
Article 17 (3)

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Text of Article 17 (3)

The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57 and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies with a view to making recommendations to the agencies concerned.

Introductory note

1. The structure of the present study, covering the period 1989-1994, follows that of the previous studies of Article 17 (3) in the *Repertory* and its *Supplements Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6* and 7. The other aspects of the coordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies are treated in the studies of this *Supplement No. 8* concerning Articles 57, 58, 63 and 64.

I. General survey

2. In December 1985, the General Assembly transformed the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) into a specialized agency and approved the agreement between the United Nations and this new agency.¹ Negotiations on converting UNIDO from an autonomous entity within the Secretariat of the United Nations to a specialized agency lasted 20 years. During the period 1989-1994, the number of specialized agencies and related organizations remained at 13,² and no changes were made in the agreements they had concluded with the United Nations.

3. The examination by the General Assembly of the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies was

traditionally carried out under the agenda item on the administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency and on the basis of reports produced by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).³ The final such report was presented in 1990 at the forty-sixth session of the Assembly.⁴ From thereon, at the request of ACABQ, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) was entrusted with the task of presenting, every other year, a statistical report on the budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.⁵ The same item remained on the agenda of

¹ See *Repertory, Supplement No. 7*, vol. II, under Article 17 (3), General survey and sect. II. A.

² The "related organization" was the International Atomic Energy Agency and the 12 specialized agencies were: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Civil Aviation Organization; International Fund for Agricultural Development; International Labour Organization; International Maritime Organization; International Telecommunications Union; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; Universal Postal Union; World Health Organization; World Intellectual Property Organization; and World Meteorological Organization. The agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank merely provided that these agencies would furnish to the United Nations copies of their annual reports and their quarterly financial statements. See *Repertory*, Vol. 1 (1945-1954), under Article 17 (3), sect. II. A.2.

³ One of the four main functions of ACABQ is "to examine on behalf of the General Assembly the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and proposals for financial arrangements with such agencies". See GA resolution 14 (I) and rules 155-157 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

⁴ [A/45/798](#). In 1989, ACABQ had presented, under the same item, a report containing essentially tabular material on the budgets of the agencies (see [A/44/711](#)). Such biennial reporting — full reports in even years and statistical information in odd-numbered years — had been recommended by ACABQ and was endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [36/229](#).

⁵ Three such reports were issued during the period under review: two in 1992 and one in 1994. They contained, with a few modifications, the statistical information previously included in the reports of ACABQ under the same agenda item (see [A/47/593](#), [A/47/746](#) and [A/49/588](#)). Two reports were issued in 1992 because, following the biennial approach to the work programme of the Fifth Committee, the report prepared in 1991 could not be presented that year.

the Assembly and, since the main purpose of the report was to provide information, the Assembly took note of it in short decisions.⁶

4. This change from “examination” to “information” was not abrupt. The previous major resolution adopted by the Assembly on this item had been adopted in 1985, the year of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. In 1986 came the reform of the budgeting process of the United Nations, and a few years later there was a surge in the number of peacekeeping operations undertaken by the Organization. The agendas of both ACABQ and the Fifth Committee became extremely complicated, forcing experts and representatives of Member States to increase the number of sessions held. A fundamental reason for this change was the fact that over the course of time, the specialized agencies had reached a level of “maturity” that was more compatible, with respect to budgetary as well as other matters, with a collaborative approach to problem-solving than with injunctions from the “centre” directed to the “periphery”.

5. In this context, ACABQ kept its leading role but focused on issues of mutual interest, such as the treatment of inflation and currency fluctuations, or the handling of extrabudgetary resources. Questions of standardization or harmonization of budget format, structure, presentation and terminology were much less pressing. The comprehensive report produced by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 1990⁷ had shown that significant achievements had already been made in such domains, and ACABQ, noting that standardization and harmonization should not become ends in themselves, had expressed reservations regarding continued efforts to achieve harmonization in budgetary practices.⁸ ACC, for its part, while producing every other year comprehensive statistical information on the budgets and finances of the organizations, worked on cross-organizational subjects of general interest to the international community, notably the protection of the environment, the situation of women and development problems in the African continent.

