



Fifteenth session
Agenda item 58

ORGANIZATION AND WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS APPOINTED UNDER GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION 1446 (XIV) AND PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS
THEREON BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. T.W. CUTTS (Australia)

1. Agenda item 58 was considered at the 784th meeting of the Fifth Committee, the relevant documents being an interim report (A/4536, annex) of the Committee of Experts on the Review of the Activities and Organization of the Secretariat (appointed under General Assembly resolution 1446 (XIV) of 5 December 1959) and the related observations of the Secretary-General (A/4536) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/4554).
2. The Secretary-General reported (A/4536, paras. 2 and 3) that, though General Assembly resolution 1446 (XIV) provided for the appointment of a committee of experts of six members, he had not found it possible, within that number, to meet the other requirement laid down in the General Assembly resolution - that of satisfactory geographical distribution. He had therefore, provisionally and subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, appointed a committee of eight members. He sought the Assembly's concurrence in that action.
3. While not questioning the soundness of the Secretary-General's action, some delegations considered that it had perhaps been unwise to depart from the exact terms of the resolution without prior reference to the Assembly. They asked why the representatives of the Secretary-General had not pointed out the need for a larger membership when the item was under discussion at the fourteenth session.

4. The representative of the Secretary-General said that at the time of the adoption in December 1959 of General Assembly resolution 1446 (XIV) no difficulty had been foreseen in appointing a committee of six experts on a satisfactory geographical basis. It was only at the subsequent stage of consultation with Governments that it had been found difficult, with a committee limited to six members, to meet the views of Governments in relation to geographical distribution. Two courses had then been open to the Secretary-General: either to do nothing, on the ground that literal compliance with the terms of the resolution would have been undesirable in an important respect, or to appoint, on a purely provisional basis and subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, a membership consistent with the requirement of geographical distribution. The latter course had been followed, because of the heavy volume of work awaiting the Committee, but the General Assembly was still free to confirm or reject the Secretary-General's provisional decision.

5. In its interim report, the Committee of Experts said that it contemplated holding two principal sessions in New York in the first half of 1961, and visiting the European Office of the United Nations between those sessions; and further that it hoped to complete its final report by May 1961. A number of delegations expressed disappointment that the report contained so little of substance. They recognized that it had been agreed in 1959 that the Committee of Experts would present the main body of its findings and recommendations in 1961. However, they had understood that the Fifth Committee would receive at the current (1960) session a progress report identifying the problems to be studied jointly by the Secretary-General and the Expert Committee, and outlining the working methods to be followed in the review.

6. There was general support in the Committee for the suggestion of the Committee of Experts (A/4536, annex, para. 6), which had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee (A/4554, para. 3), that, pending examination of the final report by the General Assembly, the various organs of the United Nations should not - save in cases of real urgency - propose the initiation of studies or other projects involving additions to the budget or to the permanent establishment of the Secretariat.

7. Some delegations suggested that, apart from the material presented by the Secretariat, the Committee of Experts should examine the observations concerning the working of the Secretariat which a number of Member States had offered during the current session of the General Assembly including proposals for a revised structure of the Secretariat designed to represent three main groupings of Member States. Those delegations also recommended that a study should be made of ways and means of stabilizing the regular budget of the Organization, as well as of the possible introduction of a special operational budget for the financing of additional programmes in the economic and social fields. They urged that close attention should be given to the problem of geographical distribution in the Secretariat and to the related question of the desirable ratio of career appointments to fixed-term appointments.

8. Other delegations took the view that, according to the terms of reference as defined in the Assembly resolution, the Committee of Experts had no authority to make proposals concerning the structure of the Secretariat which involved a revision of the Charter.

9. The Committee approved without objection the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/4556) for the addition, as proposed by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/830), of \$50,000 to the appropriation under section 1 of the 1961 budget, to provide for the estimated expenses of the Committee of Experts in that year.

Recommendation of the Committee

10. At its 784th meeting, the Fifth Committee unanimously decided to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution.

ORGANIZATION AND WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly

1. Takes note of the interim report of the Committee of Experts on the Activities and Organization of the Secretariat^{1/} and the related observations of the Secretary-General^{2/} and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;^{3/}

^{1/} A/4536 and Corr.1, annex.

^{2/} A/4536 and Corr.1.

^{3/} A/4554.

2. Confirms the provisional decision of the Secretary-General that, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 1446 (XIV) of 5 December 1959, the composition of the Committee of Experts should be increased from six to eight members;

3. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee of Experts that, pending examination of its final report by the General Assembly, United Nations organs should not - save in cases of real urgency - propose the initiation of studies or other projects involving additions to the budget or to the permanent establishment of the Secretariat.
