



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MARVILLE (Barbados)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

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)
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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
(continued) (A/33/105)

1. Mr. BELYAEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that an analysis of the documents before the Committee suggested that progress had been made in recent years in remedying the abnormal situation which had developed in the recruitment of staff and in following the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly. It was fair to say that things were moving in the right direction. But it should not be forgotten that the results achieved to date were extremely modest - especially with regard to the implementation of the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter and General Assembly resolutions calling for strict observance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution - in comparison with the effort expended.
2. A situation in which the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which had existed as long as the United Nations itself, still did not govern the staffing practices of the Organization's executive organ, could not be considered normal. Some 43 Member States, some of them founder Members of the Organization, were still unrepresented or under-represented in the Secretariat. Other countries met only the lower limit of their desirable ranges, while a certain group of States had for years been over-represented. Whereas recruitment from the unrepresented and under-represented countries tended only to fill posts vacated by nationals of those States, recruitment from the over-represented countries tended to aggravate the situation resulting from the failure to implement the principle of equitable geographical distribution. His delegation was, therefore, in favour of ending recruitment from over-represented countries.
3. An important way of increasing efficiency in the Secretariat was to cease issuing permanent contracts. The preponderance of permanent over fixed-term contracts was a hindrance to efficiency and high quality in the Secretariat in that it impeded the replacement of insufficiently qualified staff by more capable specialists.
4. His delegation was also concerned at the practice of extending the contracts of staff who had reached pensionable age, contrary to the provisions of regulation 9.5 of the Staff Regulations. It called for strict observance of the

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(Mr. Belyaev, Byelorussian SSR)

decisions taken by the General Assembly in that regard, and considered that the posts made available in consequence should be filled by young specialists from under-represented countries.

5. In the view of his delegation, the reclassification of posts in the Secretariat was unjustified in that it was unrelated to any real extension of the responsibilities of staff members or an increase in the volume and complexity of their work, but was simply a means of awarding promotions, and led to further unjustified expenditure on staff. The post classification structure of the United Nations should be determined solely by the requirements of the programme of work.

6. He noted with satisfaction that over the reporting period more women from more countries had been employed in the Secretariat. However, the principle of equitable geographical distribution was violated also in the recruitment of women. The way in which the applications of women candidates were processed hardly tallied with the sympathy towards them which had been expressed in the Committee: one highly qualified female candidate from the Byelorussian SSR had been waiting for months to be appointed to a suitable post.

7. There was no need to send recruitment missions to countries which were adequately represented in the Secretariat, chiefly by staff on permanent contracts. The opposite was true of countries whose nationals were without a single permanent contract; such countries could very rapidly move from being adequately represented to being under-represented, as his country had done during 1978. It was highly unsatisfactory that in more than 30 years his country had never been allocated a post at the D-1 level or higher, although the Charter insisted that every Member State should have an equal opportunity to take part in the everyday work of the Organization.

8. The implementation of personnel policy reforms should be governed primarily by the objective of giving complete and immediate practical expression to the requirements of the Charter and decisions of the General Assembly concerning the staffing of the Secretariat, first and foremost on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It was to be hoped that all the suggestions made during the Committee's consideration would be duly applied.

9. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported the principle of equitable geographical distribution at the senior level of the Secretariat. Senior posts should not be the monopoly of particular States. The primary consideration in seeking replacements at the senior level should be competence, a quality which was not particular to any country or region. No post needed a priori to be filled by a national of any country, and reserving posts for nationals of certain countries only hindered attempts to recruit equally competent staff from other countries in the interests of equitable geographical distribution.

10. His delegation recognized the importance of giving women attractive career opportunities and supported the principle of distributing posts between the sexes without giving advantages to either sex to the detriment of the other. The major concern should be the interests of the United Nations and implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution without discrimination between developing and developed countries.