6. This type of system-wide coordination on substantive issues continued to be undertaken by the Economic and Social Council, by the Secretary-General,

the heads of the agencies and their senior colleagues meeting in the framework of ACC as well as through informal channels, and by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). It is the role of this Committee, a subsidiary body of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, which falls within the scope of a review of Article 17 (3) of the Charter. CPC, established in the 1970s as an essential element of the planning, programming and budgeting process of the United Nations, was the body through which the programmes of both the United Nations and the specialized agencies were to be examined and coordinated with a view to achieving coherence and efficiency in the use of resources.⁹ Also, CPC held annual “joint meetings” with ACC. “Examination” of the budgets of the specialized agencies by the Assembly therefore meant receiving observations and recommendations from both ACABQ, an expert body, and CPC, an intergovernmental body. Regarding the latter, the Assembly regularly formulated its comments and decisions in its resolutions on programme planning.

7. During the period 1989-1994, the General Assembly adopted four resolutions and one decision on the item “Programme planning”.¹⁰ The four resolutions had a relatively short section on coordination, one of them being solely devoted to coordination within the United Nations. Concerning coordination within the system, the Assembly requested ACC to modify substantially the format and content of its annual overview report.¹¹ Two years later, it expressed its appreciation for the improvements made in that report and requested ACC to pursue its efforts.¹² It invited CPC and ACC to discuss measures to improve the efficacy of their joint meetings, including their structure and level of participation.¹³ It reaffirmed the importance of coordination in the United Nations system and, at its forty-seventh session, “welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to assign a high priority to coordination and to develop new approaches

⁶ See GA decisions [47/449](#) and [49/465](#).

⁷ See [A/45/130](#).

⁸ See [A/45/798](#) para. 170.

⁹ See the terms of reference of CPC in ECOSOC resolution 2008 (LX) and GA resolution [31/93](#).

¹⁰ See GA resolutions [44/194](#), [45/253](#), [46/189](#) and [47/214](#) and decision [49/464](#).

¹¹ See GA resolution [44/194](#), sect. V, para. 2.

¹² See GA resolution [46/189](#), sect. VI, paras. 1 and 2.

¹³ See GA resolution [44/194](#), sect. V, para. 5.

for collaboration with the purpose of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of coordination”.¹⁴

8. Also at its forty-fifth session, however, the Assembly took some more precise decisions. It invited the Secretary-General to launch the System-wide Plan of Action for African Recovery and Development and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and called upon all the relevant executive heads of the United Nations agencies and bodies to accord high priority to the implementation of the Plan.¹⁵ It took note of the preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001. It also took note of the decision of CPC to propose to ACC that the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and their implications for the United Nations system be discussed at their joint meeting of 1993.¹⁶ Programme planning was not on the agenda of the forty-eighth session and, in December 1994, at its forty-ninth session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the item.¹⁷

9. Thus, as for the budgets of the specialized agencies, the examination of their programmes had, in the first part of the 1990s, a rapidly diminishing weight in the work of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. In budgetary matters, both Member States and the secretariats of the organizations concerned were focused on reforms and financial crises. Regarding the activities embodied in programmes, the challenge was to encourage a sufficient number of them to address issues such as the development of Africa and the preparation and follow-up of the major world conferences that the United Nations itself had started to organize by the mid-1980s. More than being the role of the Fifth Committee and CPC, this was a form of coordination and mobilization that was under the purview of the top echelon of ACC, of the Second and Third Committee of the Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

10. Another characteristic of the period, however, was very much within the competence of the Fifth Committee and its counterparts in the governing bodies of the specialized agencies. This was the focus of Member States on questions of responsibility,

accountability and control in the secretariats of the organizations of the United Nations system. In 1994, the General Assembly created the Office of Internal Oversight Services, an independent entity within the Secretariat, to supplement the work of the external Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit.¹⁸ Questions of audit were on the agenda of the Fifth Committee in all its sessions and it adopted elaborate and detailed resolutions, mostly on the United Nations itself but also on issues common to all the organizations.¹⁹ Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit covering such issues were also before the Assembly.²⁰

11. The United Nations common system and the United Nations pension system remained domains of intense coordination and cooperation among the participating organizations. The General Assembly continued to thoroughly examine the annual reports of the International Civil Service Commission and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and to adopt comprehensive resolutions on these subjects.²¹

12. Very late during its forty-ninth session, on 14 September 1995, the General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations system”. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee, it recognized that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was an occasion for re-examination and strengthening of the United Nations system, as the United Nations prepared for the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Assembly stated that it was conscious of the importance of a viable financial basis and adequate and predictable resources for the effective functioning of the United Nations system, and that it was encouraged by the ongoing efforts to improve the administration, management and performance of the system of international organizations. It noted that the Secretary-General and a number of United Nations bodies, as well as independent commissions, institutions, scholars

¹⁴ See GA resolutions [46/189](#), sect. V, para. 2, and [47/214](#), sect. IV, para. 1.

