



FIFTH COMMITTEE  
43rd meeting  
held on  
Monday, 21 November 1983  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. KUYAMA (Japan)

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

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(b) APPOINTMENT OF SIX MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS

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

AGENDA ITEMS 109 AND 110: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/38/3 (Part II), A/38/6, A/38/7, A/38/38; A/C.5/38/2 and Corr.1; A/38/7/Add.3; A/38/172 and Add.1; A/38/334 and Add.1; A/C.5/38/L.10)

First reading (continued)

Section 7. Department of Technical Co-operation for Development

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the original estimate of \$17,596,500 had been revised downwards by an amount of \$89,300. Although it recommended acceptance of the revised estimate, the Advisory Committee discussed in document A/38/7/Add.3 some of the financial problems encountered by the Department and commented in particular on the expected programme delivery rate for 1984 and 1985 and programme support reimbursements. The Advisory Committee considered that the estimates of overhead earnings for 1983, 1984 and 1985 might be somewhat optimistic and that it would therefore no doubt be necessary to revise again the estimates relating to posts financed by overhead reimbursements. He drew the Fifth Committee's attention to paragraphs 9, 10 and 12 of document A/38/7/Add.3, which contained comments of the Advisory Committee on that aspect.

2. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that he wished to emphasize the decisive role which the Department played for developing countries and the anxiety caused by the catastrophic financial situation in which the Department had found itself for the past two years. His country was critical of some of the management methods used and in particular deplored the fact that appropriations earmarked for the implementation of crucial development tasks had not been made available to the Department. With the budgetary restrictions and the abolition of posts, there was a danger that the Department would be deprived of all means of functioning properly and would thus be condemned to disappear. The developing countries were requesting an increase in the Department's budget because they considered that such an increase was indispensable to enable the Department to carry out its essential functions. It seemed, however, that the vital interests of the majority of Member States were not taken duly into account. For example, table 5 in document A/C.5/38/2 indicated that the number of extrabudgetary posts in the Professional category and above would fall from 180 in 1982-1983 to 102 in 1984-1985, with the number of General Service posts falling from 194 to 117. Those figures should make Member States stop and think. What they meant was that either the Department had previously been overstaffed or, just as unacceptable, it was now intended to reduce the Department's staff to such an extent that the Department would no longer be able to carry out any of its tasks. His delegation wanted clarification on that issue. In addition, it asked the Secretary-General once again to examine ways of resolving the Department's difficulties and to submit proposals at the current session if possible so that the interests of the majority of Member States could take precedence over mere budgetary and financial considerations.

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3. Mrs. DEREGIBUS (Argentina) said that her country was concerned to see that activities relating to technical co-operation for development had not been given priority during the preparation of the proposed programme budget. The latest documents concerning the Department's situation did nothing to allay that concern. For example, in paragraph 140 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, it was indicated that, despite a greatly improved delivery rate, the qualitative strengthening of the programme and increased demand by developing countries for services, the Department was facing the most acute financial constraints, and the possibility of income continuing to fall could not be excluded. Under those circumstances, her country wondered whether the Department would be able to implement its programmes, which were of vital importance to the developing countries. She therefore supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee requesting the Secretary-General to keep the Department's delivery situation under constant scrutiny with a view to taking the necessary remedial measures if the Department failed to achieve the projected level of income.

4. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) said that, given the reduction in extrabudgetary posts and the changes resulting from the streamlining of the Department's organizational structure, it seemed doubtful whether the Department could implement all the programmes planned for the remainder of 1983 and for the biennium 1984-1985. According to the figures provided in paragraph 3 of document A/38/7/Add.3, the ratio of programme delivery to project budgets would be 88 per cent in 1983. If that delivery rate, which was the highest ever planned for the Department, was not attained, estimated programme support income would fall proportionately, and that would result in a deficit both for 1983 and for the next biennium. As noted by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 12 of the same document, the reserve fund which had so far made it possible to finance the deficits would be almost depleted by the end of 1983. His delegation therefore endorsed the Advisory Committee's request to the Secretary-General to exercise maximum restraint in the management of section 7 of the budget and keep the Department's activities under constant scrutiny in order to avoid any deficit.

