



Sixteenth session  
Agenda item 94

ENLARGEMENT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Antonio ARRAIZ (Venezuela)

1. Agenda item 94 concerning the enlargement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was considered by the Fifth Committee at its 866th to 868th meetings, held between 27 and 31 October 1961, on the basis of an explanatory memorandum (A/4916) submitted, in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, by nineteen Member States.<sup>1/</sup>
2. The Committee also had before it a draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680) proposed in the following terms by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroun, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo (Leopoldville), Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay and Venezuela:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 14 (I) of 13 February 1946, by which the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was established at nine members,

"Noting that the membership of the United Nations has increased substantially since the adoption of that resolution,

"Noting further that the African Member States presently constitute a large percentage of the total membership of the United Nations,

<sup>1/</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

"Considering that the African Member States are not represented in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

"1. Decides to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from nine to eleven members;

"2. Decides to amend as follows rule 156 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly:

"The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (hereinafter called the "Advisory Committee"), with a membership of eleven, including at least two financial experts of recognized standing."

3. Introducing the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680), the representative of Costa Rica pointed out that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was essentially a technical body composed of experts selected on the basis of their personal qualifications. Its members served on the Committee not as representatives of their countries or even as representatives of the regions to which they belonged but exclusively in an individual capacity. At the same time, the Charter laid stress on the principle of geographical distribution and called for its observance in all organs of the United Nations, so that their work might reflect the outlook and thinking of the different peoples of the world. That principle had prompted the majority of the Latin American countries to propose the item to the General Assembly, in a gesture of co-operation and friendship towards the African States. The authors of the initial proposal (A/4916) were glad that several African delegations had joined them in sponsoring the draft resolution, and they hoped that Africa and Latin America would have frequent opportunities of working together for the solution of the problems confronting the Organization. The sponsors were naturally anxious that the proposed enlargement should be so planned as to safeguard the effective functioning of the Advisory Committee; that point had been expressly covered in the explanatory memorandum (A/4916, para. 3).

4. Delegations taking part in the discussion were agreed that representation of the African continent on the Advisory Committee was called for. The rule of procedure governing the composition of that Committee stipulated that broad geographical representation should be one of the criteria for the selection of its members, and it had been recognized, from the outset, that all available experience should be drawn upon. While it would be incorrect to think in terms of national

representation on the Advisory Committee, it was equally undesirable, at the opposite extreme, to exclude a whole continent from the membership and reject thereby the expert contribution which it could make to United Nations affairs. In February 1946, when the Advisory Committee was established, the fifty-one Member States included only three African States, whereas today Africa accounted for more than 25 per cent of the total membership of 103 States. A clear case existed for African representation on the Committee.

5. Many speakers pointed out that the high repute in which the Advisory Committee was held could be ascribed to the eminence of the Chairman and members and to their outstanding personal qualifications and professional competence, as well as to the quality of the secretariat by which the Committee was served. Care should therefore be taken to ensure the maintenance of the exacting standards which the Advisory Committee had set for itself over the past fifteen years and which had made of the Committee an indispensable adjunct of the Fifth Committee and a major instrument of control in the administrative apparatus of the United Nations.

6. In the ensuing discussion on the optimum size of the Advisory Committee, attention was drawn to the reference in paragraph 3 of the explanatory memorandum (A/4916) to "the limitations necessary to safeguard the effective functioning of the Committee as an expert body of the General Assembly". Some delegations spoke in favour of maintaining the number of nine members; in their view, the expansion of the Organization did not necessarily call for an increase in every subsidiary organ; in some cases, it might on the contrary demand either a reduction in number or a raising of the basic qualifications for membership. The desired representation of the African continent could be achieved by a redistribution of the seats. In the specific case of the Advisory Committee, the compactness of its membership had proved a positive asset; the Committee had found it possible to take up items at short notice, to examine them expeditiously and, where necessary, informally, and - above all - to rid the consideration of such items of political content.

7. Other delegations were of opinion that a modest increase in the membership would in no way detract from the advantages inherent in a limited composition. While the optimum size of the Committee could not be determined with mathematical precision, a limited increase would assuredly not prejudice its effective functioning; it would at the same time permit the infusion of the wholesome new

ideas which representatives of the African continent could bring to its deliberations, including doubtless a better appreciation of the many problems with which the less developed areas of the world were grappling.