¹⁵ See GA resolution [47/214](#), sect. IV, para. 3 (a) and (b).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 4 and 5.

¹⁷ See GA decision [49/464](#).

¹⁸ See GA resolution [48/218](#).

¹⁹ GA resolutions [44/183](#), [45/235](#), [46/183](#), [47/211](#), [48/216](#) and [49/216](#).

²⁰ The General Assembly adopted four resolutions and one decision on the Joint Inspection Unit: resolutions [44/184](#), [45/237](#), [47/201](#) and [48/221](#), and decision [46/446](#).

²¹ The resolutions on the United Nations common system were: [44/198](#), [45/241](#), [46/191](#), [47/216](#), [48/224](#) and [49/223](#). The resolutions on the United Nations pension system were: [44/199](#), [45/242](#), [46/192](#), [47/203](#), [48/225](#) and [49/234](#).

and other experts, had studied the United Nations system and recommended a variety of measures to revitalize, strengthen and reform the United Nations.²²

13. On the basis of these observations, the Assembly decided to establish an open-ended high-level working group of the General Assembly, under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly, to undertake a thorough review of all relevant studies and

²² GA resolution [49/252](#), preambular paragraphs.

suggestions relating to the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General was requested to provide the necessary support for this working group, within existing resources, to be supplemented by a trust fund to which voluntary contributions could be solicited. The working group was requested to submit a report on its work before the end of the fiftieth session.²³

²³ Ibid., paras. 1, 2, 3 and 5.

II. Analytical summary of practice

****A. Nature and scope of the financial and budgetary arrangements with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency**

B. The phrase “administrative budgets” of specialized agencies

****1. Transmission of the budgets of the specialized agencies to the United Nations**

****2. Consultation in the preparation of the budgets**

3. Coordination of the form of the budget

14. A comprehensive study of the level of harmonization of the planning, programming and budgeting methods achieved by the United Nations and the specialized agencies was issued by the Joint Inspection Unit in 1990 and presented to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.²⁴

15. Medium-term planning as such had not been adopted by many organizations, but most of them had a document setting out medium-term or long-term objectives. The five larger organizations (the United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and three of the smaller ones (the International Maritime Organization (IMO), UNIDO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) had adopted a biennial budget cycle and achieved synchronization of the periods covered. Eight organizations had a programme budget,

²⁴ [A/45/130](#) (see above footnote 7).

combining the presentation of programmes with the required expenditures by object, that is, at least salaries, travel and equipment. These organizations were the United Nations, FAO, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The United States dollar was the currency used, except for IMO, which, based in London, used pounds sterling, and for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), WIPO and WMO, which, based in Switzerland, used the Swiss franc. The secretariats of most organizations had the ability to present revised or supplementary estimates to their governing bodies. In addition, the presentation of these budgets had a number of common characteristics. Introduction by the executive head, explanatory notes, summary tables and information provided in annexes were broadly comparable.²⁵

16. This harmonization of budgetary processes and methods had been achieved under the impulsion of ACABQ, JIU and ACC. A committee of the latter, the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, had produced over the years a number of guidelines, handbooks and glossaries.²⁶ A lot remained to be done, however, notably in terms of budget structure and methodology. For instance, a comparison of the rates of growth of the budgets of the various organizations was still difficult, and a number of recommendations were made in the report of JIU.²⁷ But, as already noted in the general survey above, the view of ACABQ,²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 4 to 8 and table 1.

²⁶ Ibid., annex, pp. 33 and 34.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 31 and 32.