5. With regard to the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, his delegation was pleased to note that two of those recommendations had already been applied or were in the process of being applied. As far as the other recommendations were concerned, it was absolutely essential that the Department's operational activities should be governed by clearly defined terms of reference, representation in the field could be strengthened by calling on staff from the regional commissions and by working in co-operation with the Resident Representatives/Resident Co-ordinators, evaluation activities should be centralized and there should be close co-operation with the small administrative unit set up for that purpose by UNDP; finally, with regard to the recruitment of experts, it was to be hoped that that issue would be dealt with by the Secretary-General within the framework of the consideration of the administrative reform in progress.

6. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) said that his delegation also wished to express serious reservations concerning section 7. The reduction in the project delivery of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was a matter for concern, and his delegation regarded the changes which the Department had had to undergo in recent months with all the more sympathy since his Government attached great

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importance to operational activities for development and had regularly increased its contribution to UNDP and UNFPA. The difficulties which the Secretary-General had encountered in reducing the number of regular-budget posts and replacing them with extrabudgetary posts and the increase in the number of extrabudgetary posts in 1982-1983 despite the stagnation in resources were among the factors to be deplored in that respect. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General should be encouraged to pursue his efforts with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the Department's operations.

7. Some clarification should be provided with regard to the measures taken by the Secretary-General to streamline the Department, as referred to in paragraph 10 of document A/38/172/Add.1, as well as with regard to the costs incurred in connection with those measures.

8. With respect to the reimbursement of programme support costs, the expectations providing the basis for the revised estimates were no doubt a little too optimistic. It emerged from the Advisory Committee's report that the Department's overhead income would be around \$15.7 million, not \$16.3 million as indicated to the Committee by the representatives of the Secretary-General. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to exercise maximum restraint in authorizing allotments and staffing tables during the biennium 1984-1985, and it fully endorsed the reservations expressed by the Advisory Committee.

9. Finally, he requested additional information on recommendations 2 and 5 of the Joint Inspection Unit and emphasized that effective monitoring and evaluation were very important for the Department's activities given the restrictions which the Department was currently facing with regard to financing and staff resources. His delegation felt that the Department should pay the closest attention to that issue and fully supported the recommendations of CPC in that respect.

10. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that his delegation shared the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee in its report concerning reduced project delivery capacity and the resulting reduction in income. His delegation feared that the Department's overhead income would be less than the \$16.3 million estimated for each year of the biennium and that the deficits recorded in 1981 and 1982 would be repeated. It therefore supported those other delegations which had requested the Secretary-General to keep the situation under constant scrutiny and to be prepared to take additional remedial measures.

11. Mr. EMENYI (Nigeria) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the Department and to the contribution it could make to the management of the development projects of the developing countries. What was at issue was not whether the Department could deliver the services which it had been established to provide but whether the Fifth Committee should be concerned with helping the Department to carry out its tasks. It was regrettable that the level of resources made available to the Department had been reduced, and an effort should be made to ensure that the Department had the kind of staff it needed to ensure the delivery of the services in question. His delegation would welcome more detailed information on the services which the Department had provided to African countries and on its programme of activities for the forthcoming biennium.

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12. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that, while the Committee should certainly welcome the Secretariat's intention to spell out more clearly the mandate of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, review its structure and streamline its operational procedures, that was not the main issue. The level of resources which the Department had so far been given to carry out its tasks had declined substantially. It should be noted, moreover, that the real problem did not lie in the decrease in resources but in the extent of the decrease. The question arose as to what extent the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit could actually be implemented. The root cause which had to be faced was not the Department's organizational structure but its very serious financial difficulties, which might lead to its being merged with other departments, and that would be highly regrettable.

13. Mr. FORAN (Controller), replying to the representative of Egypt, said that the difficulties facing the Department stemmed from the decline in real terms of contributions to UNDP. In the case of most executing agencies, that decline had resulted in a decrease in the delivery rate for technical co-operation programmes and projects. The table in paragraph 3 of the Advisory Committee's report showed a marked increase in the delivery rate for technical co-operation programmes between 1979 and 1981, and a corresponding increase in programme support reimbursements. Since that time, income from reimbursements had decreased, while expenses had risen substantially. That was why the Department had been forced during the two previous years to pursue a policy of restraint. It had had to undergo "surgery" beginning in 1981, which, it was hoped, would be completed in 1983. In short, the Department had to have extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of technical co-operation projects and programmes.

14. With regard to the streamlining of the Department's organizational structure, the staff members who had voluntarily agreed to separation had received a termination indemnity as provided for in the Staff Rules. The expenditure involved was less than what the staff members in question would have cost had they remained in the service of the Organization. The streamlining operation had thus led to savings.

