



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUYAMA (Japan)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 112: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY
QUESTIONS

(b) FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A SINGLE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL: REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 113: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued)

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/38/SR.24
17 November 1983
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 112: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
(continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS
(A/35/515)

(b) FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A SINGLE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/C.5/38/26)

1. Mrs. HOUSHOLDER (United States of America) said that the report of the Advisory Committee before the Committee (A/38/515) was all the more useful in that it was the one document in which were consolidated financial and administrative data on all the agencies in the United Nations system. Since assessed contributions and voluntary contributions tended to evolve interdependently, although in opposite directions, her delegation would like to see the report expanded to include comprehensive figures on all the voluntary programmes.

2. The assessed budgets, which had increased 250 per cent in 10 years, had had their growth curbed in recent years; that was undoubtedly due to the changing economic conditions and the "tightening of belts" by Governments and international organizations, as well as to the fact that the latter had arrived at maturity and were endowed with an adequate infrastructure, so that henceforth the existing machinery could be adjusted to meet new needs.

3. Although it proposed no action with respect to cash-flow problems or arrangements in each of the agencies for programme planning, budgeting and evaluation, the Advisory Committee had compiled some extremely interesting information. It would be useful if it would continue to report on general problems of all the agencies in odd-numbered years, including the question of the excess of support costs over reimbursement for technical co-operation activities (table C).

4. Mr. KOULIK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) expressed the concern of his delegation over the continued growth of the regular budgets of the agencies. For FAO and WIPO the amounts estimated for 1984 were more than 20 per cent higher than those for 1983, while in the case of UPU, ICAO, WHO and IAEA the growth was over 10 per cent. It was clear from tables B and C that staff costs and the financing of technical co-operation activities accounted for the increases.

5. In most of the organizations of the system, staff costs represented 80 per cent of the total budget; their constant rise was due to increases in salaries and benefits and to the growing number of staff members. Although staffing resources were already enormous (more than 24,500 persons), it was intended to create 451 new posts in 1984 (compared with 285 in 1983), of which 218 were for the United Nations; that was all the more inadmissible in that many experts and consultants were available to the agencies.

/...

(Mr. Koulik, Ukrainian SSR)

6. It was also of concern to note that in 1984 expenditures for technical co-operation activities would represent 20.9 per cent of the overall total of regular budgets (para. 10 and table C). His delegation's position of principle on that matter was clear-cut: such activities should be financed by voluntary contributions exclusively, and UNDP and the other programmes financed from extrabudgetary resources should reimburse in full the support costs incurred by the organizations of the system.

7. In its study of cash-flow problems, the Advisory Committee had neglected to point out that those problems were chiefly due to the difficulties faced by Member States in shouldering the increasingly heavy burden imposed by the growth of the regular budgets.

8. As for programme planning, budgeting and evaluation, his delegation was surprised at the conclusion of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 36 of its report and felt that, on the contrary, by exchanging their experiences, the organizations could improve their effectiveness, rationalize the use of their resources and, by such economies, build up reserves. Moreover, the remark made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 51, according to which the agencies were aware of the need for careful programming, budgeting, financial control and evaluation in order to ensure the optimum use of limited resources, seemed to be contradicted by the fact that the regular budgets of nearly all of them were increasing.

9. Although the work of the Advisory Committee was commendable, his delegation hoped that future reports would contain a greater number of specific recommendations aimed at improving administrative and budgetary co-ordination in the system; they should provide additional information on the structure of disbursements, by object of expenditure, and on the cost of the various types of activities, also by object of expenditure. Lastly, the Advisory Committee could also study the impact of inflation and exchange rate variations.

10. Mr. FERNANDEZ MAROTO (Spain) pointed out a technical error in the Spanish version of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/38/515, table A.2, footnote a/). The data furnished by the tables included in the report were extremely useful, for they made possible both a qualitative and a quantitative evaluation. His delegation had noted with interest that UNJSPF had 2,197 more participants than there were staff members in posts. It therefore strongly encouraged the Advisory Committee to pursue its work and to recommend, where necessary, the improvement of accounting methods in order to be able to determine precisely, inter alia, the project support costs referred to in paragraph 10.