²⁸ [A/45/798](#) (see footnote 8).

which was shared by the secretariats of the organizations concerned, was that the most pressing and most useful task was not further progress in harmonization, but rather joint efforts to address common problems such as the treatment of inflation or the palliatives to late and partial payments of their contributions by Member States. In these domains, however, the margin of manoeuvre of experts and international civil servants remained extremely limited.

C. Nature and scope of examination of administrative budgets

17. The last full report produced by ACABQ on the administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency was before the Assembly at its forty-fifth session.²⁹ The Advisory Committee had met in the course of the year with the executive heads, or their senior representatives, of most of the organizations whose agreements with the United Nations provide for transmittal of their budgets for review by the General Assembly. Communications with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and IMO had been done by correspondence.

18. The report had two main parts. Section II, "General observations and comparative tables", and section III, "Comments on the budgets of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency". The brief section IV was devoted to the special topic "Problem of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs", and section V contained comments on the JIU report mentioned above (see para. 5).

19. The comparative tables provided data, at 31 December 1989 or the latest available year, on total amounts of approved regular budgets, total amounts of net contributions of Member States actually payable under approved regular budgets, established posts, regular budget contributions to technical cooperation activities, extrabudgetary funds, working capital funds, scale of assessments applicable in 1991 and collection of contributions.

20. As an example of the information provided in these tables, the total number of established posts authorized for 1991 under the regular budgets was

13,274 for the specialized agencies and IAEA (excluding IFAD) and 9,951 for the United Nations, a total of 23,225 posts. As of December 1989, the number of staff in posts financed by extrabudgetary resources was 25,596, of which 16,878 were in the United Nations and its funds and programmes. At the same date, the total number of participants in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund was 56,222. Regarding the size of the budgets, the total amounts of approved regular budgets for 1991, including revised estimates, was \$2,326,146,666. Of this, \$1.5 billion was for the specialized agencies and IAEA and \$0.8 billion was for the United Nations. Nine years earlier, in 1982, these figures were, in rounded terms, a total of \$1.6 billion, of which \$1 billion was for the agencies and IAEA and \$0.6 billion was for the United Nations. The budgets of the agencies varied, in 1991, from \$327 million for WHO to \$18 million for UPU. As at 30 September 1990, the total outstanding contributions equalled 70.7 per cent of total net contributions of Member States actually payable in respect of 1990. The corresponding figure one year earlier was 60.4 per cent.³⁰

21. Section III of the report contained comments on the budgets of the agencies presented in an analytical and descriptive, rather than normative, manner. Regarding ILO for example, it was noted that, due to the exchange rate of the Swiss franc to the United States dollar, the level of the budget in 1990-1991 was nominally 26.5 million lower than that approved for 1988-1989, and the Advisory Committee took note of the incentive scheme for prompt payment of contributions introduced for the two-year trial period.³¹ On FAO, it was pointed out that, faced with grave problems in delays in contributions and mounting arrears, the FAO budget had been subject to forced programme reductions.³² The Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, authorized by the Assembly of that organization to borrow externally an amount not exceeding \$1 million, never had to do so.³³ UPU had made considerable efforts to reduce drastically recurrent expenditure in order to implement, from 1989, a general action plan aimed at improving the quality of the international postal service by helping

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., paras. 7, 8, 9 and table B, for posts and number of staff; para. 6 and table A.1 for the size of budgets; and para. 14 for outstanding contributions.

³¹ Ibid., para. 21.

³² Ibid., para. 26.

³³ Ibid., para. 54.

postal administration to combat competition.³⁴ The budget of WHO was increased by \$44.7 million for the biennium 1990-1991 — as compared with the biennium 1988-1989 — essentially for the financing of the activities of the organization related to the provision of primary health care in the developing world.³⁵

22. The brief (one page) section of the report (sect. IV) devoted to the current and projected arrangements in the United Nations system for dealing with the problem of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, was also descriptive. The relevant activities of ILO, UNESCO, FAO and WHO had been discussed during meetings the Committee had had with those agencies in Geneva and Vienna. A synthesis of the discussions was presented in the report.³⁶ A similar approach was taken for the comments that ACABQ made on the report of JIU, although the opinion of the Advisory Committee on the further harmonization of budgets, was, as has already been noted, clearly stated.