15. Miss ANSTEE (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) thanked those delegations which had expressed support for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, in particular the developing countries, which were most directly concerned by technical co-operation. Such support seemed to be an indication that the quality of the services provided by the Department had improved in recent years. It was therefore surprising that one or two delegations had spoken of a decrease in the Department's capacity to deliver technical co-operation services to the developing countries. When the financial crisis had first hit, the Department had been more active than ever, and the difficulties which it was currently facing stemmed both from a decrease in resources made available to its main funding agencies - UNDP and UNEPA - and an increase in common staff costs, which were not reimbursed by extrabudgetary sources of funding.

16. A programme such as the one which the Department was responsible for carrying

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out posed countless difficulties from the point of view of both implementation and the management of resources. Indeed the Department's programme was not known in advance: it was the sum of the various programmes which developing countries called upon it to undertake. The amount of resources could likewise not be determined beforehand, since they were provided from voluntary contributions.

17. The purpose of programme support reimbursements was to help the Department to improve the technical services it provided to developing countries. In recent years the Department's policy had been systematically to plough such funds back into programmes, especially their technical components, so as to improve the quality of its work.

18. The Department's programme depended also on the priorities set by Governments themselves. Traditionally, UNDP provided two thirds of the funding for the Department's programme and UNEFA 20 per cent, with the balance coming from the regular programme and special trust funds. In view of the financial difficulties which UNEFA had been experiencing recently and the decision taken by the UNDP Governing Council to reorder its priorities and to place greater emphasis on family planning in the population programme, which fell more within the sphere of the World Health Organization, the Department's population activities - including, in particular, censuses, which accounted for a large share of the programme executed for UNEFA - had declined. The Department had thus become more dependent on UNDP, since the latter now provided more than 80 per cent of the funding for the operational programme.

19. Some delegations had voiced fears that the objectives set for the current year were not attainable. In reality, the Department's slow start in that respect was not as great as might be thought at first sight, given the difficulties encountered in recent months. The delivery rate was off by only 7 per cent in comparison with 1982, and steps were being taken to catch up by the end of the year.

20. Replying to the United States representative, who had observed that the planned delivery rate for 1983 was higher than ever, which had caused the Advisory Committee some concern, she said that the Department's budget was not static and that the figures given by the Advisory Committee in that connection were those which had been available when its report had been prepared. Those figures were now higher, on the order of \$155 million as at the end of October, representing a delivery rate of approximately 80 per cent.

21. Replying to the representative of Nigeria, she explained that the Department's programme was determined by the policy set by the funding agencies, and that a large part of the programme was concerned with the African region. For 1984, \$40 million would be allocated to that region, but that figure would continue to grow since the funding of the Department was an ongoing process and Africa accounted for some 43 per cent of its operational activities. The fields in which the Department undertook activities depended on the priorities set by each Government. In general, the Department's work related to natural resources (mineral resources, water, energy) development planning, statistics, public administration and finance, and population.

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22. With respect to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Department had scrupulously followed recommendation 2 relating to the streamlining of its organizational structure. Thus, the Programming and Implementation Division had been abolished and its staff redeployed. The management functions for operational programmes and projects had been integrated in the competent substantive divisions, which had been strengthened accordingly. There had been a consequential decrease in the staff of the Policy Division.
23. With regard to evaluation, the Department had a small evaluation unit within the Country Programming and Evaluation Branch, but in view of the shortage of staff it had not been possible to assign that function to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General as the Joint Inspection Unit had recommended. The Department had formulated guidelines in that area and would collaborate closely with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP's Central Evaluation Unit.
24. In conclusion, she assured the Committee that the Department's management position was stable, but that time was necessary for consolidation, which should be possible if there were no unpleasant financial surprises in the months ahead. Significant staff reductions had been made, resulting in the elimination of 38 per cent of the staff at Headquarters over the past 18 months. A period of consolidation was now necessary to ensure the viability of the Department, which could not withstand further reductions at the moment.
25. In the final analysis the fate of the Department depended on Governments' decisions. Traditionally, activities initiated at Headquarters had subsequently been entrusted to executing agencies in the field. It would not be wise to accede to new demands to decentralize operations beyond the degree envisaged in General Assembly resolution 32/197, which provided only for the decentralization of regional and subregional projects. The support of Governments would be of critical importance in that regard.
26. Mr. ORTEGA (Mexico) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Egypt on section 7. His delegation was concerned about the reduction in technical co-operation activities. Several developing countries had expressed a desire for a further exchange of views on that section within the Group of 77. He thus requested the Committee not to take any decision on section 7 until groups had had an opportunity to hold consultations.
27. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that he found the replies given by the Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development and the Controller very disturbing. It seemed that the essential concern was to determine whether the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development could function or not. Yet that was not the issue. The Department could function on \$200 a year, but the real question was what it could achieve with that amount. Reference had been made to surgical operation, readjustment and streamlining, but what was meant by that? It seemed to him that what was taking place was the assassination of the Department. In paragraph 12 of its report (A/38/7/Add.3), the Advisory Committee stated that it had been "further informed that the reserve fund would be almost depleted by the

