

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 54th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana)

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

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 113: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE
MIDDLE EAST (continued)

- (a) UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE AND UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT
OBSERVER FORCE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 110: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(b) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
Implementation of personnel policy reforms (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 106: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
(continued)

Women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system:
report of the Joint Inspection Unit (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 103: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING
COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Revised estimates under section 23A. Department of Conference Services

AGENDA ITEM 102: UNITED NATIONS ACCOMMODATION (continued)

- (c) EXPANSION OF MEETING ROOMS AND IMPROVEMENT OF CONFERENCE SERVICING AND
DELEGATE FACILITIES AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 8 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)

- (a) UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE AND UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.5/33/L.27, A/C.5/33/L.30)

1. Mr. POPAL (Afghanistan) said that, if his delegation had been present during the voting on draft resolutions A/C.5/33/L.27 and A/C.5/33/L.30, it would have abstained in each case.

AGENDA ITEM 110: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/33/176; A/C.5/33/CRP.1 and 2)

- (b) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

Implementation of personnel policy reforms (continued) (A/33/228; A/C.5/33/2)

AGENDA ITEM 106: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued)

Women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system: report of the Joint Inspection Unit (continued) (A/33/105 and Add.1; A/C.5/33/L.32)

2. Mr. IYER (India), speaking as Chairman of the Working Group on Personnel Questions, said that the Group had held 18 meetings, all constructive and well attended. It had decided that the outcome of its negotiations should be set forth in the form of a single consolidated draft, and it had been generally agreed that its consultations represented a point of departure for the work of the Fifth Committee on the perennial subject of personnel questions.

3. The resulting text (A/C.5/33/L.32) took the form of a draft resolution with three operative sections. Section I dealt with personnel policy reforms, section II with issues related to geographical distribution and section III with the representation of women in the secretariats of the United Nations and other bodies in the United Nations system. The text had previously been provisionally issued as a conference room paper (A/C.5/33/CRP.4), and delegations had referred that text to their Governments for comments and instructions.

4. Since the issue of the document, he had received comments from delegations indicating that there was a consensus on the advisability of deleting from section I of the draft resolution the words "on the list of candidates considered be supplied

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(Mr. Iyer, India)

to Member States on request" in paragraph 1 (c) and the words "Regulations concerning" in paragraph 1 (f). In the case of section III, final agreement had not been reached on the last part of paragraph 1, which had been placed in square brackets, or on paragraph 6. He had reason to believe that a consensus could be reached shortly on those two texts, and he therefore requested that the Committee should defer a decision on the draft resolution in order to allow further consultations to take place.

5. In conclusion, he expressed his thanks to the staff of the Office of Personnel Services and the Committee secretariat for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of the draft resolution.

6. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that there had been an understanding within the Working Group that the question of General Service staff in Geneva would also be considered. He therefore hoped that the final version of the draft resolution text to be produced by the Chairman of the Working Group as a result of his additional consultations would not merely resolve the remaining controversies over the existing text, but would also include a section IV dealing with the matters raised in document A/32/327.

7. Mr. GHERAB (Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services) said that he had been kept generally informed of the progress of the discussions in the Working Group, and had conveyed his point of view to members of the Group on various points. In some, but not all, cases his views had been taken into account.

8. The Secretary-General welcomed the positive attitude of the Working Group towards his plan of action for the biennium 1979-1980. Many directives in the draft resolution would assist him in achieving his objectives; one paragraph, however, would cause specific difficulties, and a number of others might require explanation.

9. Section II, paragraph 1, requested the Secretary-General "to establish a target of 40 per cent of all vacancies arising in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution during the period 1979-1980 for appointment of nationals of under-represented and unrepresented countries". The Committee had already been informed that the Secretary-General intended to reduce by half both the number of unrepresented Member States and the number of posts needed by under-represented Member States to reach their desired ranges. That objective would account for about 20 per cent of all appointments during the period of the programme of action. The draft resolution did not envisage a two-year period, but rather only 18 months, because a final report had to be submitted at the thirty-fifth session of the Assembly and would therefore cover the situation reached on 30 June 1980. The figure of 40 per cent of all vacancies was a goal to aim at, and it was hoped that with the co-operation of Member States the appointment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries could approach the goal very closely.

10. With regard to section I of the draft resolution, he understood paragraph 1 (e) to refer to statistics on the number of staff whose probationary period had been

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(Mr. Gherab)

extended or who had not been given a permanent appointment after completion of the probationary period, and to the number of staff whose permanent appointments had not been confirmed after the five-year review under the Staff Rules. Paragraph 1 (f) referred to regulations concerning the definition of occupational groups; the Secretary-General fully accepted the need for definitions and the establishment of standards for appointment, promotion and rotation of staff, but such matters were properly the subject of an administrative instruction, and were not appropriate for inclusion in the Staff Regulations of the United Nations.

