

United Nations

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records*



FIFTH COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Thursday, 10 November 1983
at 3 p.m.
New York

UN DOCUMENTATION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUYAMA (Japan)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEMS 109 AND 110: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 AND
PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

First reading (continued)

Section 25. International Court of Justice (continued)

Section 28. Administration and management (continued)

Section 29. Conference and library services

*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.34
21 November 1983
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 109 AND 110: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985 AND PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/38/3 (Part II) and Corr.1, A/38/6, A/38/7, A/C.5/38/28; A/38/7 Add.4)

First reading (continued)

Section 25. International Court of Justice (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee of his suggestion at a previous meeting that consultations should be held on the estimate for the D-1 post for the proposed liaison function of the International Court of Justice in New York. As a result of those consultations, it had been agreed that the additional information requested could be considered jointly with the budgetary proposals for 1986-1987.
2. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) drew attention to a recommendation of CPC concerning section 25. Since the Chairman had stated that, on the basis of the consultations, the Committee should decide to postpone its consideration of the matter until the budget proposals for 1986-1987 were considered, and since CPC had made a recommendation to that effect, he wondered whether the decision in question implied also an endorsement of the CPC recommendation.
3. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that, in the opinion of a number of delegations, the issue was not very clear, in particular, in terms of the organizational structure of the liaison function; nor was it clear in the judgement of CPC and the Advisory Committee. His delegation had originally intended to oppose the creation of a liaison post; however, on learning of the concern of some delegations, it had felt that the matter should be postponed until a comprehensive study was made available.
4. Mr. HERRIDGE (United Kingdom) said that, in so far as he could see, there was no contradiction between the CPC recommendation and the outcome of the recent informal consultations. He therefore had no difficulty in endorsing the recommendation.
5. The CHAIRMAN said that postponing consideration of the matter was an integral part of the agreement reached in the informal consultations.
6. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that the CPC recommendations had been borne in mind throughout the informal consultations. However, as some delegations opposed and others accepted what had been recommended by the Advisory Committee and CPC, it had been decided to adopt a compromise solution whereby the matter would be postponed until the fortieth session of the General Assembly, when the Fifth Committee would have before it the reports and studies requested and would be able to take a final decision.

7. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that CPC had not been approached in the informal consultations. If the issue was postponed until the budget proposals for 1986-1987 were taken up, it would be necessary at that time to deal with it together with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and CPC.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to postpone its consideration of the proposal for the creation of a D-1 post to perform a liaison function for the International Court of Justice in New York, together with its consideration of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and those of CPC in paragraphs 361 and 362 of part II of document A/38/38, until the proposed programme budget for 1986-1987 was taken up.

9. It was so decided.

Section 28. Administration and management (continued)

10. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to continue its consideration of the subsections of section 28 of the proposed programme budget.

Section 28C. Office of Personnel Services

11. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the Egyptian delegation had proposed that the Committee should approve the reclassifications requested by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 28C.4 and 28C.34 of the proposed programme budget.

12. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) requested that the Egyptian proposal should be put to the vote.

13. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (United Republic of Cameroon), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that he would vote in favour of the Egyptian proposal. The Advisory Committee stated it was not convinced that the reclassification requests were justified (A/38/7, paras. 28.22 and 28.35); nevertheless, he felt that both the requests were in line with the principle that post reclassifications should be proposed at the beginning of the budget period and the principle that, before a reclassification was proposed, the functions of the post should be reviewed on the basis of criteria established by ICSC.

14. One of the most important of the ICSC criteria was that the level of responsibilities attached to the post should have increased. In the case of the post of Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General, advisory duties had been added to the liaison and co-ordination functions (A/38/6, para. 28C.4). In that regard it would be recalled that in previous years, the General Assembly had adopted many resolutions entrusting advisory duties to the Assistant Secretary-General, thereby increasing his responsibilities. As to the post of Senior Medical Officer, it was stated that the Medical Service, in addition to its curative function, would be giving greater attention to the prevention of diseases, which also implied increased responsibilities (A/38/6, para. 28C.23).

15. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that he was in favour of both of the post reclassifications. It was his understanding that the scope of the responsibilities and the work-load of the Senior Medical Officer had increased to the point where the very nature of the post was changed. As to the post of Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General, the increased responsibilities referred to in the proposed programme budget (A/38/6, para. 28C.4) were understandable in that the incumbent was working under the direct orders of the Assistant Secretary-General, who might confer on his Special Assistant a greater or lesser number of duties, according to his own discretion. That meant that the responsibilities were subject to modification and, depending on the circumstances, could correspond to a P-3, a P-4 or a P-5 post.

16. Mrs. de HEDERVARY (Belgium) said that, according to the list of staff of the United Nations Secretariat (ST/ADM/R.36), the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General was already in a P-5 post. She wondered, therefore, what point there was in continuing to discuss the matter.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the voting had already begun, the answer to the Belgium representative's question would have to be given at a later stage.

18. Mr. BANGURA (Sierra Leone) said that, in a year that called for maximum budgetary prudence, he hesitated to support requests for reclassification of posts. Nevertheless, his delegation would vote in favour of the Egyptian proposal, in view of the Secretary-General's concern to be allowed a certain margin of flexibility for strengthening the Secretariat and the morale of the staff. The posts in question entailed additional functions and he trusted that the Secretary-General would fill them with qualified persons.

19. Ms. ZONICLE (Bahamas) stated that the history of reclassifications of posts showed that the existing system was defective, since the Advisory Committee had repeatedly had to reject such requests by the Secretary-General. Her delegation would vote against the Egyptian proposal because it wished to reaffirm its commitment to the maintenance of strict rules of conduct in the United Nations for the benefit of all the staff. Many staff members were concerned that their efforts were not rewarded by the promotion they deserved. She would like to see the Office of Personnel Services study the question on a much broader and more equitable basis instead of concentrating on isolated cases.

20. The Egyptian proposal was adopted by 48 votes to 30, with 4 abstentions.

21. Mr. DITZ (Austria) said, in explanation of vote after the vote, that the present system of reclassification of posts was not satisfactory. The head of the unit involved prepared a job description, the Classification Section applied the rules for classification, the Controller accepted or rejected the request, the Advisory Committee did what it thought best and, finally, the proposal reached the Fifth Committee. It was a process which constantly confronted the Fifth Committee with the dilemma of accepting a supposedly objective process supported by the Secretary-General or the judgement of the Advisory Committee. It was an irritating

(Mr. Ditz, Austria)

exercise, which should impel the Secretariat to study the question and work out a more coherent and less arbitrary system of promoting the career prospects of staff so that the Fifth Committee would not have to engage every year in those eternal discussions concerning reclassification of posts.

22. Mr. NEGRE (Assistant-Secretary-General for Personnel Services) explained, in reply to the question asked by the representative of Belgium, that his collaborator had been recruited at the P-5 level, on the recommendation of the Appointment and Promotion Committee and with the approval of the Secretary-General, because that action was justified by his qualifications and experience. He had had to transfer temporarily a post from the Division of Personnel Administration so that his Special Assistant could start work, since the Office of Personnel Services was engaged in a series of basic reforms for which he needed the services of his Special Assistant. The proposal to reclassify that post from P-4 to P-5 had been made in order to adjust the level of the post to that of its holder.

Section 28I. General Services, Geneva

23. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that, as he understood it, the results of the introduction of word processing at Headquarters were to some extent being awaited before it was introduced at Geneva. In that case, he took it that, in the light of the New York experience and, in particular, taking into account the views of the Advisory Committee as expressed in its report (A/38/7, para. 38), the Secretariat would be able, in the next two years, to propose a coherent plan for the Geneva Office.

24. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said the question had been the subject of much study in recent months, both at Headquarters and at Geneva and that the Budget Division and the Department of Conference Services were currently analysing a proposal concerning the introduction of word processing in the language services of the Geneva Office. That proposal would be submitted to the General Assembly if possible in the course of its current session and in any case at its next session.

Section 28J. Staff training activities (Headquarters, Geneva and the regional commissions)

25. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), referring to the programme for training English and French translators/précis-writers in ECA (A/38/6, para. 28J.38), said that, according to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/38/7, para. 28.153), eight translators were being trained in 1983. In view of the amount requested for the programme, more cost-effective measures should be considered for the purposes of the programme. He wished to know what other measures might be applied and whether it was planned to increase the number of trainees in the next biennium.

