### **UNITED NATIONS**



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FIFTH COMMITTEE
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held on
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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 73rd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. ALOM (Vice-Chairman)

(Bangladesh)

<u>Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative</u> and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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## <u>In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alom (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.</u>

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 140: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

- (a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS ( $\underline{continued}$ ) (A/51/965)
- Mr. YEO (Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the Lessons Learned Unit (A/51/965), recalled that the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the support account for peacekeeping operations, contained in document A/51/890, had included requests for approval of three new temporary posts for the lessons learned function. However, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its related report (A/51/906), had recommended against the establishment of the three posts. In its resolution 51/239, the General Assembly had not modified the Advisory Committee's recommendation, and had requested the Secretary-General to submit, no later than 31 August 1997, proposals on resources and structure to strengthen the lessons learned capacity and to ensure the sharing and application of experience gained in peacekeeping operations. The report before the Committee had been produced in response to that request. In paragraph 20, the Secretary-General resubmitted his request for the establishment of the three new posts, and in paragraph 25, stated that, should the General Assembly approve the request, he expected that the costs involved could be met, for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998, from within previously approved resources.
- 2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that the proposals submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/51/965 were the same as those contained in document A/51/890 (annex I). In its report on the latter document (A/51/906), the Advisory Committee had stated its view that all organizational units involved in the backstopping of peacekeeping operations should have a lessons learning function as their permanent responsibility. It still held the view that lessons learning functions were an integral part of the Organization's operations and should be an ongoing Secretariat-wide practice.
- 3. As presented in the report currently under consideration, the proposed programme of work and organizational structure of the Lessons Learned Unit were too ambitious and elaborate. The Unit should be basically a coordinating body and should use in-house expertise to the extent possible, seeking additional expertise as required. That was already being done to a certain extent, as in the case of the request, in the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999, for consultancy services to conduct a study on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces programmes. The Unit provided analyses for the use of Secretariat units as well as troop-contributing countries.
- 4. As indicated in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report, the Unit included two posts funded by the regular budget and four posts funded by the

trust fund established in December 1995. Moreover, one gratis personnel position at the P-5 level had been provided to the Unit until February 1997. The Advisory Committee had also been informed that, in March 1997, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) had requested the Unit's assistance for the execution of a project on lessons learned in the enhancement of civil society's role in the political and reconstruction process in Liberia. The project was being carried out by UNOPS personnel under the guidance of the Chief of the Unit.

- 5. Paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's report indicated that non-post resources had been provided under the support account for peacekeeping operations and from extrabudgetary sources, as well as contributions to the trust fund to support the lessons learned mechanism. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, as at 15 August 1997, total allotment from the trust fund had amounted to \$1,032,600, of which \$313,000 had related to non-post requirements. Total expenditure as at 31 July 1997 had been \$428,000.
- 6. The Advisory Committee had also been informed, with regard to support account posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, that the vacancy rates as at 31 August 1997 had been 12.8 per cent for Professional-level posts and 5.4 per cent for General Service-level posts. The Secretary-General proposed to redeploy the savings thus accrued to fund the three new posts being requested.
- 7. Given the high vacancy rate and the largely coordinating nature of the Lessons Learned Unit's functions, as well as the pool of experience and expertise available from returning mission personnel, the Advisory Committee recommended that the functional requirements requested for the Unit should be met through redeployment from within the complement of posts funded through the support account rather than through the establishment of new posts.
- 8. <u>Ms. SHENWICK</u> (United States of America) wondered why the Advisory Committee had not originally recommended that the posts should be filled through redeployment when the matter had been discussed in June 1997, and asked that information should be provided as to which of the posts under discussion should, in the opinion of the Advisory Committee, be filled by that means.
- 9. Mr. MAZEMO (Zimbabwe) recalled that the General Assembly had decided that the Lessons Learned Unit should be strengthened through the provision of stable and assured funding and an appropriate structure; it had also assigned a programme of activities to be undertaken by the Unit during the current period. Africa had experienced some of the most horrendous consequences of failures in the area of peacekeeping. It was unfortunate that no new approach to peacekeeping had so far been adopted.
- 10. He requested additional information as to how the Secretary-General would proceed, and what problems he might encounter, if the General Assembly adopted the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.
- 11. <u>Ms. MSELLE</u> (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), responding to the representative of the United States, said that the Advisory Committee had recommended acceptance of some, but not