11. Paragraph 1 (g) limited the movement of staff from the General Service category to the Professional category - a process referred to as "recruitment" in the English text - to 25 per cent of the total posts available. The Secretary-General considered the proportion should be 30 to 35 per cent rather than 25 per cent. It was important to give existing staff the possibility of broadening their career after they had loyally served the Secretariat and demonstrated their capacity to undertake higher responsibilities. The representatives of the staff had requested the Secretary-General to draw the Committee's attention to their objection to any quota as detrimental not only to the career prospects of the staff but also to the internal harmony of the Organization. The Secretary-General fully appreciated their concern. He would like to make it clear that in 1979 it would only be feasible to undertake competitive examinations as planned, but in 1980 the system should be operational for all staff. The majority of General Service staff members were women, and any reduction of promotion opportunities would have an undue impact on them. The Secretary-General considered that movement to the Professional category was in the nature of promotion, and he did not consider it proper to consider the nationality of an existing staff member when reviewing him or her for promotion, even to a post subject to geographical distribution.

12. A number of paragraphs in the draft resolution appeared to have financial implications, of which the Committee would be duly informed. The Secretariat would proceed with the implementation of the various resolutions on personnel policy reforms and the composition of the Secretariat as fast as it could within the available resources, but in some instances more resources would be necessary. The cost of issuing the bulletins referred to in section I of the draft resolution could be absorbed, as could the costs of defining occupational groups, and the information requested on the over-all results of the staff performance review could be provided without difficulty. However, publicity and advertising would have to be paid for, and additional recruitment missions would be needed to improve the composition of the roster of candidates, to bring the maximum number of unrepresented and under-represented Member States within their desirable range and to increase the representation of women to 25 per cent in four years. The increased use of competitive methods of recruitment and promotion would also, of course, entail additional costs. Section II, paragraph 2, required many reports with detailed numerical data wherever appropriate. He recalled that at its thirty-second session the Assembly had requested full data, including comparative numerical data, but at the same time had cut the requests made by the Secretariat for temporary assistance to code the data. Lastly, section II, paragraph 7, urged the Secretary-General to provide the Panel to Investigate Allegations of Discriminatory Treatment in the United Nations Secretariat with better facilities for its activities.

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13. The Secretary-General continued to consider the improvement of the composition of the Secretariat to be of prime importance; with goodwill and co-operation, it would surely be possible to meet the major concerns both of the Secretary-General and of Member States.

14. Mr. IYER (India) said that, as Chairman of the Working Group on Personnel Questions, he would take into account the comments made by the Assistant Secretary-General and the representative of Belgium.

AGENDA ITEM 103: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/33/44, A/C.5/33/46; A/C.5/33/L.28)

15. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/33/L.28, as amended at the preceding meeting.

16. The draft decision, as amended, was adopted.

17. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that his delegation had accepted the procedural decision proposed by the Chairman because, in the absence of a consensus in the Negotiating Committee on the Financial Emergency of the United Nations, the Organization had no option but to continue its efforts, especially as the financial emergency was going from bad to worse. His delegation recognized that there were serious political differences between the States represented in the Negotiating Committee, but trusted that that Committee would pursue its efforts in 1979 with renewed vigour in the hope of reaching a consensus.

18. Mr. GASS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation agreed with the way the Committee had chosen to proceed on the item, and had been willing to join in the consensus on the draft decision. However, its position of principle on the question of withholding contributions was unchanged and was diametrically opposed to that of the countries which withheld contributions to the regular budget; he could see no prospect of consensus on that issue.

19. Mr. OUATTARA (Ivory Coast) said that his delegation had accepted the consensus, in the hope that Member States would assume their collective and individual responsibilities towards the United Nations and make the necessary efforts to reach an amicable settlement of the dispute.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Revised estimates under section 23A. Department of Conference Services
(A/33/7/Add.17; A/C.5/33/55)

20. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the revised estimates under section 23A (A/33/7/Add.17), said that the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/55) contained a proposal which had originally been included in the proposed programme budget for 1978-1979 submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session. The Advisory Committee had recommended against acceptance of the proposal, which was for six reclassifications from G-5 to P-2 for the posts

(Mr. Mselle)

of supervisors in the Stenographic Service. In the present resubmission of the proposal, the Secretary-General gave a description of the work performed by a supervisor in the Typing Unit of the Stenographic Service (A/C.5/33/55, annex). The Secretary-General's report stated that the Classification Section had conducted an ad hoc review of the posts and had supported their reclassification (para. 3).

21. The Advisory Committee recognized that a problem existed which was both a human problem and a problem of personnel management and career development. It believed, however, that the Secretary-General's request was not the best answer to the problem and that there had not been a substantive enough change in the job content of the staff members in question to warrant reclassification to the Professional category. The Advisory Committee believed that their functions still remained in the General Service category and that it was in that category and within the context of personnel management and career development that the problem should be solved. While it recognized that attempts had been made to solve the problem and that the Secretary-General had met with a number of difficulties in the search for a solution, it felt that the problem was not insurmountable, given goodwill and determination.