/...

26. Mr. NEGRE (Assistant-Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that, although he could not speak for ECA, he felt that it was a very special Commission composed of countries of different linguistic backgrounds, and the language question was of great importance to it. Since the United Nations did not use any African language, ECA had to employ the working languages of the United Nations - in its case, English and French - and for that reason the programme was of special significance for ECA. Consequently, he thought that the appropriation should be maintained.

27. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation was not proposing elimination of the programme but wished to know whether measures had been considered for increasing its effectiveness from the economic point of view. As the programme had developed so far, the cost per trainee was excessive.

28. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked what the increase of \$4,000 in the estimate for ESCAP (A/38/6, para. 28J.37) was for.

29. Mr. FORAN (Controller) replied that the explanation could be found in paragraph 28J.40 and Table 28J.21 of the proposed budget.

30. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) asked, in connection with word processing equipment, what the situation was in the language services: which language units already had such equipment and in which units was its installation planned.

31. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that at present such equipment was being used in the Spanish, French and English typing units. Work was proceeding with the supplier in connection with word processing equipment in Arabic, Chinese and Russian, and appropriate keyboards for those languages were being prepared. The work was quite advanced, so that the equipment could start to be used in the not too distant future.

32. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that, in view of the fact that there was strong competition in that field and the quality of equipment varied depending on the manufacture, he would like to know whether the Secretariat planned to deal with a single manufacturer or whether, on the contrary, it was going to engage in a selection process in the market to find the one that could best serve the interests of the Organization.

33. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that more information would be available when the Committee examined Section 29 of the proposed budget; it would then be possible to supply more details concerning the introduction of word processing in other languages.

Section 28K. Miscellaneous expenses

34. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) wished to know what the global increase of 54.1 per cent for the subsection applied to.

35. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that the increase was due to a combination of two factors affecting the health insurance coverage for retired staff (A/38/6, para. 28K.2). First, there had been an enormous increase in medical premiums, amounting to 55 per cent and secondly, an increase was expected in the number of retired staff and consequently the number of persons covered by the plan. In that connection, it should be noted that United Nations staff did not show a normal age-distribution curve. Large numbers of staff had been recruited in the early years of the Organization, between 1946 and 1952, and all had been more or less of the same age. Subsequently, the age pattern of staff at recruitment had become normal and the number of retired staff in relation to the number of active staff members had fallen in the intervening years. Owing to that special situation, the number of retired staff entitled to coverage by the health insurance plan would increase in the next few years.

Section 28L. Jointly financed administrative activities

36. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the estimates for ICSC (A/38/6, para. 28L.2) were only provisional, as was the initial recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/38/7, para. 28.163), since ICSC had not yet formulated its proposals for the biennium 1984-1985 when the programme budget proposal had been prepared. The revised estimates for ICSC appeared in document A/C.5/38/28 and were analysed in the fifth report of the Advisory Committee (A/38/7/Add.4).

37. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the rules of procedure of ICSC stipulated that the Commission would meet at least once a year in regular session (rule 2) and that the sessions of the Commission would be held at the Headquarters of the United Nations, unless it decided that a particular session should be held elsewhere at the invitation of one of the participating organizations (rule 4). In the latter case, as agreed by ACC in 1981, the ensuing costs would be met by the participating organization wishing to host a session of the Commission in 1984-1985 (A/C.5/38/28, para. 5). Accordingly, the budget should provide resources for holding only two sessions, one in each year of the biennium. In the revised estimates (A/C.5/38/28, para. 6), however, funds were requested to meet travel costs for the fifteen members of the Commission to attend the two sessions to be held in Geneva during the biennium in addition to the sessions that would be held in New York. He asked for an explanation of the situation.

38. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked how it had happened that for the second consecutive time the International Civil Service Commission had not been able to submit its budget proposals in time.

39. Mr. FORAN (Controller), replying to the question of the USSR delegation, said that, ever since its establishment, ICSC had been holding two sessions a year, the first in New York and the second elsewhere. As he understood it, the other organizations covered the costs of the sessions they hosted, while ICSC met the travel costs and subsistence allowances of its staff. If more information was desired, he would have to make inquiries.