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(Mr. El Safty, Egypt)

end of 1983" and that, in order to balance the accounts, the Secretary-General had informed it "that maximum restraint would be exercised in authorizing allotments and staffing tables in 1984-1985 with a view to containing the expenditures charged to the programme support account". Was that the way to meet the expectations of Member States? His delegation thought that that was a very strange use of language. The real problem lay in the reduced level of contributions, particularly those paid to UNDP. That was the problem which had to be tackled. The only concern was to find additional resources for the Department.

28. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that his delegation also found the picture presented by the Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development distressing. The Department was among the major entities of the Organization responsible for assisting developing countries. The Philippines had always maintained that technical co-operation should be distinguished from the assistance provided by UNDP. It was to be hoped that the Department would continue to discharge its functions despite its reduced resources, and that it would formulate contingency plans to be implemented should the situation deteriorate further.

29. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) said that his delegation fully shared the views expressed by the representative of Egypt. Over recent years programmes financed from voluntary contributions had suffered from the increases in the size of the budgets regularly voted by various United Nations agencies, such as WHO, ILO and UNESCO. Those organizations had increased their programme implementation capacity and had been less concerned with what the United Nations itself was doing, so that the programmes of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and those of UNDP or UNICEF had been bound to suffer. His delegation felt that a major effort should be made to support those programmes through voluntary contributions. For its part, the United States had just voted a \$20 million increase in its contribution to UNDP over that for the previous year. It was to be hoped that members of the Fifth Committee would be sure to inform their counterparts in other organizations of the consequences engendered by the increase in the programme implementation capacity of some executing agencies to the detriment of UNDP and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

Section 6. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

30. Mrs. KNEZEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that, in view of the information provided at the previous meeting by some delegations and the representative of FAO, her delegation could not support the Advisory Committee's recommendation to terminate the United Nations contributions to the Committee for Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives (COPAC) and to the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition. Given the importance of the activities of those organs for developing countries, financial and programme considerations should not take precedence, and she had no objection to the appropriations requested under that heading by the Secretary-General. With regard to the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendation to retransfer the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs from Vienna to New York, she considered that the administrative problems encountered by the Centre could be resolved through better communication with the Department.

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31. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Nigeria had proposed that the Committee should approve the establishment of an appropriation of \$56,200 for the Committee for Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives (COPAC) and of an appropriation of \$88,000 for the United Nations contribution to the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition. Referring to the draft decision submitted by Austria in document A/C.5/38/L.10, he suggested that the Committee should await the submission of the Advisory Committee's report on the JIU report before taking up the draft.

32. Mr. AMNEUS (Sweden) said that his delegation supported Nigeria's proposal. In the light of the additional information obtained by the Committee - information which ACABQ and CPC had not had when considering the Secretary-General's proposals - his delegation thought that the Organization should include in its regular budget a contribution to the two organs in question, the activities of which were useful to developing countries. Nevertheless, given the Advisory Committee's views, he proposed that the contribution to COPAC should be limited to 1984. Sweden presumed that the review of the financial arrangements between the United Nations and COPAC requested by the Advisory Committee would be carried out by the Secretary-General, and that the latter would submit his conclusions to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council.

33. Mr. EMENYI (Nigeria) said that he had no objection to the amendment proposed by the representative of Sweden.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that as he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning section 6 (A/38/38, Part II, paras. 131-138).

35. It was so decided.

36. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the proposal of Nigeria, as amended by Sweden, for an appropriation of \$27,400 for COPAC for 1984, and an appropriation of \$88,000 as the Organization's contribution to the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition for the biennium 1984-1985, making a total amount of \$115,400.

37. Mr. GIDLEY (United States of America) said that he had no objection to make to the substance of the proposal but regretted that the normal procedure had not been followed: the Advisory Committee had not had all the relevant information when it examined the Secretary-General's estimate and it was the Fifth Committee which had subsequently been given additional data. In the circumstances, the United States delegation would vote against the Nigerian proposal if it was put to the vote.