22. The Advisory Committee had therefore concluded that it would be inadvisable to "stretch" the Professional category in order to provide recognition to General Service staff who had risen to supervisory levels within their occupation (A/33/7/Add.17, para. 7). It believed that renewed consideration should be given to restructuring the General Service category in such a way as to recognize the additional responsibilities of supervisors. It recommended that the Secretary-General should study that question with a view to formulating proposals thereon.

23. He hoped that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would receive due consideration from the Fifth Committee and be evaluated on their merits.

24. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported the Secretary-General's request for reclassification from G-5 to P-2 of the six posts of supervisors in the Stenographic Service. Although it did not agree with the Advisory Committee on the proposal, it noted that ACABQ was mindful of the need to give renewed consideration to restructuring the General Service category in such a way as to recognize the additional responsibilities of supervisors (A/33/7/Add.17, para. 7). It welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General should study the question with a view to formulating proposals thereon, and hoped that an acceptable solution could be found for staff who had served the Organization for a great length of time and assumed a higher level of job responsibility.

25. Another category of staff whose rights had long been neglected was editorial staff. They never went beyond the P-3 level, regardless of their experience and despite the fact that they were recruited on the basis of competitive examinations, had to have a perfect command of their main language and a good knowledge of two other official languages and performed tasks at a level similar to that of translators and interpreters. It was only fitting to give incentives to editorial staff and allow them to enjoy the same status as their colleagues in other language departments. His delegation suggested that their posts should be reclassified from

(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

P-3 to P-4 and that the financial implications of such a reclassification should be decided on at the current session.

26. Mr. BEDRANE (Algeria) noted that the Advisory Committee did not consider it advisable to "stretch" the Professional category in order to provide recognition to General Service staff who had risen to supervisory levels within their occupation (A/33/7/Add.17, para. 7). However, the Secretary-General's action in submitting the proposal in the middle of the biennium was so exceptional that he must have considered the matter to be of particular importance and urgency. His delegation would welcome further clarification from the Secretariat and an indication as to when the restructuring of the General Service category would take place.

27. Mr. RUTLEDGE (Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that the Secretariat appreciated the Advisory Committee's sympathetic consideration of the question of reclassification in the Stenographic Service, even if it differed with the Committee's conclusion. The feeling in the Department of Conference Services was that the inequity had existed for such a long time that it was fitting to resubmit the proposal for the six reclassifications at the current session. The Department had been seized with the problem for at least 10 to 12 years and had raised the question of reclassification or other solutions on numerous occasions with the financial authorities. The Department recognized the validity of the Advisory Committee's argument and would not deny that it might be a more understandable administrative arrangement to deal with the question of the job responsibilities of supervisors in the Stenographic Service within the context of the restructuring of the General Service category. There had, however, been discussion about such a restructuring for at least 20 years. Studies had been made but, for a number of reasons, no action had been taken. Opposition had been expressed to the concept of restructuring from various quarters at various times. While the Department of Conference Services would welcome a solution through the mechanism suggested by the Advisory Committee, it was perhaps the sad experience over the years which accounted for its difference of opinion with the Advisory Committee. It was because the Secretary-General appeared to be caught in a dilemma with no readily available solution that the proposal for the reclassification of the six posts had been resubmitted.

28. It could be assumed that, if there was a restructuring of the General Service category, a number of positions at about the G-5 level, higher or lower, would also have to be reviewed to determine where they would fit in the new structure. Obviously the six posts of supervisors, even if they were reclassified to P-2, would come under such a review. Accordingly, a favourable decision on the Secretary-General's request at the current session would not prejudice future reconsideration, but would be a solution to a long-standing problem.

29. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said he was grateful to the Secretary-General for his efforts on behalf of the staff concerned, because staff members who had devoted years of service to the Organization and reached a high level of competence should be given the right incentives. The Stenographic Service had many staff members from developing countries, including Latin American States, and his delegation was

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(Mr. Williams, Panama)

naturally inclined to support proposals which were potentially beneficial to them. Nevertheless, Panama endorsed the views of the Advisory Committee, which, while recognizing the commendable services rendered by the staff in question, also recognized that given educational or professional qualifications were needed for Professional posts (A/33/7/Add.17, para. 6). It was for the Secretary-General to seek a viable solution and secure appropriate rewards for staff.

30. The major consideration was not the cost of the proposed reclassifications. The Fifth Committee should be concerned rather with consistency. In the draft resolution presented by the Chairman of the Working Group on Personnel Questions under item 110 (A/C.5/33/L.32), the Secretary-General was requested to adopt certain measures and guidelines regarding the recruitment of Professional staff. One such guideline was that the movement of staff from the General Service category to P-1 and P-2 levels should be conducted exclusively through competitive methods of selection. It would be contradictory for the Fifth Committee to endorse such a guideline and at the same time to endorse the reclassification of the posts of supervisors in the Stenographic Service without their being required to take a competitive examination.

