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Fifth Committee**Summary record of the 53rd meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 March 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Orr (Vice-Chairman) (Canada)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

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Action taken on certain items (continued)

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

In the absence of Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Mr. Orr (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (continued)

Final budget appropriations for the biennium 2000-2001 (continued) (A/56/866, A/56/868; A/C.5/56/L.53)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.53

1. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.53 on the final budget appropriations for the biennium 2000-2001 on behalf of the Chairman.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.53 was adopted.*

Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations (continued) (A/56/311; A/C.5/56/L.55)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.55

3. **Mr. Ivashchenko** (Ukraine) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.55, entitled "Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations".

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.55 was adopted.*

Standards of accommodation for air travel (continued) (A/54/382, A/55/488, A/56/7, A/56/426, A/56/630; A/C.5/56/L.60)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.60

5. **Mr. Ivashchenko** (Ukraine) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.60, entitled "Standards of accommodation for air travel".

6. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.60 was adopted.*

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.47 and L.56

7. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.56, which was the result of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.56 was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as a result of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.56, the measures affecting Internet services provided to Member States were rescinded. The costs would be financed from the savings resulting from changes in the level of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, as provided for in draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.55. With regard to the provision of conference and support services to bodies and committees, every effort would continue to be made, as requested in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, to minimize the adverse effects on Member States. The other measures outlined in the note verbale of the Secretary-General dated 28 February 2002 and in ST/IC/2002/13 would continue to be in effect at the current level of appropriation for the biennium 2002-2003, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 56/254. The requested report on the implementation of resolution 56/242 within the resources specified in resolution 56/254 would be prepared for submission at the second part of the Assembly's resumed session.

10. **Ms. Silot Bravo**, speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, expressed appreciation for the efforts that had been made to reach consensus on such a sensitive issue. The Group of 77 and China expected the Secretariat to implement the resolution on the pattern of conferences in such a way that the work of Member States would not be adversely affected.

11. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) drew attention to paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. It was his delegation's understanding that implementation of the budget appropriation resolution should not affect the implementation of the resolution on the pattern of conferences. Conference services were the basis of the Organization's ability to communicate and as such should receive special attention; he could not accept a lack of resources as a reason for cuts in those services.

The report requested from the Secretary-General should identify all possible areas for the financing of conference services and section 27 D of the programme budget should be reviewed to determine the level of resources required.

12. **The Chairman** said that, in the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.56, he took it that draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47 was now withdrawn by its sponsors

13. *It was so decided.*

Documentation availability in six languages on the United Nations Web site (continued)
(A/C.5/56/L.12; A/C.5/56/L.57)

Review of public information activities in the United Nations (continued) (A/C.5/56/L.17; A/C.5/56/L.58)

ESCWA documents and publications (continued)
(A/C.5/56/L.19; A/C.5/56/L.59)

Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.57, A/C.5/56/L.58 and A/C.5/56/L.59

14. **Mr. Schlessinger** (Austria) introduced draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.57, entitled “Documentation availability in six languages on the United Nations Web site”; A/C.5/56/L.58, entitled “Review of public information activities in the United Nations”; and A/C.5/56/L.59, entitled “ESCWA documents and publications”.

15. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) drew attention to an editorial correction in the Spanish version of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.58.

16. *Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.57, L.58 and L.59 were adopted.*

17. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation would have preferred to consider the three draft resolutions separately, but it had shown flexibility as the resolutions were mainly procedural in nature. With regard to draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.59, in particular, it looked forward with great interest to the progress report on the production of documents and publications in Arabic.

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.50)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.51)

Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.50 and L.51

18. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) introduced draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.50 and L.51. The figures contained in paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.50 should read “223,169,800 dollars gross (223,189,600 dollars net)”.

19. *Draft resolutions A/C.5/56/L.50 and L.51, as orally revised, were adopted.*

Agenda item 130: Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (*continued*)

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Follow-up investigation into possible fee-splitting arrangements between defence counsel and indigent detainees at the International Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (continued) (A/C.5/56/L.44)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.44

20. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.44, on behalf of the Chairman, said that, in paragraph 3, the words “Secretary-General” should be inserted in place of “Office of Internal Oversight Services”. She urged the draft resolution’s adoption by consensus.

21. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.44, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo *(continued)* (A/C.5/56/L.52)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.52

22. **Mr. Wins** (Uruguay), Rapporteur, introducing draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.52, said that, in the third line of paragraph 10, the words “and any other relevant options that might arise” should be inserted after the words “the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions”, and that, in the first line of paragraph 11, the words “as a matter of priority” should be inserted after the word “submit”.

23. **Mrs. Salim** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), in response to a question posed at a previous meeting by the representative of the United States of America concerning mission subsistence allowance (MSA) rates in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), said that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), in its report on the audit of the establishment and management of MSA rates (A/56/648), had recommended that the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) should review MSA rates for a number of peacekeeping missions, including MONUC, as OIOS had found the rates to be too high. Accordingly, OHRM had conducted field surveys in two missions: the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in February and April 2001, respectively. In addition, questionnaire surveys

had been carried out for eight missions, including MONUC.

24. As a result of the survey findings, MSA rates for missions, including MONUC, had been revised. Missions were advised that, while MSA rates that had been revised upwards would be implemented with immediate effect implementation of those MSA rates that had been revised downwards, as had been the case for MONUC, would take effect three months after the date of promulgation in order to ensure that the operational requirements of the missions would continue to be met and to enable mission personnel to make the necessary financial plans and to adjust their living expenditure patterns accordingly.

25. Following the announcement of the promulgation of the revised MSA rates, a number of missions, as well as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), had expressed considerable concern about the outcome of the questionnaire surveys. Consequently, it had been agreed that OHRM would conduct field surveys in selected missions, including MONUC, in January and February 2002.

26. Under Staff Rule 103.21 (b), the Secretary-General had the authority to set the rates and conditions for MSA payable on each mission assignment. The methodology for setting MSA rates was set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/6. Section 3.1 provided that MSA rates should be determined on the basis of cost of long-term accommodation, food and miscellaneous expenses at the duty station of the mission assignment. Thus, MSA was intended to cover the living expenses of personnel during the period of assignment to a peacekeeping, peacemaking or special mission. Under miscellaneous expenses, account was taken of expenditures deemed necessary to maintain reasonable living conditions in the mission area. In addition to the data it collected through field and questionnaire surveys, OHRM also took into account data from the cost-of-living and daily subsistence allowance surveys conducted by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) in order to ensure as complete and accurate a profile as possible of the cost of living in mission areas.

27. The data analysis and mission reports were now complete and the results of the MSA surveys had been communicated to DPKO on 12 March 2002. The revised MSA rates for MONUC would take effect from 1 April 2002.

28. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.52, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations *(continued)*

Action taken on certain items
(A/C.5/56/L.54/Rev.1)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.54/Rev.1

29. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft decision A/C.5/56/L.54/Rev.1.

30. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.54/Rev.1 was adopted.*

31. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Committee was to consider a number of issues under agenda item 126, Human resources management, at the second part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. He hoped that the relevant reports, some of which were to have been considered at the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session, would be issued in good time.

32. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, said that those delegations attached special importance to the agenda item on human resources management and to the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 55/258. They therefore regretted that it had not been possible for the Committee to consider all the relevant issues at the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. She trusted that delegations would have available to them at the second part of the resumed fifty-sixth session all necessary information and reports and that the documents would be provided sufficiently ahead of time to enable the Committee to give adequate consideration to those important issues.

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

33. **The Chairman** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.