23. The General Assembly, in decision [45/450](#), took note with appreciation of the report, invited ACABQ to continue its consideration of administrative and budgetary issues relevant to a more effective coordination of the organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and welcomed the intention of the Committee to ensure that statistical information submitted to the General Assembly was timely and to increase its efforts to report on specific matters of system-wide concern, such as conference services, procurement and agency support costs. The Assembly also took note with appreciation of the report of JIU on the budgets of organizations of the United Nations system ([A/45/130](#)) and invited the Unit to continue its work on budgeting techniques and practices.³⁷

24. Starting in 1992, ACC produced statistical reports on the budgetary and financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system, in replacement of the quantitative aspects of the ACABQ report evoked above. The information provided in these reports was essentially the same as in that presented by ACABQ. The third statistical report of ACC, made available to the General Assembly in October 1994 at its forty-ninth session, had many pages of tables and explanatory notes on subjects

identical to those previously treated in the reports of the Advisory Committee.³⁸ In addition to covering the specialized agencies, it covered the funds and programmes of the United Nations. The approved regular budgets for 1995 of the United Nations and the specialized agencies amounted to \$2.9 billion.³⁹ The fact that the Assembly devoted little time to these reports and took note of them in short decisions does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest on the part of Member States or a minimum relevance of the received information to the debates of the Fifth Committee and other expert and governing bodies. For example, in the United Nations itself, the Committee on Contributions benefited from the detailed statistics provided in these reports.

25. Regarding the examination by the Assembly of the programmatic aspects of the budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, the system-wide plans developed during this period have already been mentioned (see general survey above). It should be also noted that the Economic and Social Council decided to discontinue the cross-organizational programme analyses.⁴⁰ CPC made the following comments on this decision: “The Committee noted that the Council, in its resolution 1988/77, has put an end to cross-organizational programme analyses in their present form, but the Committee considered that the mandated 1990 analysis on industrial development should be undertaken. Regarding the new form that system-wide analyses might take, the Committee suggested that the forthcoming discussions in the Council would define the scope and character of the thematic analyses called for by the Council in resolution 1988/77. In that regard, the Committee recommended that, in their new form, system-wide analyses should provide a more qualitative assessment of the current status of coordination in particular sectors of United Nations activities and suggest action-oriented forward-looking recommendations on ways and means to improve it.”⁴¹

³⁴ Ibid., para. 69.

³⁵ Ibid., para. 75.

³⁶ Ibid., sect. V.

³⁷ See GA decision [45/450](#), paras. (a), (b), (e) and (f).

³⁸ See [A/49/588](#).

³⁹ Ibid., table 1.

⁴⁰ See Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/77.

⁴¹ GA (44) Suppl. 16, para. 30.

D. Financial and budgetary arrangements: analysis of recommendations made by the General Assembly to the specialized agencies

1. Adoption of common financial and administrative regulations

**** (a) Common financial regulations**

(b) Common staff regulations and salary system

26. A major preoccupation of the General Assembly at the beginning of the 1990s was to maintaining the integrity of the United Nations common system by supporting the mandate of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and reaffirming its own role at the apex of the United Nations system.

27. The Assembly deplored, regretted and expressed its concern over the decisions of some organizations that were made without consideration of the mandate of ICSC and of the agreements worked out in the body. In December 1990, at its forty-fifth session, it noted that WIPO had revised its rules in respect of an additional step in the salary scale for the Professional and higher categories. It urged the governing bodies of ILO and WHO to bring their salary scales into line with those of the other organizations of the common system, as recommended by ICSC.⁴² The resolution adopted at its forty-sixth session included a section entitled "Regulation and coordination of the United Nations common system". Decisions of ITU, ILO and WIPO were again deplored.⁴³ At its forty-seventh session, the Assembly reiterated its regrets that ITU had persisted in its decision regarding the payment of a special post allowance to its staff, in spite of the views expressed by the Assembly against such action the year before.⁴⁴ Similar remarks concerning ILO and FAO were made by the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.⁴⁵