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(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

11. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the JIU report on the implementation of the personnel policy reforms approved by the General Assembly in 1974 (A/33/228). Staff members should not suffer discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, political opinion, nationality or other such factors. In that connexion, his delegation attached considerable importance to the work of the Panel to investigate allegations of discriminatory treatment.
12. The Secretariat should seek to derive the utmost benefit from its available staff resources by removing unnecessary obstacles to the promotion of staff members, due account being taken of outside talent which might also be valuable to the Organization. It was unfair to deny promotion to staff members who fulfilled the necessary conditions. Some staff members, after long years of service in the General Service category still remained in that category even after obtaining higher degrees. Other staff members had entered the Organization through competitive examinations and were denied access to certain higher posts. After a long period of demonstrated competence, staff members should not be allowed to become discouraged or be forced to choose between changing departments in order to get promotion and considering resignation in search of better prospects. The Organization could not afford to lose such well-trained personnel.
13. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that the Secretariat appeared indifferent to the deplorable situation with regard to the recruitment of nationals from the developing countries. The various resolutions adopted in the search for solutions to the problem of the composition of the Secretariat had apparently fallen on deaf ears. His delegation wished to reiterate its demands for improvements in the composition of the Secretariat, since it felt that the highly qualified candidates of the Latin American and other unrepresented or under-represented countries should be given positive consideration for Professional posts in the Secretariat.
14. His delegation viewed with some surprise the note by the Secretary-General on recruitment missions contained in document A/C.5/33/CRP.1. Out of the 10 women and 13 men interviewed in Latin America and the Caribbean, only one had been recruited. The document included the curious information that in Panama only two men and two women had been found with the appropriate qualifications. With regard to Honduras, the document stated that the mission had contacted the Women's Associations of Honduras and had found only two men who were considered qualified enough. Out of a total of 130 candidates interviewed, one from Latin America and the Caribbean, one from the Middle East, and four from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had been recruited.
15. His delegation was reluctant to believe that there was bad faith among members of the Secretariat. It was clear, however, that the time for deceitfulness and inquiries had passed. Positive solutions were needed urgently. Two delegations had expressed concern about discriminatory practices in the recruitment of Secretariat staff. It was felt that the complaints of the developing countries were being ignored and that there was no protection against discrimination on the basis of race, nationality and sex. The Secretariat should comment on those

(Mr. Williams, Panama)

concerns, since there was obviously something very wrong. In addition to discussing global problems and seeking appropriate solutions, delegations had a responsibility to attempt to remedy the ills within the Organization.

16. Miss CHAN (Singapore) said that she hoped the Secretary-General would take due note of the constructive suggestions contained in the JIU report on women in the Professional category and above in the United Nations system (A/33/105) and of the comments and recommendations respecting equitable geographical distribution made in the Committee. It was too often forgotten that the item on personnel questions also concerned the basis upon which individual staff members were recruited, assigned and promoted and the interests and well-being of the United Nations staff as a whole. Her delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the Secretary-General to the effect that the United Nations should find a working balance between national sovereignty and interest, and international responsibility (A/33/1, part XI) and felt that the Organization's recruitment and promotion policies should be based on that principle. However, it was clear that at present the staff management policies were not being implemented with complete impartiality in the collective interests of the Secretariat and the Member States.

17. Her delegation believed that if the United Nations was to function effectively it needed an efficient, impartial and competent Secretariat. She wished to remind Members and the Secretary-General of their obligations under Article 101 of the Charter; Members should not merely speak out for the principle of Secretariat independence but should also act in conformity with that principle. It was therefore necessary to upgrade the quality of personnel recruited by the Organization and to protect the integrity of the recruitment and promotion processes. Further, to attract recruits of the highest quality, a career service should be developed offering reasonable prospects of advancement for individual staff members to the highest echelons of the Secretariat. Accordingly, a two-pronged approach was required. Member States should not regard the United Nations as an extension of their home civil services; positions in the Secretariat were not to be used as rewards, nor was the Secretariat to be employed as a tool for furthering national interests. Representatives of Member States should therefore stop interfering in the recruitment and promotion of Secretariat staff; while it was perfectly legitimate for them to identify talented candidates and to present them for consideration to the Secretariat, once having done so they should refrain from exerting pressure or influence on the selection process. The Secretary-General should, in turn, redouble his efforts to ensure that the Secretariat conformed to the three objective criteria of competence, efficiency and integrity laid down in the Charter and should show courage and fortitude in resisting pressure exerted by Member States in respect of recruitment and promotion.

18. Her delegation had observed that, at present, morale did not seem to be especially high among the Secretariat staff. In certain cases, people had been recruited from outside the Secretariat to fill positions that could have been filled as effectively, if not more so, by more experienced persons who were already staff members. In other cases recruits lacked the necessary expertise, particularly in the technical field, and occasionally seemed more concerned with promoting the interests of their national Governments than those of the world community. Member States should recognize that it was in their collective interests to ensure that only persons who had distinguished themselves in the relevant field and who

(Miss Chan, Singapore)

believed in the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter should occupy senior Secretariat positions.