31. Mr. AKASHI (Japan) said that he agreed with the representative of Panama on the need for consistency. It should also be remembered that 1978 was an off-budget year. The Secretary-General's request had been rejected by the Fifth Committee at the thirty-second session and the proper occasion for resubmitting it would be the thirty-fourth session, when the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 would be considered. By that time, the work on the classification of all posts in the Secretariat should have been completed. Without categorically rejecting the request, the Fifth Committee could defer consideration until the next session. In the meantime, his delegation endorsed the line of action suggested by the Advisory Committee in its report (A/33/7/Add.17).

32. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that, basically, the Advisory Committee was right in saying that the six posts of supervisors in the Stenographic Service should not be reclassified. His delegation was concerned, however, at the fact that the responsibilities of those supervisors clearly went beyond the normal responsibilities of G-5 staff, and felt that it was unfair to pay them G-5 salaries. The restructuring of the General Service category could be a long-drawn-out exercise, and it was not good enough to defer consideration of the problem. One possible solution would be to give the staff concerned a special post allowance in recognition of the fact that they were assuming a clearly higher level of duty and responsibility.

33. Mrs. DERRE (France) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the views expressed by the representative of Belgium. It understood the anomaly which existed with respect to the classification of the posts of supervisors in the Stenographic Service. That was not the only category of General Service staff thus affected. What was needed, perhaps, was an intermediate category between the

(Mrs. Derré, France)

Professional and General Service categories to accommodate staff members in that position. The Secretariat should expedite its efforts to rectify the present unjust situation.

34. At the same time, it would be paradoxical for the Fifth Committee to decide that the posts of the supervisors should be reclassified as proposed, when it was calling for competitive examinations as a prerequisite for movement from the General Service category to the Professional category. The supervisors in question could, of course, take such an examination. In the meantime, a special post allowance was a palliative which deserved further consideration, and prompt review of the question by the Advisory Committee would make it possible to settle the matter at the current session. The entire problem should be studied by the Secretariat as soon as possible.

35. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that it would be inadvisable to reclassify the six posts of supervisors in the Stenographic Service from G-5 to P-2. The Soviet Union was in principle opposed to reclassifications of that type. It felt that requests such as the one made by the Secretary-General should not be approved because clearly distinct categories of staff were involved. Such a reclassification would have serious financial implications at a time of appreciable financial difficulties for the Organization. Moreover, reclassification in any unit of the Secretariat could produce a chain reaction, the results of which were difficult to envisage. The Secretary-General should give thought to other ways of providing incentives to the staff concerned.

36. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that his delegation had already recognized the existence of certain anomalies; however, an ad hoc reclassification was not the answer, because it would pre-empt the results of the job classification currently under way. He would support the kind of solution proposed by the representative of Belgium, and agreed with the representative of France that there were probably other cases of supervisors in a similar position.

37. Mr. EL-AYADHI (Tunisia) observed that the request could not be purely gratuitous, since otherwise the Secretary-General would not have resubmitted it. He therefore appealed to the wisdom of the members of the Committee not to reject it a second time. Furthermore, the Secretary-General had made clear in his report (A/C.5/33/55) that the supervisors in question would have additional responsibilities as a result of the introduction of word-processing equipment. Since most of them had been in the Organization's service for many years and were at the top of their category, it would be only fair to agree to the reclassification of their posts in the interests of efficiency and justice.

38. Mr. MARVILLE (Barbados) expressed support for the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, although he recognized that a number of supervisors were at a disadvantage in relation to the staff they supervised. The simple answer would be to give them some sort of allowance, not to promote them to the Professional category. His delegation found it offensive to argue that reclassification was justifiable because there were funds available for the current biennium, particularly since no mention was made of future biennia or of the establishment of what was in fact a new principle. He hoped that the matter could be settled on the basis of a consensus.

39. Mr. RUTLEDGE (Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that he appreciated the recognition of the work done by the category of staff in question, and had noted the suggestions made by the representatives of Belgium and France that some other solution should be found. As he had stated previously, attempts in that regard had proved unsuccessful, but obviously further efforts would be made if the Committee decided not to approve the Secretary-General's request. He wished to stress that what was being requested was the reclassification of posts, not individuals, although the human element was of course of concern to the Department. The situation of individuals would be settled through the normal promotion or recruitment machinery.

40. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly to:

(1) Take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/33/55 and the related report of the Advisory Committee in document A/33/7/Add.17 with regard to reclassification of posts of Supervisors, Stenographic Service, Department of Conference Services; and

(2) Request the Secretary-General to study the question of the restructuring of the General Service category in such a way as to recognize the additional responsibilities of supervisors with a view to formulating proposals thereon.

41. Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) said that his delegation had been ready to join in the consensus; however, in the light of the statement made by the Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General, it would be discourteous to request the Secretary-General to make a further study. For the reasons given by the representatives of Belgium and France, he believed that the Committee should adopt a decision agreeing to the reclassification of the six posts in question.

42. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that while he had no objection to the recommendation, he presumed it was understood that the Secretary-General would try to find some formula such as the payment of a special allowance for the posts. That could be done without the Committee's taking a separate decision.

43. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, since his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's proposal, it believed the Committee's recommendation should be that the Secretary-General should not proceed with the reclassification but should study new ways of enhancing the posts in question.

44. Mrs. DERRÉ (France) stressed that the Secretary-General should be asked to take into account the views expressed in the Committee.

45. Mr. EL-AYADHI (Tunisia) said that some clarification was perhaps necessary. He had understood the consensus that the Secretary-General should seek some suitable means of encouraging the staff members in question; however, the second part of the recommendation suggested by the Chairman seemed to call for the Secretary-General to make further proposals to the Committee. Any further study might cost as much as reclassifying the posts.

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46. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt by consensus the recommendation he had suggested.

47. It was so decided.

48. Mrs. DERRE (France) noted that her comment to the effect that the recommendation should include a request to the Secretary-General to take into account the views expressed by members of the Fifth Committee seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

AGENDA ITEM 102: UNITED NATIONS ACCOMMODATION (continued)

(c) EXPANSION OF MEETING ROOMS AND IMPROVEMENT OF CONFERENCE SERVICING AND DELEGATE FACILITIES AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/33/7/Add.13; A/C.5/33/24; A/C.5/33/L.34)

49. Mr. TALIEH (Iran), introducing the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/33/L.34, recalled that at the thirty-second session the Advisory Committee had expressed doubt about so-called alternative B for the expansion of catering facilities and the Secretary-General had been asked to review the question in all its aspects, including the possibility of using the terrace outside the existing cafeteria. Paragraphs 19 and 20 of his report (A/C.5/33/24) contained the opinion of the architects that 16 class-rooms for language studies could be constructed at the fifth-floor level. In the view of his delegation, that space would be more appropriate for the expansion of the cafeteria and kitchen facilities. In any case, the question of the class-rooms was not before the Assembly at the current session. The estimated cost for the construction of the class-rooms was given as \$1.7 million, but in fact it would be \$1.3 million because \$400,000 of that sum had been requested only if the project was to be undertaken simultaneously with the expansion of the kitchen and the fourth floor. In the interests of economy, it would seem feasible to use twice as much space as would be needed for the 16 class-rooms in order to accommodate the expanded cafeteria, dining room and kitchen. Aesthetically, that would be preferable to using part of the south garden, which was already very small.

50. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said he would like to hear the reaction of the representative of the Secretary-General to the Iranian proposal.

51. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said he understood the concern of the representative of Iran to preserve the south garden. Since it was clear from the drawing contained in document A/C.5/33/24 that the proposed class-rooms would occupy only a very small portion of the roof of the conference building, the amount of money requested would not do very much to improve the cafeteria facilities. The span across the top of the dining room and the cafeteria was considerable, and some very heavy construction would be necessary to carry the static and dynamic load. The estimate of \$1.3 million might therefore be misleading, in view of the extent

(Mr. Cunningham, United States)

of the work involved if the entire roof area was to be used. In addition, there would be the cost of the proposed feasibility study, and the fact that that study could not be submitted to the General Assembly until its thirty-fourth session meant that there would be increased costs due to inflation, which was running at about 10 per cent per annum. Thus, there might be an additional cost of up to \$1 million merely as a result of delaying the project for a further year.

52. He requested information from the Assistant Secretary-General for General Services on how much space the proposed new facility would provide for the staff cafeteria and kitchen; how much additional space it would provide for uses other than the cafeteria and kitchen, how much space could be reasonably expected at the fifth-floor roof level, what other possible ways there might be of developing that area, what would be the cost per square foot of construction of the proposed facilities in the south garden, by extension onto the terrace and on the fifth floor respectively, and how much space could be found for the existing facilities under the alternate modes for developing additional cafeteria and catering facilities.

53. The architectural model which had been made available for members of the Committee to examine showed that the garden would be relocated on the roof, and he was delighted to see that there would be a cloistered garden court. Construction at the south-east corner would not block any vista and would improve security. Sometimes it was necessary to spend money in order to save. The need for additional cafeteria facilities had long been established, and it was his Government's view that further delay would not yield any substantial or justifiable aesthetic or economic benefits. There was a good case for proceeding with the plan proposed by the Secretary-General.

54. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that when his delegation had last spoken on the subject it had been ready to take a decision, particularly if no benefits would accrue to the Organization from any further delay. The representative of Iran had stated that the adoption of the draft decision in document A/C.5/33/L.34 would result in some economies, and his delegation would like to hear the views of the Assistant Secretary-General and of other delegations on that point. He did not share the view that the question was solely one of catering facilities, since the Secretary-General had been asked to study the matter in all its aspects. The catering facilities could not be dealt with in isolation.