28. Apart from expressing its regrets at decisions undermining the integrity of the common system, the General Assembly could only exhort its counterparts in the United Nations system to refrain from repeating

such behaviour. It repeatedly recalled that executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations common system had a responsibility to ensure that they applied their organization's rules and regulations with due regard to their obligations under the common system.⁴⁶ And it invited those executive heads to consult ICSC, as well as the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, before putting proposals relating to conditions of service of staff to their respective governing bodies. Executive heads were reminded that the statute of ICSC and the regulations of the Board had been accepted by the organizations they were leading.⁴⁷ The Assembly also stressed that decisions incompatible with this system should not be invoked as precedents.⁴⁸ Addressing Member States, the Assembly urged them to ensure that their representatives in the meetings of the governing bodies of the organizations of the common system were informed of the positions taken by ICSC and the General Assembly in respect of conditions of employment in the common system.⁴⁹

29. A second major preoccupation of the General Assembly, again related to the integrity of the common system, was with decisions of administrative tribunals. At its forty-eighth session, the Assembly noted that judgements regarding the conditions of service of staff by either the United Nations Administrative Tribunal or the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization, might have a consequential impact for the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. It noted also that while these were provisions in the rules of the two Tribunals for the Chairman of the Pension Board, after having given prior notice to the Presidents of the Tribunals, to intervene in a case if it was considered that the judgement could affect the administration of the Pension Fund, there were no established mechanisms to ensure that the Chairman of the Fund would receive timely notice of such cases, and that, furthermore, such opportunity was not provided to ICSC by either Tribunal.⁵⁰

30. At its forty-ninth session, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, with a view to introducing an amendment to its rules, reading: "If, in any proceeding,

⁴² See GA resolution 45/241, sect. VI, third preambular paragraph and para. 1.

⁴³ See GA resolution 46/191, sect. II, and paras. 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the present section.

⁴⁴ See GA resolution 47/216, sect. I.A., fourth preambular paragraph.

⁴⁵ See GA resolution 49/223, sect. I, paras. 1 and 2.

⁴⁶ See, for example, GA resolution 46/191, sect. II, para. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, sect. II, para. 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, sect. II, para. 5.

⁴⁹ See GA resolution 45/241, sect. VI, para. 3.

⁵⁰ See GA resolution 48/224, sect. VI, second and third preambular paragraphs.

it appears that the judgement of the Tribunal may affect a rule, decision or scale of emoluments or contributions of the common system of staff administration, the Executive Secretary of the Tribunal shall promptly inform the Executive Secretary of the International Civil Service Commission and enquire whether the Commission wishes to participate in the proceeding. If the Commission indicates its wish to do so, it shall be provided with copies of all the pleadings and shall be permitted to comment thereon, and also to participate in any oral proceedings.”⁵¹

31. The Director-General of the International Labour Organization was requested to consult the Administrative Tribunal of ILO with a view to introducing the same amendment into its rules.

32. Among the other issues that received the attention of the General Assembly during this period were the supplementary payments provided by some Governments to their nationals serving in international organizations,⁵² the employment of women,⁵³ and the salaries of both high-level international civil servants and persons employed at the General Service level.⁵⁴

33. In December 1989, the Assembly commended to the attention of the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations common system the recommendation of the International Civil Service Commission to increase the mandatory age of separation to 62 for staff members entering into service on or after 1 January 1990.⁵⁵

34. In December 1994, the question of appointments of limited duration (versus the contracts known as “permanent contracts”) was evoked by the General Assembly. It recalled its request to ICSC in June 1994 to provide views on the proposal by the United Nations to develop arrangements for contracts of limited duration and it requested the Commission to report its findings on the arrangements for such contracts upon completion of its study.⁵⁶

35. It might also be mentioned that, in keeping with the then-prevailing atmosphere of reform, restraint and

financial difficulties, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make all necessary efforts to absorb the costs arising in respect of the budget of the United Nations as a result of its decisions regarding emoluments, allowances and other aspects of the conditions of service of the staff.⁵⁷

**** (c) Common services**

2. Establishment of a joint audit procedure

36. In December 1992, the General Assembly endorsed the efforts of the Panel of External Auditors to ensure that common auditing standards for the United Nations system were consistent with those of international auditing bodies, and urged the Secretary-General and the executive heads of United Nations organizations and programmes to accelerate their efforts to develop common accounting standards for the organizations of the United Nations system and to take these standards into account in the preparation of their financial statements for the period ending 31 December 1993.⁵⁸