19. Mr. AKSOY (Turkey) said that his delegation supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to implement the personnel policy reforms approved by the General Assembly in 1974, although it was a little pessimistic with regard to the speed with which they were being implemented; it believed that the JIU recommendations (A/33/105; A/33/228), would be of positive assistance to the Secretary-General in those efforts. The task before the Secretary-General was a difficult one, requiring a delicate balance between securing efficiency, competence and integrity, and maintaining an equitable geographical distribution, and at the same time achieving the right proportion of fixed-term and permanent staff and of men and women, and increasing the representation of developing countries at the policy-making levels.

20. His delegation was concerned that an international bureaucracy depending increasingly on permanent staff might become alienated from the realities of the international scene and, even more so, from the realities encountered by the Member States themselves. An international bureaucracy out of touch with Member States could not serve as efficiently and as impartially as it should. It should, however, provide opportunities for mobility and flexibility and should be open to new ideas and to renovation.

21. His delegation wished to commend the plan to hold a competitive examination for the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category and, in that respect, believed that the staff development programmes, in preparing staff for higher levels within their categories or for transfer to other categories, could be of great utility in promoting mobility. It endorsed the recommendation to increase the number of staff from developing countries at decision-making levels, in which respect it shared the concern of the representative of Trinidad and Tobago at the apparent static situation in the Secretariat, and would support proposals and initiatives to increase representation of the developing countries at all levels of the Secretariat.

22. With regard to the situation of women in the Secretariat, the JIU report (A/33/105) clearly indicated that, despite efforts made to increase employment opportunities for women and to eliminate discriminatory practices, much remained to be done throughout the United Nations system. His delegation supported the JIU recommendations but appreciated that Governments themselves should include more qualified women when nominating candidates. The Secretariat, too, should give more attention to women candidates but should consider giving preference to women candidates from the developing countries, where the applicants were equally qualified. Moreover, when recruiting at the junior Professional level, opportunities should be offered to qualified women who had been employed in the General Service category and who had thus not been afforded equality of opportunity at the beginning of their careers; when the promotion of such persons was considered, there should be no discrimination on the ground of sex. He praised the Secretary-General's policy of giving men and women staff members equal opportunity and treatment, and of requiring that decisions affecting conditions of employment or opportunities for career development in the Secretariat and the placement, assignment and promotion of staff members should, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter, be based on merit, without regard to sex.

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23. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) said that his delegation welcomed the efforts that had been made towards fulfilling the General Assembly's intentions with regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution but was unhappy that they had not met with more success. He appreciated that Member States had to share the major responsibilities of the Secretariat in facilitating the attainment of the objectives established by the General Assembly. However, it was disappointing to learn that as at 30 June 1978, there were still 20 under-represented and 23 unrepresented Member States and that only 39 nationals of such States had been appointed during the reporting year, in contrast to 119 appointments of nationals of well-represented States and 96 appointments of nationals of over-represented States.

24. He pointed out that most of the under-represented and unrepresented States were African or other developing countries. It was therefore misleading to use regional desirable ranges to suggest that African countries were well-represented and such regional ranges could not be considered as substitutes for national desirable ranges. His delegation rejected totally any argument that developing countries were incapable of producing well-trained men and women to meet the requirements of the United Nations and believed that it was inconceivable that the developed countries should hold a monopoly of intellectual and academic competence. There had been cases where competent and highly qualified persons from the third world, especially Africa, had applied for positions within the Secretariat without success. It seemed that Africa was not being taken seriously by the Organization, as demonstrated by the failure to dispatch timely recruitment missions to African States and the lack of information on the missions recently sent to the Ivory Coast and Gabon. His country had many qualified men and women, who had been waiting too long a time for a recruitment mission to be sent to East Africa. His Government was willing for its qualified men and women to serve the Organization without prejudice or preconceived ideas; its basic assumption was that the Secretariat should give of its best in serving the international community and that the heterogeneity of the Secretariat's talent and culture was the source of its inspiration and success.

25. His delegation believed strongly in the philosophy of an international civil service committed to the implementation of programmes adopted by Member States but rejected any philosophy that might support the idea of creating pockets of foreign ministries in the Secretariat. On that basis it objected to the belief apparently held by some Member States that specific departments of the Secretariat were strictly their preserve and that nationals from developing countries were not acceptable in those departments. He cited a case in which a Secretariat post had been vacant for two years and was still vacant because a particular Member State was trying to find one of its own nationals to fill the post, although many qualified people from developing countries could do so competently and efficiently. The United Nations was a political organization whose success depended entirely on the moral and political support that Member States gave it; equitable geographical distribution provided the essential means of ensuring the objectivity, impartiality and global perspective with which the work of the United Nations had to be carried out and the Secretariat should reflect the pluralistic nature of the Organization's membership and the confidence of its Member States.