55. Mr. GASS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation whole-heartedly supported the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/24), which had been endorsed by the Advisory Committee. There was an urgent need to expand the cafeteria facilities. All the possible options had been fully discussed and the time had come for urgent, positive action. Any further delay would mean a rise in costs and his delegation could not, therefore, support the draft decision proposed by Iran.

56. Mr. DIAMOND (Budget Division) stressed that the statement he was about to make on the financial implications of the draft decision in document A/C.5/33/L.4 related only to the feasibility study. The total appropriations that would be required for

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that purpose amounted to \$60,000, comprising \$15,000 for structural engineers, \$10,000 for mechanical engineers, \$30,000 for architects and \$5,000 for a kitchen consultant.

57. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the cost of the study which would be carried out if the Iranian decision was adopted should be absorbed within the existing appropriation. Should it prove impossible to absorb the cost, the Secretary-General could raise the matter at the spring session of the Advisory Committee and refer it to the General Assembly in his final performance report to be submitted at the thirty-fourth session.

58. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that, although the Secretariat had agreed that a study might be made of the proposal to construct a cafeteria at the fifth-floor level, it continued to believe that the construction of a new building in the south garden area was the most desirable course of action. The Secretary-General had never suggested that construction at the fifth-floor level would be less expensive than the construction of a new building in the south garden; obviously, the cost of such a project could be estimated only after a study had been made and a design prepared and evaluated. Nevertheless, in response to a request made by the representative of the Philippines, he had prepared figures showing an order of magnitude for the cost of the project envisaged in the Iranian draft decision. The figures should be regarded as nothing more than an educated guess.

59. The consulting structural engineer for the United Nations had explained at a recent meeting, at which the representative of Iran had been present, that when the Headquarters buildings had been designed there had been no expectation that a structure would ever be needed on the roof of the dining room and cafeteria. It was therefore highly unlikely that a facility with a high-density use such as a cafeteria could be constructed there without major structural modifications. The consulting structural engineer had further stated that he could not, without extensive study, give an opinion as to whether the proposed construction was at all feasible because many of the columns supporting the roof were themselves supported by girders spanning the three Council chambers. If those girders could not carry the added weight the project simply could not be carried out, and even if they could the columns would need reinforcement. Furthermore, the structural engineer had noted that, while the existing strength of the roof was sufficient to support class-rooms, the building code of the City of New York would require double that strength for a cafeteria, and thus it was certain that the roof slab would have to be replaced.

60. In estimating the cost of the project envisaged in the Iranian draft decision, he had begun with the fact that construction costs alone per square foot for alternative A had been estimated at \$581.13. That figure had been obtained by taking the costs of actual construction, including demolition, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical and plumbing work, amounting to \$8,796,000, and dividing it by the number of square feet involved, roughly 15,136. That method did not include cost of furniture, architectural and engineering fees, contingencies or any other costs than those related to basic construction. The method had been adopted in order to reduce the possibility of extraneous elements

(Mr. Timbrell)

affecting the calculations. The figure of \$581.13 per square foot was very high indeed, reflecting the cost of alterations and construction in an occupied area where very extensive structural reinforcement was required.

61. With that figure as a base, he had proceeded to make calculations for two different assumptions. If the cost of construction at the fifth-floor level was assumed to be only one half of that at the fourth-floor level, the cost for the 18,330 square feet of available space at the fifth-floor level would be \$5,325,964 at 1978 prices, and, assuming an inflation factor of 7 per cent, the cost would be approximately \$5.7 million if the work were to commence in 1980. If, on the other hand, it was assumed that the cost of construction at the fifth-floor level would be two thirds the cost of construction on the terrace, the corresponding figures would be \$7,101,408 and \$7.6 million. He left it to the members of the Committee to judge whether it was more likely that the cost per square foot of a fifth-floor project would be one half or two thirds that of a fourth-floor project. He could not at the present stage guarantee that the cost might not in fact reach the \$581.13 per square foot figure for the fourth-floor plan.

62. The comparable cost for the proposal of the Secretary-General (alternative B) was \$6,412,000. That figure represented the cost of basic construction and heating, ventilation, air conditioning and plumbing work, and the remodelling of the fourth-floor dining area.

63. If it was decided to build a structure at the fifth-floor level, 18,330 square feet would be gained, whereas the construction of a new cafeteria and kitchen in the proposed building in the south garden would provide 38,317 square feet of space. Moreover, because in the latter case the class-rooms on the thirty-ninth floor could be moved elsewhere, an additional 6,000 square feet of space would be released for other uses. Thus, the project in the south garden would provide more than double the space of the fifth-floor project at a cost that would be comparable and might even be less.

64. As to the question of aesthetics which had been raised in connexion with the Secretary-General's proposal, he pointed out that the south garden was a small area that was virtually unused by staff or delegations. Construction of a cafeteria on that site would increase its use, and the garden area displaced could be reproduced on the roof of the new building. The architect of the Headquarters buildings, Wallace K. Harrison, who continued to maintain a lively interest in the aesthetic aspects of the complex, had endorsed the proposed building in the south garden.