8. The point was made that, in order to enable the Committee to profit from ideas and contributions of the widest possible range, different representatives from every region should have the opportunity of serving in rotation. That could be achieved if the members would voluntarily accept the principle of rotation and not seek re-election. There could be no question that the newly independent countries could furnish experts of the requisite technical calibre, and even were that not so, a detached outlook, an open mind, and common sense were attributes at least as important as technical competence and experience.

9. Some delegations thought it preferable to omit the third and fourth preambular paragraphs of the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680), which by linking the enlargement of the Committee to a particular geographical region appeared to stipulate how the tenth and eleventh seats should be filled; the omission of those paragraphs could not prejudice the claim of the African States, which had in any case been endorsed by all speakers in the debate, and there was likely to be unanimous support for the election of two African candidates.

10. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, after referring to the view which delegations had expressed unanimously in favour of the representation of the African continent on that Committee, touched upon the question of the optimum size of the Advisory Committee in relation to broad geographical representation and to the efficient functioning of the Committee. The question had been debated in December 1945 by the Preparatory Commission, which recommended to the General Assembly at its first session that the Advisory Committee should be a small expert body composed of seven members and that the members should not represent Member States on the Committee. Those were, in his opinion, sound recommendations; a small expert committee could work more efficiently, expeditiously and economically than a large body. The General Assembly had not, however, shared the Preparatory Commission's view regarding the number of members, preferring instead a membership of nine. The question might be asked what was the ideal number from the standpoint of efficiency. It would be difficult to reply in absolute terms or to argue that, as soon as some

given figure was exceeded, efficiency started to diminish. As regards the particular point on which his opinion had been sought, it appeared to him that the wisest course would be (a) to achieve a better representation of the various regions within the present number of nine members, and (b) to arrange for a regular rotation in membership by imposing a limit of two terms (six years) for service on the Committee. In any case, it seemed probable that, with further admissions to the United Nations anticipated in 1962, additional claims to seats on the Advisory Committee might be presented at the next session. For that reason, it would perhaps be wiser, while doing justice at the current session to the legitimate claim of Africa, to defer until 1962 a decision on the far-reaching changes that had been proposed.

11. At the 866th meeting, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - subsequently joined as sponsor by Albania, Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic - proposed amendments (A/C.5/L.681 and Add.1 and 2) to the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680) whereby the fourth preambular paragraph would read: "Considering that the African and Eastern European Member States are not represented in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions", and the word "eleven" in operative paragraphs 1 and 2 would be replaced by the word "twelve".

12. The Soviet Union representative referred to the close connexion between the work of the Advisory Committee and the activities of the Secretariat, which - in their administrative and budgetary aspects - were submitted to that Committee's scrutiny. The question of the Committee's composition should therefore be considered in relation to the general situation prevailing in the Secretariat, and in both cases - Secretariat and Committee - a solution should be found for the problem of geographical distribution. The Advisory Committee was at present composed of one United States expert, one Soviet Union expert, three experts from Western Europe, two from Asia and the Middle East, and two from Latin America. Africa and Eastern Europe which should, as of right, be playing an important part in the organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, were not represented. That situation should be remedied, and the purpose of the proposed amendments was to repair a serious omission in the text of the joint draft resolution, by inserting a reference to Eastern Europe in the preamble and by providing in the

operative paragraphs for the necessary additional seat. It could not with justice be contended that by reason of the presence of a Soviet Union expert on the Committee, Eastern Europe could be regarded as having representation thereon. The Soviet Union representative pointed out in this connexion that the greater part of his country's territory lay in Asia.

13. Other delegations favouring the proposed amendments pointed out that the countries of the Eastern European regional group, excluding the Soviet Union, counted a total population of 140 million, a figure equivalent to that of Western Europe, excluding France and the United Kingdom; yet Western Europe was also represented on the Advisory Committee, while Eastern Europe was not. Again, a comparison based on budgetary assessments showed that the Latin American countries, with an aggregate assessment of 4.73 per cent, had two seats on the Committee, whereas the Eastern European countries, with an aggregate assessment of 5.47 per cent, had none. The comparison was particularly relevant in the case of a committee exercising budgetary functions of the highest importance. Rule 157 of the rules of procedure should be strictly applied; the regional groupings in the United Nations were well defined, and the allocation of a seat to the Eastern European group was fully justified in terms of the "broad geographical representation" stipulated in that rule of procedure and in relation to the representation of other regions on the Advisory Committee.