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(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

26. It was disappointing to learn that very few African women had been employed at Professional levels in the Secretariat. No Kenyan woman had ever served at the Professional level and, where women from other African States were employed, it was invariably at a low level. He called for the recruitment of African women to the higher echelons of the Secretariat and emphasized that they should not be recruited as mere window-dressing or as a political gimmick.

27. However, his delegation considered that the balance between men and women should be maintained within the framework of equitable geographical distribution. It believed strongly that the developing countries, and Africa in particular, had the right to adequate female representation in the Secretariat and therefore could not agree with recommendation 8 of the JIU report (A/33/105) that for a limited period of time women should be appointed without regard to geographical distribution. Such a proposal might have dangerous political consequences and would not benefit countries such as Kenya, which was visited by a United Nations recruitment team once every five years. Moreover, if the concept of geographical distribution was abandoned, there was no reason to believe that Kenyan women would ever be given a chance to serve in the Organization. Nevertheless, he noted with satisfaction the work of the Panel to investigate allegations of discriminatory treatment and hoped that it would devote more time to the problem and would sustain the principle of fair play and the elimination of all forms of discrimination within the Secretariat.

28. With regard to the classification of General Service posts, his delegation wished to recommend strongly a comprehensive study of the reclassification of General Service staff in the United Nations system. The current system created distortions in the salary structure and resulted in certain incomprehensible anomalies in respect of the classification of posts in New York, Geneva and Nairobi. He therefore supported the five recommendations made by Inspector Bertrand in the JIU report (A/33/228), which were indicative of a sincere commitment to a better international civil service. He suggested, however, that the design of competitive examinations should be considered very carefully to ensure that such examinations did not have any inherent cultural bias which would, in the long run, work to the disadvantage of candidates from the developing countries.

29. He noted that the liberal promotion of General Service staff into the Professional category had contributed to the age imbalance in the Secretariat and to a distortion of its geographical distribution and had diminished opportunities for the recruitment to grades P-1 and P-2 of bright college graduates from developing countries. His delegation was in favour of linking promotion to mobility. Noting that some members of the international civil service who were assigned to posts in developing countries were invariably unwilling to transfer, he suggested that, if their promotion was a condition of their transfer, that situation would change and staff who were stale and unimaginative in their jobs would be removed.

30. His delegation was concerned that nationals from developing countries were not adequately represented at high decision-making levels. It had mixed feelings on the idea of the advance earmarking of posts and on recruitment to such posts by means of examinations. Although the idea might provide a solution to the persistent

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(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

under-representation of certain States and to the need to upgrade the quality of staff, it might not be in the interests of the developing countries, particularly if they were not informed that such examinations would be held. His delegation favoured strengthening the authority of the Office of Personnel Services in such a way as to make it impossible for other departments to refuse to accept its recommendations concerning well-qualified candidates; the prior association of the Office with the selection process of candidates should ensure the co-operation of other departments. However, unless caution was exercised, examinations could easily be used to perpetuate the over-representation of certain States within the Secretariat. He pointed out, in that respect, that the report indicated that an examination had been conducted in one of the over-represented countries.

31. Finally, he suggested that Member States might consider the possibility of fixing a quota for the employment of women so that, for example, 25 per cent of their nationals within the Secretariat were women. That would prevent certain countries from seeking to secure all available posts for their own female candidates.

32. Mr. RAKOTONAIVO (Madagascar) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/33/176) indicated that 23 Member States were not represented, 20 were under-represented, 50 were within the desirable range and 56 were above the desirable range. The unrepresented or under-represented States were mainly the developing countries, including those belonging to the Group of African States, among which there were 11 unrepresented and 6 under-represented countries. The number of senior posts occupied by nationals of developing countries was relatively small; out of 352 senior posts, only 40 were held by nationals of African countries. In that connexion, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, in its resolution 627 (XXXI), had reaffirmed its desire to see the OAU member States adequately represented at the higher echelons of the Secretariat of the United Nations as well as in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system (A/33/235).