11. Sections III and IV of the report were also very interesting. His delegation did not entirely share the opinion expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 36, however, for, while realizing the difficulties, it was convinced that the harmonization of arrangements in respect of programme planning, budgeting and evaluation among agencies remained a valuable objective.

/...

(Mr. Fernandez Maroto, Spain)

12. As to the feasibility of establishing a single administrative tribunal, a question which had been under study for five years, his delegation was pleased that the legal advisers had reached a general agreement on a number of proposed reforms designed to improve or harmonize the procedures of the two Administrative Tribunals, and that the Secretary-General was now in a position to prepare a set of proposals. In that respect, the process described in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/38/26 must be initiated without delay, so that a final decision could be taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

AGENDA ITEM 113: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued) (A/38/34, A/38/92; A/C.5/38/8)

13. Mrs. HOUSHOLDER (United States of America) said that her delegation, although recognizing the vital role of the Joint Inspection Unit and the quality of its reports, would prefer it to direct its attention to studies having greater cross-organizational significance.

14. Referring to paragraph 88 of document A/38/34, she reminded JIU that it was a collegial body and warned it against the practice of indicating dissenting opinions among the Inspectors, which could only serve to undermine its recommendations. As for the proposal made in paragraph 12, JIU had not provided for cases in which a legislative body might wish simply "to take note" of its report and to leave it to the executive head to adopt those suggestions which he found feasible; it was, in fact, sometimes preferable to ignore certain recommendations in particularly sensitive areas.

15. Referring to reports of JIU on particular subjects, she said that the one dealing with the contribution of the United Nations system to the conservation and management of Latin American cultural and natural heritage (A/37/509) would have been more useful if it had allowed Member States to determine the actual value of United Nations system operations, which, in the field of cultural heritage, was small in comparison to that of other agencies. The report in document A/38/333 contained valuable information on the constraints encountered by Governments in developing their own evaluation capacity and the activities of the United Nations system to remedy that situation.

16. Her delegation regretted that the Secretary-General had not yet reported on the implementation of certain JIU recommendations. It recognized the validity of the reasons given in document A/C.5/38/8 to justify the fact that some recommendations had not been implemented. In conclusion, she invited JIU to concentrate on areas where it could make concrete, action-oriented recommendations which would produce greater efficiency in the United Nations system.

17. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that, despite the increased attention which they were giving to JIU reports, the Secretary-General and the other executive heads should do more to ensure an effective follow-up. Their comments on the JIU reports which concerned them should be submitted in good time, so as not to delay the consideration of those reports by

/...

(Mr. Takasu, Japan)

the legislative bodies. Furthermore, in spite of the arrangements which had been recently made, the reports had not been given the necessary attention by the committee concerned and the governing bodies. It was to be hoped that during the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly the reports concerning, inter alia, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) would be given in-depth consideration by the Main Committees concerned.

18. Although some of the recommendations in the report on DIESA gave rise to serious reservations, his delegation felt that that report and the report on DTCD should be taken into consideration by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session when it reviewed the implementation of the resolution on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors. As JIU pointed out, the General Assembly, or the other legislative bodies concerned, should take a clear position on the recommendations, thereby facilitating their implementation. In that regard, his delegation noted with satisfaction that, according to document A/C.5/38/8, a substantial number of recommendations had been implemented and that the Secretary-General had put forward a reasonable explanation for not complying with others.

19. Among the preliminary studies in the JIU work programme, his delegation was particularly interested in the following subjects: inter-organizational co-operation on food questions, the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in South-East Asia and United Nations peace-keeping activities.