- all, of the Secretary-General's proposals, and believed that the Secretariat should be able to provide for the posts through redeployment.
- 12. Mr. YEO (Peacekeeping Financing Division), responding to the representative of Zimbabwe, said that, while it had been indicated that the costs related to the three posts over a six-month period could be met on an ad hoc basis from within the resources of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, any longer-term continuation of that situation would require further review.
- 13. <u>The CHAIRMAN</u> suggested that the Committee should take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/965) and endorse the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
- 14. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation was not yet in a position to endorse the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. It was important to ensure that the existing capacity of the Lessons Learned Unit should be clearly maintained through assessed funding from the peacekeeping support account. The reply given by the representative of the Secretary-General had not guaranteed the establishment of the posts in question, and her delegation was opposed to their being filled through redeployment at the current time.
- 15. Recalling that the issue of gratis personnel was involved, she requested that the representative of the Secretary-General should confirm that the P-5 level post which had been occupied by a gratis officer could continue to be filled by that means.
- 16.  $\underline{\text{Mr. YEO}}$  (Peacekeeping Financing Division), referring to the gratis officer at the P-5 level mentioned by the United States of America, said that the voluntary contribution by the Member State concerned had come to an end. The further provision of any gratis personnel to the Lessons Learned Unit was a matter for donor countries to decide.

AGENDA ITEM 112: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (<a href="mailto:continued">continued</a>)

### Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.83

- 17. Mr. YUSSUF (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.83 on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities. The draft resolution represented those countries' response to the disappointing outcome of the Committee's deliberations on the issue. Since it incorporated the views of various States and groups of States, he hoped that the Committee could reach a consensus on it by the end of the resumed session.
- 18.  $\underline{\text{Mr. MADDENS}}$  (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that all draft decisions and draft resolutions should be introduced by or on behalf of the Chairman, in keeping with the Committee's practice of adopting decisions and resolutions by consensus. Moreover, negotiations were still under way on the points contained in draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.83. However, he was

confident that consensus would be reached and that a draft resolution that was satisfactory to all delegations could be introduced on behalf of the Chairman by the end of the resumed session.

19. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation's traditional position had been that all delegations had the right to introduce draft decisions and resolutions whenever they wished. Speaking in her capacity as the coordinator of informal consultations on the agenda item in question, she called upon the Committee members to try to reach a consensus by the end of the week. A revised text of the draft resolution had been prepared by a drafting group and would be made available to delegations shortly.

### OTHER MATTERS

- 20. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would reply, by the end of the resumed session, to the questions raised at the previous meeting by the Costa Rican delegation concerning the policies governing the use of the United Nations garage.
- 21. Mr. McCANN (Chief of the Security and Safety Service) said that it was unfortunate that the security measures imposed during the recent special session of the General Assembly had created problems for delegations. Every effort would be made to ensure that delegations had no difficulty in gaining access to United Nations premises during the fifty-second session. He invited all delegations to attend a meeting to be held the following day, at which he and the Chief of Protocol would discuss the security arrangements to be imposed by the Organization and by the host country during the fifty-second session.
- 22. Mr. YUSSUF (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77 and China, asked whether another formal meeting could be held the following day to enable those countries to introduce a draft resolution on the construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa.
- 23. <u>The CHAIRMAN</u> said that the Secretariat had confirmed that a formal meeting could be held the following morning.
- 24. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) asked when the Secretariat would reply to the letter concerning human resources management, and particularly the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/226, which the Tanzanian delegation, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77 and China, had addressed to the Secretary-General on 28 July 1997. Those countries wanted confirmation that the Secretariat was complying strictly with that resolution, especially the paragraphs referred to in the letter. That issue was very sensitive in connection with the ongoing negotiations on related matters.
- 25.  $\underline{\text{The CHAIRMAN}}$  said that every effort was being made to provide a reply by the end of the resumed fifty-first session.