33. His delegation felt that the measures taken thus far to ensure an equitable geographical distribution of posts within the Secretariat were inadequate. It supported the statements made by other delegations on the need to give priority to the nationals of unrepresented or under-represented States. It was in favour of the organization of competitive examinations on the understanding that they could be intended primarily for nationals of unrepresented or under-represented States until an equitable balance was obtained. It recommended that recruitment missions should be conducted with the greatest of care.

34. His delegation endorsed the principle of equal opportunity for men and women within the Secretariat and was concerned to note the very small proportion of women staff members. Efforts to recruit more women should be intensified, with priority given to nationals of unrepresented or under-represented States. As to the distribution of posts, his delegation endorsed the principle that women should occupy senior posts on the same conditions as men.

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35. Mr. BIRICHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the short-comings in the personnel policy of the United Nations which had been discussed by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth and thirty-first sessions still persisted, as could be seen from the current report of JIU on that subject (A/33/228). For example, staff continued to be recruited from the General Service into the Professional category, in contravention of the decisions of the General Assembly calling for young specialists to be appointed to the Secretariat in order to reduce the average age of Secretariat staff.

36. A number of useful suggestions had been made by delegations in connexion with the implementation of personnel policy reforms. For example, it had been proposed that broad co-operation should be instituted between the United Nations and the national personnel services of individual States, in order to provide for the periodic assignment of United Nations employees to work in their home countries for up to five years, after which they would return to the United Nations. The implementation of such a scheme would represent a development of the fixed-term contract system.

37. Planned recruitment, which the General Assembly had recognized to be necessary in resolution 2736 (XXV), would also help to ensure the proper staffing of the United Nations. Unfortunately, the proposal was not receiving the attention it deserved. The reference to the difficulties encountered in using the long-term recruitment plan as a working tool (cf. A/C.5/33/2, para. 12) was, in his delegation's view, unfounded. Planned recruitment was necessary not only to improve the representation of unrepresented and under-represented countries in the Secretariat, but also in order to set time-limits for the reduction of staff from over-represented countries. The proposed reform referred to in the table annexed to the JIU report (A/33/228), namely to devise a simplified method of one-year forecasting of recruitment needs was inadequate for that purpose.

38. All Soviet members of the Secretariat staff worked on fixed-term contracts and some 50 of them, excluding translators, were replaced every year. Thus another specialist had to be recruited for every one leaving the United Nations and the over-all number of Soviet staff members in the Secretariat remained within the limits of the desirable range.

39. With regard to the question of competitive examinations, he pointed out that in a number of countries staff were selected for work in international organizations by the appropriate institutions, making examinations unnecessary. His delegation was not, however, against holding such examinations in countries whose Governments were prepared to bear all the expenses incurred. It agreed that it was superfluous to send recruitment missions to, or hold competitive examinations in countries which far exceeded their allotted number of senior posts.

40. In connexion with the question of staff mobility, his delegation stressed the need to correct the practice of certain heads of department of unjustly depriving specialists working on fixed-term contracts of their legitimate and hard-earned right to promotion.

(Mr. Birichev, USSR)

41. The transfer of a number of functions and responsibilities of the Office of Personnel Services to other Secretariat departments and divisions had reduced the role played by the Office in personnel questions, leading to discord in the implementation of a uniform personnel policy. It had also permitted bureaucratic delays and the narrow sectoral interests of certain groups of staff to interfere in decision-making. His delegation, like that of Kenya, was in favour of strengthening and extending the authority and responsibilities of the Office of Personnel Services in personnel matters.

42. The steps currently being taken to implement personnel policy reforms were insufficient. Far more needed to be done if the Secretariat was to become a truly effective body which could meet the demands made on it; but care must be taken to ensure the strict observance of the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions concerning equitable geographical distribution in the introduction of all changes.

43. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that the Assembly should take note of the amendments to the Staff Rules contained in document A/C.5/33/1.

44. It was so decided.

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

Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations (continued) (A/C.5/33/3, A/C.5/33/L.6)

45. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/33/L.6 on behalf of his own delegation and that of Trinidad and Tobago. He explained that the draft resolution called for the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session in order to allow time for the compilation of data covering the entire biennium 1978-1979, and because delegations would have more time to consider the matter in an off-budget year.

46. Mr. ABDESSELEM (Algeria) said that it would have been more logical to consider the question of the use of experts and consultants in the United Nations in conjunction with personnel questions. His delegation felt also that JIU should be given a mandate to examine the use of experts and consultants.