20. Mr. KOULIK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) observed that the Joint Inspection Unit had been set up in order to improve the effectiveness of the specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and promote a more rational utilization of their human and financial resources. An analysis of the studies carried out by JIU in its 14 years of existence showed that, for the most part, it had wasted its efforts by drawing up reports which were often of limited interest or which dealt with matters that fell within the competence of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. If one also took into account the fact that JIU, which was composed of 11 inspectors, and its secretariat of 19 persons cost \$2 million annually and that most of its recommendations led, not to a reduction, but to an increase in budgetary expenses, the Unit's lack of cost-effectiveness became evident.

21. JIU attached too much importance to the development of a very elaborate evaluation system in the United Nations and the related organizations: four of the 12 reports under consideration by the Committee dealt with that subject. It should instead concentrate its efforts on the following questions: limiting budgetary growth, increasing staff productivity, the effectiveness of programme delivery, the elimination of duplication and the standardization of staff salaries and benefits in the organizations applying the common system. Its recommendations should tend to limit operating expenses and enhance the effectiveness of each of the agencies and of the system as a whole, instead of dealing with disparate questions.

/...

(Mr. Koulik, Ukrainian SSR)

22. The late issue of the JIU reports and the reports of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, which was dealt with in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the JIU report, prevented the Main Committees of the General Assembly from giving them due consideration. The Unit should follow up its own recommendations, once they were approved by the General Assembly, otherwise it would be unrealistic to expect greater effectiveness. In that regard, his delegation supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 12 of the JIU report, to the effect that the legislative bodies should clearly explain their positions on the recommendations submitted, in order to improve implementation.

23. With regard to the work programme of the Unit for 1983 (A/38/92), it was not clear why the Inspectors had chosen to study one particular subject rather than another: they should explain the reasons for doing so. Lastly, his delegation hoped that the internal evaluation process referred to by JIU itself would ensure that the observations made by delegations concerning JIU's work were duly taken into consideration.

24. Mr. RALLIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the member States of the European Community, said that those States continued to hold the Joint Inspection Unit in high esteem. They appreciated its detailed and in-depth studies and felt that its reports deserved the full attention of the Fifth Committee and the bodies concerned. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of JIU was receiving greater attention from Member States, which was very encouraging.

25. He expressed satisfaction that the reports of JIU would henceforth be submitted under the agenda items to which they related. That procedure, however, was not being followed in all cases, and the reasons for the departures should be explained.

26. With regard to the need for the legislative bodies to take a clear position on each of the recommendations of JIU, as urged by the Unit in paragraph 12 of its report, he appreciated that such a procedure would enable the Inspectors to follow up their recommendations more effectively, but he felt that it was preferable that each legislative body should itself determine whether it wished to give an opinion on a recommendation.

27. He urged the only specialized agency which had not yet done so to accept the statute of JIU, thereby enabling it to benefit from the Unit's advice and demonstrating that the organizations of the United Nations system were unanimous in recognizing the useful role played by the Unit.

28. Mr. MARRON (Spain) expressed satisfaction that the Joint Inspection Unit was carrying out preliminary studies on each of the questions under consideration in order to determine whether a formal study would be likely to result in constructive recommendations, as it indicated in paragraph 9 of its report (A/38/34). Those preliminary reports, however, should not be too elaborate, or the purpose of the exercise would be lost. The vast experience of the Inspectors should enable them to determine promptly whether it would be worth while to embark on a formal study.

/...

(Mr. Marron, Spain)

29. The carrying out of internal studies designed to improve the effectiveness of the Unit itself demonstrated the vitality of that body. They included an assessment of past activities, the development of standards and methods for preparing JIU reports and the introduction of new techniques for follow-up of its reports.

30. The late issue of the comments on JIU reports - 68 per cent of which were submitted late - gave cause for concern, particularly in view of the fact that the questions under consideration had technical aspects which delegations should have the time to examine. Furthermore, each postponement of the consideration of the reports delayed a little longer the remedying of the problems considered. The recommendations which had been approved could very quickly become outmoded. One had only to read section VII of the report, "Summaries of JIU reports and notes", to see that that was so.