65. He noted that the Iranian proposal made no provision for expanded kitchen facilities. A new kitchen was an essential element of any study, since the existing facilities were manifestly inadequate. As to the suggestion that the Secretariat should absorb the cost of \$60,000 for the study required by the Iranian proposal, he pointed out that, while the Secretariat had in the past year absorbed the cost of reviewing alternative A and also managed to provide an electronic voting machine in Conference Room 1 within the existing appropriations, there was a limit to the additional costs that could be absorbed.

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66. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation was pleased that the cost of the study requested by the General Assembly at the preceding session had been absorbed, and supported the recommendation of the Advisory Commission that the cost of any new study should also be absorbed within existing appropriations. In the view of his delegation, the Secretariat should have no difficulty whatever in absorbing the cost of the study called for in the Iranian proposal.

67. Mr. PEDERSEN (Canada) said that his delegation shared the concern of the representative of Iran regarding cost and aesthetics and found alternative B to be acceptable from the aesthetic point of view. He would like to know, however, what the Secretariat intended to do with the Chagall window, since it would appear that an entrance to the proposed new building would have to be constructed at the place where it was at present installed. He also requested information regarding the amount of disruption which would be created if the construction envisaged in the Iranian draft decision was undertaken.

68. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) asked what the cost of construction per square foot would be if alternative B was approved, and requested further details regarding the costs of carrying out the work planned for the thirty-ninth floor.

69. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that the proposed construction in the south garden would not affect the Chagall window, since the plans called for an entrance to the Secretariat building approximately 15 feet from the present location of the window. With regard to the disruption factor, he noted that a project as complicated as the construction of a cafeteria on the fifth-floor level would entail major structural work and was certain to cause considerable disruption. The proposal to construct classrooms on that level would not entail any structural changes and while it might create some disruption, would not preclude the use of areas below.

70. In reply to the representative of Belgium, he said that the estimated cost for basic construction under alternative B was \$167.34 per square foot. It was not possible to provide even an order of magnitude for the proposed remodelling of the thirty-ninth floor, since the problems anticipated in connexion with that project were very different from those which would be encountered in the projects proposed for the fourth and fifth floors. However, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had recently stated that, taking into account the cost of renting outside office space, he would consider costs exceeding \$3 million for the alteration of the thirty-ninth floor to be excessive.

71. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, in the light of the Assistant Secretary-General's statements, alternative B would certainly be more economical, since it would provide almost twice as much space as the Iranian proposal at a comparable cost. In addition, there was the question of the disruption which would be caused by construction on the fifth-floor level. He therefore urged the representative of Iran to withdraw his draft decision.

72. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said his delegation had no major difficulties in

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(Mr. Pirson, Belgium)

accepting alternative B. It was not, however, in favour of the plan for the alteration of the thirty-ninth floor, and if the request for \$50,000 for an architectural and engineering study was put to a vote it would vote against it.

73. Mr. TALIEH (Iran) said that his delegation would withdraw the draft decision it had proposed (A/C.5/33/L.34) but would vote against the Advisory Committee's recommendation that alternative B should be accepted, since it did not believe that that was the best solution to the problem. It would also oppose the Secretary-General's proposals for the thirty-ninth floor because, according to information obtained through informal consultations with high-ranking Secretariat officials, the cost of the project might run as high as \$2.5 million to obtain 500 square meters of space. An equivalent area could be rented outside the Headquarters building for approximately \$80,000 per year. In the view of his delegation, even \$1 million would be excessive to remodel the thirty-ninth floor.

74. Mr. THOMAS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that his delegation shared the views of the Belgian and Iranian delegations with regard to the remodelling of the thirty-ninth floor and would vote against approval of the Secretary-General's plans.

75. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation regretted that the Iranian delegation had withdrawn its proposal (A/C.5/33/L.34). It was not reasonable to take a decision entailing millions of dollars in expenditure at a time when the Organization was experiencing financial difficulties. Before embarking on the construction of a new building, consideration should be given to ways of making more effective use of existing space. In any event, there was no real need to expand the cafeteria and dining room, as no crisis existed in that respect and there were many outside catering facilities available to staff and delegations. The Secretary-General's proposals for the thirty-ninth floor were also unreasonable, and his delegation would vote against the request for funds to make an architectural and engineering study.

76. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, when the Committee had considered the question of the Director-General's residence in Geneva, some delegations had expressed the fear that the Secretary-General's submissions represented only the "tip of the iceberg". However, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had given assurances at that time that the full picture had been placed before the Committee. He suggested that it would be helpful if the Secretary-General could provide similar assurances in connexion with his proposals for the thirty-ninth floor.

77. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) noted that the plans for the thirty-ninth floor would provide approximately 500 square metres of space, and asked the Assistant Secretary-General whether it was anticipated that so large an area would actually be required by the Organization within the period covered by the Secretary-General's proposals.

78. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) expressed the hope that the Committee would approve alternative B at the current session, because action to alleviate the genuine

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hardship suffered by those who used the cafeteria facilities was long over-due. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposals for the thirty-ninth floor, he noted that there were pressures on the available space on the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth floors. More detail should perhaps be given regarding the possible uses of the available space on the thirty-ninth floor, which, although not large, was prime space. A final decision was not required at the current stage, and there was ample time for the Secretary-General's proposals to be scrutinized carefully by the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee. His delegation did not believe that approval of a \$50,000 study would be taken by the Secretary-General to go on a spending spree, and would vote in favour of the request if it was put to a separate vote.

79. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested information regarding the actual use made of the cafeteria both during General Assembly sessions and for the remainder of the year. The United Nations should not embark on a vast construction programme for the sake of easing conditions which obtained for only three months of the year.

80. Mr. TIMBRELL (Assistant Secretary-General for General Services) said that catering consultants had made a study of the use of the cafeteria and dining room during the thirty-second session of the General Assembly, in the early part of 1978 and during the tenth special session in May and June. They had found, inter alia, that when the Assembly was in session an average of 3,500 persons used the cafeteria during the lunch hours. It was on the basis of the consultants' study that the Secretary-General had projected the requirements set out in paragraph 12 of his report (A/C.5/33/24). A copy of the study by the consultants would be made available for any interested delegation to consult.

81. The Secretary-General appreciated the concern of members over the cost of the proposed remodelling of the thirty-ninth floor and would certainly not recommend any construction plans which did not appear to be cost-effective. In any event, the earliest time when work on the thirty-ninth floor could be started would be the latter part of 1981, when the new building in the south garden would be completed and the language classes could be moved into the newly constructed classrooms. The Secretary-General therefore had ample time to consider the views put forward by members and to explore every possible alternative. Since the Iranian draft decision had been withdrawn, the Secretary-General would not have to absorb the related cost of \$50,000, and he would endeavour instead to absorb the cost of the study relating to the thirty-ninth floor and would withdraw his request for an additional appropriation of \$50,000.

82. Mrs. DERRÉ (France) said it was incredible that the Secretary-General should have engaged outside consultants to find out how many meals had been served in the cafeteria, when such information could have been readily obtained from the cafeteria management itself. She was profoundly shocked that the contributions of Member States had been used for such a purpose. Her delegation could not support the Secretary-General's proposals for the remodelling of the thirty-ninth floor.

83. Mr. MALONGA (Congo) said that his delegation would be unable to vote in favour of the Secretary-General's proposals for the thirty-ninth floor because there was no clear indication of how the space obtained would be used, and because the Committee had not been provided with a breakdown of the figure of \$50,000 for the architectural and engineering study. Delegations were keenly aware of the need for additional office space, but they had been given no assurances that the remodelled thirty-ninth floor would be used for that purpose.

84. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he could not fail to note that even so elementary a question had not been properly prepared. He wished it to be placed on record that the adoption of a decision on the basis of incomplete information would be irresponsible.

85. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly to:

(1) Take note of the report of the Secretary-General on expansion of meeting rooms and improvement of conference servicing and delegate facilities at United Nations Headquarters in document A/C.5/33/24 and the report of the Advisory Committee thereon contained in document A/33/7/Add.13;

(2) Concur with the observations of the Advisory Committee and approve the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10, 12 and 14 of its report.

86. Mr. TALIEH (Iran) pointed out that the request for an additional appropriation should be for \$421,000, not \$471,000, since the Secretary-General had agreed to endeavour to absorb the \$50,000 for the study relating to the remodelling of the thirty-ninth floor.

87. Mr. ANVAR (Secretary of the Committee) said that, in view of the Assistant Secretary-General's statement, the reference in the second paragraph of the recommendation to paragraph 14 of the Advisory Committee's report should be deleted.

88. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that to omit paragraph 14 would be to omit the substance. It was only the request for \$50,000 that should be removed, not the authorization to conduct the study.

89. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that his delegation was not in favour of the study relating to the use of the thirty-ninth floor and could not, therefore, vote in favour of paragraph 12 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/33/7/Add.13). He requested a separate vote on the part of the recommendation referring to the thirty-ninth floor.

90. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) urged the Committee to proceed to a vote.

91. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt by consensus the text he had read out.

92. It was so decided.

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93. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Chairman had acted too quickly in announcing that decision. His delegation requested that a vote should be taken.

94. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that he had not yet put the additional appropriation to the vote.

95. Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) expressed agreement with the views of the representatives of the Congo and the Soviet Union. It was the very principle of the study on the use of the thirty-ninth floor which was being contested. He had wished to request a vote, but the Chairman had not given him an opportunity to do so.

96. Mr. OUATTARA (Ivory Coast) said that the Chairman had obviously not seen that some members wished to speak. However, the decision had been taken, and in view of the lateness of the hour he appealed to members not to cause difficulties.

The meeting rose at 11.50 p.m.