(Mr. Foran)

40. In reply to the question of the United States delegation, he said that the Committee should bear in mind that ICSC traditionally held one of its sessions in the summer, and the proposed budget was completed in the early months of odd-numbered years so that the CPC could have it when it met in early May. Consequently, the estimates to be included in the budget were essentially ready at the end of each even-numbered year or at the beginning of the year in which the budget was presented. ICSC would not find it easy to hold its annual summer session much earlier, since its activities were co-ordinated with those of the governing bodies of the other organizations of the United Nations system.

41. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that when the Fifth Committee had examined the Statute of ICSC, it had been decided that the Commission would meet only once a year, but in view of the fact that at the beginning it would have to deal with very important and complex matters, an understanding was reached that it could meet more frequently in the first years of its existence. Actually, ICSC had been holding two sessions annually in recent years, perhaps without sufficient justification.

42. It should remain quite clear, however, that under its rules of procedure the Commission could meet only in New York and if, at the invitation of another organization, it met elsewhere, all costs including the travel costs of those attending the session, should be borne by the host organization. In spite of that, costs directly related to the sessions that would be held in Geneva were included in the proposed budget. The USSR delegation trusted that the Controller would explain the reasons, if necessary, even at a later meeting.

43. Mr. DUQUE (Secretary of the Committee) recalled that at its thirty-first session the General Assembly had decided that the International Civil Service Commission would hold its regular annual session at Headquarters and, if more than one session was required in any one year, it could accept an invitation from one of its participating organizations to hold its other session or sessions at the headquarters of that participating organization (A/RES/31/140, para. 4 (g)). Again, article 23 of the Commission's Statute stated that it would meet at least once a year, without specifying a limit. What was more, the Committee had already approved the pattern of conferences of ICSC for 1984-1985, and it provided for the holding of two sessions in each of those two years.

44. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, in view of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should approve: (a) an additional appropriation of \$366,200 for section 28L.1; (b) a reduction of \$15,900 under section 31 (Staff assessment) with a corresponding reduction in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment); and (c) an increase of \$218,900 in the estimates under income section 2 (General income).

45. The Chairman's proposal was adopted by 74 votes to 8.

Section 28M. Administrative services, Vienna

46. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) noted with satisfaction that the overall maintenance costs of the Vienna International Centre for the next biennium were much lower than for the preceding biennium. Nevertheless, the amount requested was still very large and his delegation wished to know whether the Secretariat was convinced that the amounts for the Centre, calculated on a square-metre basis, were comparable with those for Geneva or New York, for example.

47. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that he did not for the moment have the information requested by the representative of Canada but he would try to obtain it for the Committee.

48. Mr. TAKASU (Japan) requested clarification of why the total of \$35.2 million, appearing in the table contained in paragraph 28.172 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/38/7), differed from the \$37.8 million given as the total for the 1984-1985 estimates in table 28M.3 of the proposed budget.

49. Mr. FORAN (Controller) said that the two figures differed because not all the administrative and common services at Vienna were shared by all the organizations. The table in the Advisory Committee's report showed the common services shared by the United Nations, IAEA, UNRWA and other organizations, whereas table 28M.3 of the proposed programme budget listed the administrative and common services requested, in a total amount of \$37.8 million. Such items as Administrative Service, Finance and Personnel Services and Other general services related to the United Nations and its organizations, but not to IAEA or, in some cases, to UNRWA, which did not therefore share in their cost.

50. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote in first reading on section 28 of the proposed programme budget.

51. An appropriation of \$309,026,500 under section 28 for the biennium 1984-1985 was approved in first reading by 75 votes to 8.

52. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had intended to support the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee for section 28. However, because of the Fifth Committee's decision not to accept the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning the upgrading of two posts, his delegation had been obliged to vote against the appropriation. During the lengthy discussion of those reclassifications there had not been a single convincing argument which called into question the Advisory Committee's sound judgement. The Fifth Committee should not be involved in the question of individual reclassifications. When in doubt, it should depend on ACABQ, the expert body which advised it.

53. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) said that, although his delegation had voted in favour of the appropriation for section 28, it was concerned by the Fifth Committee's partial rejection of the limited reductions recommended by ACABQ in a section of the budget which not only was very substantial in financial terms but also related to administrative activities, an area to which sufficient attention was already accorded.

Section 29. Conference and library services

54. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General was requesting an appropriation of \$262,267,500 for 1984-1985 under section 29 and the Advisory Committee was recommending an estimate of \$260,384,900, which represented a reduction of \$1,882,600.

55. Staffing resources were requested to increase the establishment at Headquarters (New York) and at Geneva, and to create a nucleus of language personnel at Vienna. To that end, a net increase of 65 posts under section 29 was proposed. The requests covered 6 new posts, 65 conversions from temporary assistance for meetings and 2 other conversions from general temporary assistance, while 8 posts were proposed for abolition, making a net total of 65 posts. The functions and location of those posts were given in paragraph 29.7 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/38/7). In addition, eight reclassifications were being proposed as indicated in paragraph 29.8 of that report.

56. The established posts proposed for 1984-1985 and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee were summarized in chapter I, table 1, of the Committee's report. Paragraph 29.10 provided a breakdown by object of expenditure, which showed that the estimate for temporary assistance for meetings was \$30,567,500. The assumptions on which the Secretary-General had based his estimates for that object of expenditure were summarized in paragraphs 29.11 (a), (b) and (c) of the Committee's report.

57. In paragraphs 29.12 and 29.14, the Advisory Committee commented on the estimates for temporary assistance, explaining the reasons which had prompted it to recommend reductions in the Secretary-General's requests.

58. In paragraph 29.13, the Advisory Committee analysed some aspects of the programme of technological innovations relating to section 29 of the proposed programme budget. It noted with satisfaction the increases in efficiency and productivity which the new technology was beginning to generate; it had accordingly accepted the Secretary-General's proposals on the purchase of new equipment.

59. The Advisory Committee had sought information on the situation with respect to technological innovations at Geneva and had been told that consultations were still in progress but that it might be possible to present the outcome of the consultations to the General Assembly at the current session. The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments could perhaps inform the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee of the expectations in that regard for 1983 and 1984.

60. The first reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee was explained in paragraph 29.21 of its report (A/38/7) and related to the request for temporary assistance for the Editorial and Official Records Division at Headquarters. The assistance would be used to eliminate an accumulated backlog in the preparation of the verbatim records of the General Assembly for 1974 and 1975 and of the Security Council for 1976. Since on previous occasions similar backlogs had been disposed

(Mr. Mselle)

of using existing staffing resources, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction in the relevant estimates of the Secretary-General.

61. In paragraph 29.22, the Advisory Committee referred to the estimate for internal reproduction supplies and materials. Although the paragraph was short, the Advisory Committee had spent a substantial amount of time in considering that item. It recommended a reduction of \$439,000 in the estimate.

62. The question of temporary assistance for the thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions of the General Assembly was discussed in paragraph 29.24, where the Advisory Committee recommended a small reduction in the number of posts requested, in the light of its acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposal on the strengthening of the Translation Division (para. 29.17).

63. The major element of the estimate submitted for the Conference Services Division, Geneva (A/38/6, vol. III, para. 29.67 (a)) was the proposal to convert funds for temporary assistance in order to create 25 posts on an established basis. The Advisory Committee had scrutinized the justification for that request and had sought to ascertain whether the statistical information in the proposed programme budget (A/38/6, vol. III, tables 29.33 and 29.36) was consistent with the information presented to the Committee in June 1981 (A/CN.1/R.938) and that submitted to the General Assembly in documents A/C.5/36/105 and A/C.5/37/103. After considering the information in question, the Advisory Committee had concluded that the method used at Geneva for compiling statistics needed to be improved. Accordingly, it recommended against the proposed conversion of 23 posts and in favour of the creation of only two posts, for meeting-room attendants (A/38/7, para. 29.32). He hoped that the necessary equipment and technological programme to increase the accuracy of the statistics used in projecting staffing requirements would be introduced at Geneva.