47. The statistical data in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/3) were incomplete. Some of the tables had a general air of unpreparedness which could be taken to suggest a deliberate misuse of resources by the Secretariat. An examination of table D revealed that there was no information on the level of higher education of 1,495 experts out of a total of 2,325. It was difficult to understand how even the most indulgent statisticians could tolerate such a lack of

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(Mr. Abdesselem, Algeria)

data. Even more disquieting, given the fact that the evaluation of the services performed under a contract was a prerequisite for payment under the contract (A/C.5/33/3, para. 16), was table E, which indicated that the services of 2,080 experts, consultants and contractors had not been evaluated, while the services of nine others had been less than adequate.

48. With regard to table B, it was difficult to understand why the separate columns for the number of months only went up to six months. He hoped that the Secretariat had not deliberately refrained from providing greater detail on experts, consultants and contractors engaged for more than six months in an attempt to avoid a more in-depth examination by the Fifth Committee, which might have revealed a violation of the principle that outside expertise should only be used for short-term tasks.

49. His delegation noted the Secretariat's desire to achieve a saving of 10 per cent during the current biennium, its acknowledgement that existing methods did not allow a total evaluation of the use of experts and consultants and its promise that the procedures would be improved for future reports. It was high time that the Secretariat provided the statistical data which could reasonably be expected on the use of experts and consultants.

50. According to the administrative instruction on the use of outside expertise and professional services, the services to be performed should be those for which provision could not be found within the staff resources of the Secretariat for lack of specialized knowledge and/or expertise (A/C.5/33/3, para. 3 (d)). In paragraph 18 of document A/C.5/33/3, however, the Secretariat appeared to be advocating the recruitment, as experts and consultants, of former and retired staff members. His delegation had the most serious misgivings about such a policy.

51. Mr. ONIGA (Romania) said that his delegation was convinced that there were instances when the use of experts and consultants was essential, in view of the great diversity of United Nations activities. But the United Nations must ensure that the use of experts and consultants should be the exception and not the rule, that such people should be used only where persons with the required qualifications could not be found within the Secretariat, that any experts or consultants recruited should have the highest qualifications, that the work of such experts should in every case be carefully analysed and evaluated, and that experts and consultants should be drawn from all Member States, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

52. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/33/3) there was still a great gap between those principles and what happened in practice. He wished to emphasize the importance of evaluating the results of the work done by experts, an evaluation which at present was the exception rather than the rule. As for geographical distribution, it appeared that most of the experts came from a very small number of countries. Those two points alone would justify concern on the part of both the Fifth Committee and the Secretariat.

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(Mr. Oniga, Romania)

53. The draft resolution submitted by Poland and Trinidad and Tobago in document A/C.5/33/L.6 reflected the concern with the problem that had been expressed during the debate and provided the basic elements for the improvement desired by all. However, he would like to see a more explicit text, particularly with a view to ensuring that in the next report there would be detailed information about what had been done in comparison with what had been asked for. In the present text operative paragraph 1 was too vague to be effective. He thought that operative paragraph 3 might well be incorporated in operative paragraph 1, although he would not insist on that point, and he suggested that the words "to take into account" in operative paragraph 3 might perhaps be changed to "to take into due account".

54. Mr. ANDERSSON (Sweden) said that his delegation too looked forward to a more complete report next year. It might be useful to have two separate parts, one on consultants and one on experts. As the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had said, there was a difference between the two categories: the work of consultants was more directly complementary to the functions of the Secretariat and they were recruited on the basis of an evaluation and decision by the Secretary-General in each case, whereas experts were often recruited for special work called for by United Nations bodies. The Swedish delegation would therefore like to see the Secretary-General submit a comprehensive report at the thirty-fifth session that dealt separately with the two categories. It would be useful to have information on experts and expert groups recruited as a result of decisions by Governments, and a reference to the legal decisions and to the period of the contracts or the time during which the work was performed should be included.

55. The Swedish delegation would support the draft resolution in document A/C.5/33/L.6.

56. Mr. DAVIDSON (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that he wished to comment briefly on the main issues raised during the debate. It would take up too much time if he replied to each individual question, and he hoped that the delegations that had raised those points would accept an arrangement whereby a responsible officer in the Secretariat would get in touch with the delegations concerned and answer the individual questions.

