differed from that of others. The budgetary amounts devoted to the

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(Mr. Monayair, Kuwait)

Palestine issue should, in fact, be increased still further, since they were being allocated to the cause of a people that had suffered greatly for more than 40 years.

36. Mr. GUPTA (India) noted that, for the first time ever, the Committee had adopted the proposed programme budget without a vote. His delegation was also pleased to note that none of the resolutions considered by the Committee had had to be put to the vote.

37. Mr. KLETT (German Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, said that there had once again been a notable resolve in the Committee to reach consensus and to consider the items allocated to it in a constructive manner. He hoped that that trend would continue and that the Committee would be able to accomplish its task even more effectively than before.

38. Ms. ALMAO (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, said that the Committee had, for the first time, adopted all of its decisions without a vote. The Committee had faced a particularly difficult challenge in establishing working procedures to give effect to the new budgetary process while at the same time endeavouring to do justice to a full and complex agenda on a wide range of administrative and budgetary issues. Its dual aspirations had been more than satisfied, and a result had been achieved that took account of the concerns of all, was equitable and set an unprecedented example of constructive co-operation.

39. Ms. TELEWODA (Liberia), speaking on behalf of the African Group of States, said that the adoption, by consensus, of the programme budget, was a notable achievement. She also noted the increase in the number of highly qualified women representatives on the Committee, and urged all Governments to promote that trend.

40. The African Group was pleased with the spirit of compromise that had enabled the Committee to reach such positive results. The resolutions adopted were not satisfactory to all delegations, but a balance had been struck between the divergent interests of all Member States.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

41. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the forty-fourth session.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.