64. The financial implications of the Advisory Committee's recommendation were given in paragraphs 29.32, 29.34 and 29.35 of its report.

65. The Advisory Committee noted that the estimate for Conference Services, Vienna, submitted in section 29C of the proposed programme budget was based on the most recent experience and endorsed the proposal to establish a nucleus of permanent staff for the translation and related services. That nucleus would comprise 40 posts: 20 Professional and 20 General Service.

66. The remainder of section 29 was devoted to resource estimates for the library services at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna, which totalled \$17,390,700. The Advisory Committee accepted the estimates for the Offices at Geneva and Vienna and recommended a slight reduction in the estimate for Headquarters.

67. Mr. WYZNER (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments), replying to the Moroccan representative's question on the introduction of word-processing equipment in the Arabic, Chinese and Russian typing pools in the course of the next biennium, said that progress was even more advanced than had been indicated by the Controller. The Department of Conference Services

/...

(Mr. Wyzner)

had planned the introduction of the equipment in the three typing pools during the biennium. The transition would be phased in gradually in each of the pools, so that the change to the new system could be introduced methodically. The conversion was expected to be complete by the end of the next biennium. The related estimates were included in paragraph 29.53 of the proposed budget (A/38/6) and had been approved by the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat was examining the systems offered for each language by various suppliers, and the equipment would be selected on the basis of objective criteria and testing. Of course, it was not yet possible to predict the outcome of the selection process, and it should be said that the task awaiting the Department was largely experimental.

68. In reply to the question of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning the introduction of word-processing at Geneva, he said that, as indicated by the Controller, consultations were being held on the subject and had reached a very advanced stage. Proposals had been worked out and were being considered by the parties concerned together with the Office of Financial Services. It was hoped to submit those proposals to the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee at the current session. However, there might be some delay and, in any event, the speed with which the matter was settled would depend on the Secretary-General and then on the Advisory Committee.

69. Mr. LAHLOU (Morocco) said that of the six D-2 posts referred to in paragraph 29.5 of the Advisory Committee's report, he had been able to find mention of only five, in paragraphs 29.16 and 29.30. He would appreciate some information about the sixth post and the functions to be performed by the six officials concerned.

70. Regarding the important question of determining a universally acceptable terminology, he inquired whether the Department of Conference Services had established machinery to maintain regular contacts with interested international and national bodies, so that the Secretariat could keep abreast of terminology developments everywhere.

71. In view of the difficulties in recruiting interpreters for the more recently introduced of the United Nations languages, he wondered whether the Secretariat might introduce an interpreter training programme with a view to supplying the market and aiding other organizations of the system.

72. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to expedite the work, delegations should comment first on section 29 as a whole and then on each of its subsections. If the Committee was amenable to that suggestion, the Moroccan delegation's question would be answered later.

73. Mr. EL-SAFY (Egypt) referred to the special difficulties presented by Arabic and requested the Secretariat, before deciding on a word-processing machine for that language, to examine all the models available on the market and, if possible, to send samples of the results produced by each to the missions of the Arab countries so that they might express their views.

74. Mr. MERIEUX (France) noted with satisfaction that the current proposals called for an increase in appropriations over those for the preceding biennium which was relatively lower than that of previous bienniums. He trusted that that trend would not be altered by supplementary appropriations at the current and thirty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly.

75. The table in paragraph 29.5 of the proposed budget showed that the cost of administrative and common services would account for 5.6 per cent of total costs at New York as compared with 1.8 per cent at Geneva. He asked whether that substantial difference was because the New York figure covered the purchase of new equipment, or whether there were other reasons for it.

76. As to the astonishing number of temporary assistance posts proposed for conversion to an established basis, his delegation wondered whether the proposals implied that the work-load of the conference services at Geneva or Vienna was far better distributed throughout the year; he would like the Secretariat, if possible, to provide more detailed information about that.

77. His delegation noted with satisfaction the first favourable results of the introduction of word-processing machines and the Secretariat's efforts to speed up the introduction of the system at Geneva; however, it would like to obtain a clearer picture of the savings to be achieved in that area. It would also like to know the stage reached in the study which the Advisory Committee had asked the Secretariat to undertake and whether that study could be made available to delegations during the current session.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.