57. He would confine himself to certain general considerations, and wished first to speak about paragraph 22 of document A/C.5/33/3, which had been referred to by many speakers, including the representatives of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. He understood why some doubts had been expressed about the wording of that paragraph, in which the Secretary-General had said that he was convinced that the existing procedures already demonstrated that the use of experts and consultants in the Secretariat was in accordance with the principles laid down by the General Assembly. Possibly that statement should be regarded as an expression of hope. The Secretariat had paid close attention to the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly, which were set out clearly in administrative instruction ST/AI/232. The Secretariat had not received any evidence that those guidelines were being abused, although it was difficult to prove that they were being followed in detail.

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(Mr. Davidson)

58. The reporting mechanism that provided the statistical basis of the report in document A/C.5/33/3 did not enable the Secretariat to answer all the questions about statistics put by members of the Committee. He himself had been reluctant to accept the explanation that the inability of the Secretariat to give full answers to all the questions and to provide comprehensive data was due to the lack of sufficient staff to process the statistics. He believed that as accurate a report as possible should be produced with the existing staff. The problem was not lack of staff but the complexity of the forms. For each consultant or expert recruited three separate forms were required, one dealing with personal history, one a control form which provided additional information for the report to the Fifth Committee, and one an outside evaluation report which was filled in not at the beginning of the contract but at its end. That meant that if 3,000 people were recruited there would be not 3,000 forms to deal with but 9,000. The aim must be to simplify the forms and make them more susceptible to statistical processing.

59. The representative of the Ukrainian SSR had commented on table A in document A/C.5/33/3 and suggested that the Secretariat mandate was to keep the level of expenditure to that of 1974-1975. The table showed that the amount for 1978-1979 was \$12,468,000. A reduction to the 1974-1975 level of approximately \$6.8 million would mean a reduction of about 50 per cent, and he asked if that were either desirable or possible. It would involve a reduction of expenditure by UNIDO from \$3.6 million to \$2 million and by UNCTAD from \$1.1 million to about \$0.7 million. Yet since 1974-1975 the devaluation of the dollar in terms of the Swiss franc and the Austrian schilling had meant a loss of funds for those two agencies. If any such reduction were contemplated, it would have a very serious effect on the work programmes of those agencies, especially in terms of economic and social questions.

60. The representative of Poland had asked what was the point of table A. It was to show that the Secretariat was paying attention to General Assembly resolution 32/203, which had asked for detailed comparative data; table A gave comparative data on expert and consultant costs over the past 10 years. There was a problem in proving to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the Committee that the principles laid down by the General Assembly were being followed. Some delegations had objected because there was little reference in the report to ensuring that consultant and expert services were not duplicating work done elsewhere. He asked the Committee to state how it would be possible to implement that principle of demonstrating that there was no duplication. Without elaborate and cost-ineffective machinery it was impossible to show that no duplication was involved. The form of application for a contract certified that as far as was known the work concerned had not been done before, and that form was signed by two responsible officials. The same applied to distinguishing between priority activities and others; there were practical difficulties in giving the Committee adequate proof that priorities were being complied with.

61. The representatives of Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had asked whether there could not be a further breakdown of the penultimate column in table B,

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listing a large number of experts engaged for six months or more. He would ask what detail would be regarded as worth-while by the Fifth Committee. Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report indicated why the Secretariat considered that the procedure followed in calculating the duration of contracts thus far was unsatisfactory, and why it was proposed in future to follow the same procedure as UNCTAD, as set forth in table C.

62. The penultimate column in table D listed an unreasonable amount of information as "not recorded", but it would be more accurate to head that column "unprocessed". The forms had not been left blank, but the Office of Personnel Services had had no time to process the returns for 1970. He directed the Committee's attention to the data in the first four columns of table D, which showed that out of a total of 830 experts only 26 had not attained one of the three levels of higher education specified. When the remaining 1,495 cases in the penultimate column had been processed, the distribution of educational qualifications in table D could be amended accordingly.

63. The representative of Italy had asked why the figures in table G did not add up to the total of 2,325 shown in other tables. That was because the classification was by the groups of countries established in General Assembly resolution 2151 (XXI), and often the nationality was not recorded.

64. The representatives of the Ukrainian SSR and Spain had referred to the desirability of further information on budgetary and extrabudgetary expenditure on experts and consultants. He referred the Ukrainian representative to annex I. A detailed breakdown giving the exact number of experts, consultants and contractors whose services were charged to extrabudgetary funds would involve much work and probably additional information, so he hoped that the representative of Spain would be satisfied with the breakdown in annex I.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that the discussion would be suspended until a later meeting, and that in the meantime he would consult with the two sponsors of the draft resolution with a view to arriving at a revised version of the text.