14. Representatives opposing the nine-Power amendments (A/C.5/L.681 and Add.1 and 2) pointed out that the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680) had confined themselves - as the preamble demonstrated - to the particular situation of the African continent which, though comprising twenty-seven Member States, remained without representation on the Advisory Committee. They had not broached the possible reorganization of the Committee or the adequacy of the representation of other geographical regions. The proposed amendments were extraneous to their intention, and indeed distorted it, by introducing into the discussion an entirely new element that might properly form the subject of a separate draft resolution, to be considered on its intrinsic merits. Eastern Europe was, moreover, already represented on the Committee by an expert from the Soviet Union, and, if the geographical distribution of the seats was at issue, other regions might also have grounds for complaint - for example, the Far East

and Australasia; it would then be easy to justify the addition of six or more members, an outcome that would unquestionably impair the Committee's efficiency. Furthermore, the number of Member States from Eastern Europe had not risen in recent years, while the increase in their number between 1945 and 1961 - from five to nine - was by no means commensurate with the increase - from three to twenty-seven - in the number of African Members over the same period. It seemed inappropriate to place Eastern Europe on the same footing as the vast African continent, which accounted for more than 25 per cent of the United Nations membership.

15. At the 868th meeting, the representative of Nigeria, speaking as a sponsor of the thirty-six-Power draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680), said that, by way of a compromise, the African countries were prepared to agree to the deletion of the third and fourth preambular paragraphs, and to propose that the number of members should be fixed at twelve instead of eleven. They would also propose that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution should be amended to provide that the Committee should include at least three rather than two financial experts of recognized standing. His own delegation was ready to enter into a gentleman's agreement that the twelfth seat on the Committee should be earmarked for an expert from Eastern Europe.

16. The representative of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of all but one of the Latin American sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680), accepted the deletion of the two preambular paragraphs in question, as well as the increase in the number of members from eleven to twelve. He could not, however, concur in the Nigerian representative's statement concerning the allocation of the twelfth seat on the Committee.

17. The representative of Poland, speaking on behalf of the authors of the nine-Power amendments (A/C.5/L.681 and Add.1 and 2), said that, in view of the compromise solution, the amendments would be withdrawn.

18. A number of representatives stated that, in the event of the adoption of the revised draft resolution, their delegations would consider themselves bound exclusively by the actual terms of the resolution. They would not be committed to any gentleman's agreement or informal understanding concerning the composition of the Advisory Committee. In the matter of all appointments to that Committee, they would have regard solely to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and cast their votes on the basis of the personal qualifications of the candidates. Other

representatives indicated that they would vote in favour of the revised draft resolution on the understanding that a seat on the Committee should be earmarked for an expert from Eastern Europe.

#### Financial implications

19. The representative of the Secretary-General reported, in accordance with rules 154 and 155 of the rules of procedure, that the enlargement of the Advisory Committee would call for an additional annual expenditure estimated at some \$5,000 per additional member.

20. Accordingly, the financial implications of the appended draft resolution are estimated at approximately \$15,000 for 1962 and each subsequent year.

#### Decision of the Fifth Committee

21. At the 868th meeting, the Committee adopted the thirty-six-Power draft resolution (A/C.5/L.680), as revised, by a roll-call vote of 81 to none, with 6 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo (Leopoldville), Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belgium, Canada, China, Italy,<sup>2/</sup> South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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<sup>2/</sup> The Secretariat was subsequently informed that Italy had intended to vote in favour of the revised draft resolution.



Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

22. The Fifth Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

ENLARGEMENT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE  
AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 14 (I) of 13 February 1946, by which the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was established at nine members,

Noting that the membership of the United Nations has increased substantially since the adoption of that resolution,

1. Decides to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from nine to twelve members;
2. Decides to amend as follows rules 156 and 157 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly:

Rule 156

"The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (hereinafter called the 'Advisory Committee') with a membership of twelve, including at least three financial experts of recognized standing."

Rule 157

"The members of the Advisory Committee, no two of whom shall be nationals of the same State, shall be selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience, and shall serve for three years corresponding to three financial years, as defined in the regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations. Members shall retire by rotation and shall be eligible for reappointment. The three financial experts shall not retire simultaneously. The General Assembly shall appoint the members of the Advisory Committee at the regular session immediately preceding the expiration of the term of office of the members, or, in case of vacancies, at the next session."

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