31. Furthermore, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/C.5/38/8) dealt with questions which had been considered for the most part in previous JIU reports, some of which had been submitted at the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions of the General Assembly. His delegation earnestly hoped that the process could be speeded up. At the same time, it welcomed the importance which the Secretary-General attached to the recommendations of the Inspectors, took note of the fact that not all of them had been accepted and inferred therefrom that there might be differences of opinion between the bodies which made recommendations and those who were responsible for implementing them. Most of the recommendations, however, had been acted on, which demonstrated a spirit of co-operation on the part of the Secretariat.

32. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines), briefly reviewing the questions dealt with by the Joint Inspection Unit, welcomed the constructive measures on programme planning which the Unit had proposed. The amendments to the United Nations Financial Regulations proposed by the Secretary-General in order to harmonize the Organization's financial and administrative regulations should be viewed in the light of JIU's recommendations. With regard to the use of experts and consultants, JIU should continue to submit interim reports on the matter, which was of particular concern to Member States in view of the limited resources available to the Organization. As for documentation, he wondered why the Secretary-General had not adopted the proposed system of quotas. With respect to the regulations applicable to official travel, JIU's report and recommendations on the matter would be welcome.

33. In a different context, the Inspectors might wish to study the question of strengthening the system of evaluation in the regional economic commissions, since they had already carried out such a study for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). His delegation would return to the system of evaluation for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific when the corresponding section of the draft programme budget was taken up. It would also be desirable for the Joint Inspection Unit to continue to consider progress in data processing in the United Nations system. With regard to peace-keeping operations, he said that

/...

(Mr. Garrido, Philippines)

if JIU undertook a preliminary study on the matter, it would be desirable to co-ordinate its activities with those of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.

34. Lastly, in paragraph 12 of its report, the Joint Inspection Unit recommended formulations which Member States might use to express their views on its recommendations. His delegation wished to add the formulation: "requests further studies on the recommendation [...] or the recommendations [...] and [...]".

35. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) referred to paragraph 88 of the JIU report, which stated that one Inspector had not been in agreement with all of his colleagues' recommendations. While the members of the Unit could not be expected to be in unanimous agreement, a certain harmony between them could nevertheless be expected. The Advisory Committee, for example, operated in that way, and its opinions were always considered to be collective.. In the case in point, there was no reference either to the name of the Inspector or to the reasons for his disagreement.

36. In general, his delegation noted that, in its various reports, the Unit was much closer to the concerns of the Secretariat than to those of Member States. It should perhaps alter its viewpoint and pay more attention to the latter's interests and concerns.

37. In paragraph 15 of his report, the Secretary-General explained why he had not implemented JIU recommendation 2 (a), relating to the proportion of nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States who should be appointed to vacant geographic posts. The General Assembly had already, on two occasions, established precise recruitment targets, namely 25 per cent for women and 40 per cent for nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States. To raise those percentages or to establish new figures would only serve to make the system more rigid, indeed ungovernable. The Secretary-General had done well to act with the greatest caution in that area

38. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the Joint Inspection Unit had a fundamental role to play in the work of the Fifth Committee, since it was at the centre of political and administrative problems. Its function made it the arbitrator between Governments and the Secretariat, a role which was frequently difficult to play, since it required the reconciliation of opposing interests. On the one hand, Member States did not wish to give more than they received, and they operated on a basis of consultation. On the other hand, the Secretariat had to be at the disposal of Member States and operated in accordance with hierarchical relationships which should be perfectly clear. The Organization's credibility depended on that tension between two opposite poles.

39. As it was always difficult to criticize oneself, the extreme independence of the Joint Inspection Unit vis-à-vis the various protagonists in the United Nations assumed particular importance. Its recommendations were not restrictive. On the contrary, they were all aimed at improving the management of resources so as to ensure parallel growth in the Organization's means and its objectives. Differences

/...