38. Mr. KHALEVINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation and asked for a vote on the Nigerian proposal.

39. Mr. STEENBERGER (Denmark), in explanation of his vote before the vote, said that his delegation regretted that, because the necessary information was not available, the Advisory Committee had been unable to approve the Secretary-General's original estimates. He was glad that the additional information provided to the Fifth Committee in response to his questions and those of the representative of Sweden enabled him to vote without reservation for the Nigerian proposal.

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40. Mr. EL SAFTY (Egypt) said that he would vote in favour of the Nigerian proposal for the simple reason that the Advisory Committee had not had complete information when it made its recommendations, and that the Fifth Committee was fully entitled to amend an estimate under consideration in the light of the further details provided to it.

41. An appropriation of \$115,400 under section 6 for the biennium 1984-1985, for contributions by the United Nations to the Committee for Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives (\$27,400) and to the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition (\$88,000), was approved in first reading by 83 votes to 9, with 10 abstentions.

42. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had abstained from voting because, although it disliked opposing the Advisory Committee's recommendations it recognized nevertheless that detailed information had been provided during the debate in support of the proposal just voted on. It hoped that in future the Secretariat would take care to provide proper support for its estimates when the proposed programme budget was being drawn up.

43. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on section 6 as a whole.

44. An appropriation of \$49,060,900 under section 6 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading without a vote.

45. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), explaining his delegation's position, emphasized that the more important a department's activities, like those of DIESA, were to Member States, the more closely the planning, financing and management of those activities should be studied. According to the various reports before the Committee, in particular the JIU report (A/38/334), the Department's activities were handicapped by the fact that no intergovernmental body had looked into its programme of work in detail. The Economic and Social Council had not had time to discuss it in depth and the other intergovernmental bodies concerned had made only a partial analysis of those activities. His delegation agreed with the representative of the Secretary-General that a certain degree of dynamism was necessary, but it should be accompanied by an economical and rational use of the resources available to the Department; those resources were adequate provided that duplication, overlapping and activities of marginal utility, which involved superfluous expenditure (particularly in respect of experts and consultants and staff travel), were eliminated. In point of fact, the Department's programme of work had still not been properly evaluated. His delegation therefore supported the recommendations of CPC and of the Advisory Committee, which it thought very generous. If a vote had been taken on the section as a whole, his delegation would have voted against it.

46. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that, if the proposal relating to output (ii) of programme element 5.1 of programme 4 had been put to the vote, he would have voted against it for the reasons put forward by his delegation in the Third Committee on 9 November 1983.

47. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that, if the appropriation had been put to the vote, he would not have voted for it, although at the outset his delegation had intended to support the Advisory Committee's recommendations, particularly those relating to consultants and ad hoc expert groups. The United States was in no way opposed to the activities of the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition or of COPAC: in fact it made a direct contribution to the latter which was double that of the United Nations. It was, however, opposed to the dubious procedure that had been followed; it believed that when the Committee was called upon to take decisions of that kind it should be in possession of all the relevant information well in advance.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that section 6 would be discussed further when the Committee took up the JIU report and the draft decision submitted by Austria.

AGENDA ITEM 17: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS (continued)

(b) APPOINTMENT OF SIX MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS (A/38/102 and Add.1; A/C.5/38/44)

49. The CHAIRMAN said that, as indicated in document A/38/102 of 17 February 1983, the General Assembly was required during its current session to appoint six persons to fill vacancies in the membership of the Committee on Contributions resulting from the expiration on 31 December 1983 of the terms of office of six of its current members. In addition, in document A/38/102/Add.1 of 22 September 1983, the Secretary-General advised the General Assembly that, owing to the resignation of Mr. Miguel Angel Dávila Mendoza (Mexico), it would be necessary for it to appoint one person during the current session to fill the unexpired portion of Mr. Dávila Mendoza's term of office, up to 31 December 1984. In document A/C.5/38/44, the Secretary-General gave the names of the persons nominated by their respective Governments for appointment or reappointment.

50. He said that if he heard no objection he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend the General Assembly to appoint to the Committee on Contributions the persons named in paragraph 3 (a) of the Secretary-General's note (A/C.5/38/44) for a three-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 1984, and the person named in paragraph 3 (b) for a one-year term of office, also beginning on 1 January 1984.

51. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.