****3. Development of a common form of the budget**

****4. Consideration of a consolidated budget**

****5. Establishment of a common approach towards the financing of the budgets of the specialized agencies**

6. Establishment of a Joint Staff Pension Fund and a common system of social security for staff

37. At its 44th session, the Assembly took measures to restore the actuarial balance of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. It recalled that a cooperative effort by member organizations, participants and beneficiaries was required if the actuarial imbalance was to be reduced or eliminated thereby securing an adequate level of benefits under the Fund. The measures adopted included a change in the retirement age to 62 for participants who enter or re-enter the Fund after 1 January 1990 (see sect. D.1 (b) above) and an increase in the rate of contributions with effect from 1 January 1990. The new rate was from 22.5 to 23.7 per cent of pensionable remuneration, of which

⁵¹ See resolution 49/223, sect. X, para. 2.

⁵² See, in particular, GA resolutions 44/198, sect. III.C, and 45/241, sect. IX.

⁵³ See, in particular, GA resolution 47/216, sect. VI.

⁵⁴ See, in particular, GA resolutions 47/216, sect. II.G, and sect. III; and 49/223, sect. III and sect. IV.A.

⁵⁵ See GA resolution 44/198, sect. III.A.

⁵⁶ See GA resolution 49/223, sect. IX.

⁵⁷ See GA resolutions 44/198, sect. I, para. 1, and 45/241, sect. I, para. 3.

⁵⁸ See GA resolution 47/211, paras. 19 and 20.

the employing member organization would pay 15.8 per cent and the participant 7.9 per cent.⁵⁹

38. A significant reduction of the actuarial imbalance of the Fund from 3.71 to 0.57 per cent of pensionable remuneration, reflected in the valuation of the Fund as at 31 December 1992, was noted with satisfaction by the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.⁶⁰ In December 1994, however, the Assembly took note of the increase in the actuarial imbalance from 0.57 to 1.49 per cent of pensionable remuneration, one of the elements that contributed to this being the increase in the life expectancy of pensioners. The Assembly did not consider corrective measures to this imbalance of the Fund, but requested the Committee on Actuaries to develop a revised unisex mortality table, based on the longevity assumptions used in the actuarial valuation of the Fund as at December 1993.⁶¹

39. In its resolution 44/199, the Assembly endorsed the conclusions of the United Nations Joint Pension Board and rejected the proposal of ITU to establish a pension purchasing power protection fund. Reaffirming the need to maintain the unity, cohesion and integrity of the joint staff pension system, the Assembly stated that ITU should not proceed with the implementation of its proposal as that would weaken the United Nations common system⁶² (this preoccupation of the Assembly is referred to in section D.1 (b) above).

40. In the same vein, when examining a request by the Director-General of ILO that assistance be provided by the Joint Staff Pension Board to that organization for implementing a judgement of its Administrative Tribunal, the Assembly decided that such assistance could be given only if a number of conditions were met. These conditions were to ensure that changes in the Staff Regulations of ILO would continue to correspond to the staff regulations of the other organizations regarding the definition of pensionable remuneration.⁶³

41. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly noted the suspension of the application of the World Tourism Organization for membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.⁶⁴ At its forty-ninth session, the Assembly decided to admit the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund with effect from 1 January 1996.⁶⁵

7. Development of priorities with a view to concentration of efforts and resources

42. The system-wide medium-term plans implemented or launched by the organizations of the United Nations system during the period under review have already been mentioned (see the general survey and sect. C above). These plans represented a real concentration of efforts and resources. Not only were the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies involved, but the organizations of the World Bank Group were partners in these endeavours.

****8. Coordination of budget procedures in relation to technical assistance and other extrabudgetary programmes involving voluntary contributions**

****9. Other recommendations**

****E. Role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and of the Economic and Social Council**

****F. The powers of the General Assembly under Article 17 (3)**

⁵⁹ See GA resolution 44/199, sect. I, second preambular paragraph, and paras. (a) and (d).

⁶⁰ See GA resolution 46/192, sect. I, para. 1.

⁶¹ See GA resolution 49/224, sect. I, paras. 2 and 4.

⁶² See GA resolution 44/199, sect. IV.

⁶³ See GA resolution 45/242, sect. V.

⁶⁴ See GA resolution 44/199, sect. V.

⁶⁵ See GA resolution 49/224, sect. IV.