(Mr. Lahlou, Morocco)

of opinion which might arise between the Committee and JIU, between the latter and the Secretariat, or between the Inspectors themselves demonstrated the healthy state of those institutions, in that they bore witness to the existence of different schools of thought.

40. With regard to the JIU recommendations dealt with by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/38/8), it seemed to his delegation that once a General Assembly decision had been taken, the question should not be raised again, nor was there any need to interpret provisions which were so explicit as to require no interpretation. Thus, recommendation 6, referred to in paragraph 17 of the report, related to the equitable geographic distribution of staff in senior and policy-formulating posts. That question had been the subject of negotiations which had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 37/235. It had thus been settled, and the Secretary-General had only to make every endeavour to implement the wishes of the General Assembly.

41. The report on the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (JIU/REP/83/1) was the latest in a series of reports on the activities of that body. JIU had adopted a very constructive and interesting approach. The efforts which it had already made would certainly help the Organization to gain a clearer idea of how UNSO operated and how its activities were co-ordinated with those of other United Nations bodies operating in the same priority sector.

42. Mr. VUKOVIC (Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit) thanked the members of the Committee for their proposals, and even for their criticisms, which would certainly help the Inspectors in their work. He would reply in greater detail at the conclusion of the Committee's consideration of the item to the questions raised.

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA

43. The CHAIRMAN said that Cuba had asked to speak on an item which was not before the Committee. If there was no objection, he proposed, as a matter of courtesy, to let him do so. If any other delegation wished to exercise its right of reply, it could do so immediately afterwards.

44. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the general debate on the draft programme budget had demonstrated the extent to which delegations were concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security and with the success of development activities. All peace-loving nations abhorred violence, but the concept of international conflict had, for the past few days, been placed in a very specific context, that of the deplorable events taking place in the Caribbean. His delegation wished to give the Fifth Committee some late information it had just received, so that the international community might be fully aware that the actions of the greatest world Power threatened to give rise to a series of international conflicts.

45. Referring to a statement of 31 October by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, he stated that the International Committee of the Red Cross had reported on the difficulties it was experiencing in Grenada owing to the fact that it had received only fragmentary reports on the status of Cuban citizens on the island.

/...

46. Mr. KELLER (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, drew attention to rule 113 of the rules of procedure. The remarks made by the Cuban representative had no connection with the items before the Committee, and consequently that representative was out of order.

47. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the statement which he had made before the representative of Cuba took the floor.

48. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that the Chairman's statement had not given the impression that the Committee would depart so radically from its agenda and broach a question being dealt with elsewhere in the General Assembly. It would, in his view, be a grave error to break with the tradition which the Fifth Committee had always respected in such matters.

49. The CHAIRMAN appealed to the Cuban delegation to be as brief as possible.

50. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that on 31 October, at 3 p.m., senior United States officials had met the Cuban Ambassador to Grenada and had refused to provide him with information on Cuban citizens who had been killed or wounded during the events. They had simply stated that the International Committee of the Red Cross was attending to their case. Those Cubans who were still alive would be evacuated at the end of the hostilities. However, nothing was known of the current state of those hostilities.

51. Two officials from the Cuban Embassy had verified the presence among the prisoners of wounded male Cuban nationals and of 34 Cuban women. Moreover, two Embassy officials had been arrested. There had been no subsequent news of their fate. The Cuban Embassy in Grenada was encircled by United States troops, so that it was impossible to enter or leave. Cuban personnel had been requested to leave the island within 24 hours.

52. Mr. KELLER (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that the statement by the representative of Cuba was far from brief and that he would certainly be unable to reply immediately as the Chairman had expected.

53. The CHAIRMAN said that the meeting would be suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 12.30 p.m. and resumed at 12.50 p.m.

54. The CHAIRMAN said that the meeting would adjourn.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.