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly in document A/33/L.4 concerning agenda item 58 (a) (A/C.5/33/27)

66. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/33/L.4 (A/C.5/33/27). The Advisory Committee had noted that one of the decisions that the General Assembly would make when it adopted the draft resolution would be to decide that the Committee Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 (Committee of the Whole) should have summary records. That provision had not been included when the General Assembly had established the Committee of the Whole at its thirty-second session.

(Mr. Mselle)

The Secretary-General had estimated in paragraph 5 of his statement that the provision of summary records and other conference services in 1979 would cost \$338,000 for a meeting of one week. Any additional appropriation would be considered by the General Assembly in the context of the consolidated statement of conference requirements for 1979 to be submitted at the current session.

67. In paragraph 6 of his statement the Secretary-General had given an estimate of \$26,000 for travel and subsistence of staff of interested organizations and regional commissions. However, as the Secretary-General had said in paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/32/106, that requirement was spread over several sections of the budget; he would therefore explore the possibilities of absorbing the requirement and, if he found that he could not absorb the whole amount, he would return to the matter in the context of the second performance report to be submitted to the General Assembly at the thirty-fourth session.

68. In paragraph 7 of his statement the Secretary-General referred to the problem of accommodating the Committee of the Whole at Headquarters. If the Committee of the Whole met on the dates indicated in paragraph 7, there might be no practical difficulties in accommodating it, but it was for that Committee itself to decide when it would meet and for how long.

69. In connexion with operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, since there was a very heavy schedule of meetings at Headquarters in 1979, practical difficulties might arise unless there were a flexible interpretation of the decision by the General Assembly to give priority in conference facilities to both the Conference on the Law of the Sea and the Committee of the Whole.

70. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution in document A/33/L.4, no additional appropriations would be required, at the present stage, for the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979.

71. Mr. EL AYADHI (Tunisia) said that, in view of the grave problems in the international economy, intensive efforts should be made to establish the new international economic order. In the light of the recent agreement to resume the North-South dialogue, the Fifth Committee's decision was urgently needed.

72. Count YORK (Federal Republic of Germany) referred to paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/33/27 and welcomed the dates suggested in the form of options to enable the Committee of the Whole to meet without additional costs being incurred. The General Assembly might accordingly wish to consider those options. If the Fifth Committee's decision on the matter was to be transmitted to the General Assembly immediately, that did not mean that the General Assembly would take an immediate decision, since it might be required to consider other additions proposed to the calendar of conferences.

73. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation's views on the mandate of the Committee of the Whole were well known. As to the proposed dates, it was for the Committee of the Whole to decide when it wished to meet, not the Fifth Committee. He asked the representative of the Secretary-General to state what impact the proposed dates would have on the calendar of conferences for 1979, and added that the recommendations could be discussed first with the Committee on Conferences and subsequently in the Fifth Committee.

74. The CHAIRMAN said that the Fifth Committee was not required to consider that point at the present stage.

75. Mr. SADDLER (United States of America), referring to paragraph 8 of document A/C.5/33/27 said he did not understand why the Secretary-General reserved the right to return to the matter, since he always had such a right when Governments took initiatives requiring additional funds. His delegation would accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the understanding that action on the draft resolution would not have financial implications.

76. Mr. IYER (India) said that the manner in which the letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences had been quoted in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/33/27 was misleading, since the establishment of the Committee of the Whole was not a new development; there was nothing unforeseen except the timing of its sessions and the question of summary records. Moreover, it was not clear what was the purpose of the statement attributed to the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences.

77. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed reservations regarding the wording, implicit in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution and explicit in paragraph 7 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General, under which a decision on the timing of the sessions of the Committee of the Whole could result in changes in the dates and venues of meetings of other United Nations bodies in 1979. If any revision of the calendar of conferences for 1979 became necessary as a result of a decision taken by the Committee of the Whole, the revision must not affect any bodies other than those concerned with economic and social affairs.

78. In his statement the Secretary-General indicated that the adoption of the draft resolution would have no additional financial implications so long as the Committee of the Whole decided to meet at the times specified in paragraph 7. He asked whether that implied that, should the Committee of the Whole decide to meet at some other time, the rescheduling of other meetings would necessarily have financial implications. If so, that fact should be indicated in the Fifth Committee's report to the General Assembly.

79. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he had used the words "no additional appropriations would be required at the present stage" so as to meet the problem referred to by the representative of the USSR.

80. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to instruct the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/33/L.4, no additional appropriations would be required, at the present stage, for the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979.

81. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.