

REPERTORY OF PRACTICE OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANS

SUPPLEMENT No. 9 (1995-1999)

(Advance version, to be issued in volume II of Supplement No. 9 (forthcoming))

of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*)

VOLUME II

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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 1995-1999, follows that of the previous studies of Article 17(3) in the *Repertory* and its *Supplements No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7* and 8. The other aspects of the coordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies are treated in the studies of this *Supplement No. 9* concerning Articles 57, 58, 63 and 64.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. During the second part of the 1990s, the number of specialized agencies remained at twelve – fourteen if the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are considered as specialized agencies - and no changes were made in the agreements they had concluded with the United Nations.¹ One “related organization” was, however, added to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This was the International Seabed Authority.

¹ The twelve specialized agencies were :the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the International Labour Organization (ILO); the International the International Maritime Organization (IMO); the International Telecommunications Union (ITU); the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);the Universal Postal Union (UPU); the World Health Organization (WHO); the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); and, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, although linked with the United Nations by agreements leaving them complete independence, are sometimes listed as specialized agencies. They are, in any case, parts of the United Nations system.

3. The agreement between the United Nations and this Authority was concluded in November 1997.² The United Nations recognized that the Authority “shall function as an autonomous international organization in the working relationship with the United Nations established by this Agreement.” In Article 11, Personnel arrangements, the two parties agreed “to apply, in the interests of uniform standards of international employment (...) common personnel standards, methods and arrangements designed to avoid unjustified differences in terms of condition of employment and to facilitate interchange of personnel in order to obtain the maximum benefits from their services.” This was a degree below full participation in the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of services (the “common system”). The Authority, however, was to participate in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and was to accept the jurisdiction of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal on matters involving alleged non-observance of the regulations of this Fund. On budgetary and financial matters, according to Article 13 the Authority “recognized the desirability of establishing close budgetary and financial cooperation with the United Nations aimed at benefiting from the experience of the United Nations in this field.”³

² See GA resolution 52/27 of 26 November 1997, Agreement Concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the International Seabed Authority. This Authority was the executive arm of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Convened through GA resolution 3067 (XXVIII) the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea had adopted this Convention, which, *inter alia*, in its Part XI, envisaged the creation of the International Seabed Authority. The Convention entered into force on 16 November 1994 and its Part XI on 28 July 1996. By its resolution 51/6 of 24 October 1996 the General Assembly had invited the International Seabed Authority to participate in its deliberations in the capacity of observer, and by its resolution 51/34 of 9 December 1996 had called for the conclusion of a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Authority.

³ GA resolution 52/27, Annex, Articles 2.2, 11.1, 11.3 and 13. Also at its 52d session, in resolution 52/251 of 8 September 1998, the Assembly concluded the Agreement on Cooperation and Relationship between the United Nations and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This Agreement contained a number of provisions for cooperation between the United Nations and the Tribunal similar to those that had been agreed upon for cooperation with the Authority. Participation in the common system and in the Pension Fund were, however, not envisaged.

4. The agreement between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) ought also to be noted in its provisions relevant to Article 17 (3). This agreement was approved by the General Assembly at its 54th session.⁴ The Commission was recognized “as an entity in working relationship with the United Nations (...) which has standing as an international organization (...)”⁵ By Article X of the Agreement, the United Nations and the Commission agreed to “consult whenever necessary on matters of common interest concerning the terms and conditions of employment of staff” and to cooperate regarding the “exchange of personnel.” Article XI, “Budgetary and Financial matters” had provisions very similar to those of the agreement with the International Seabed Authority. The “desirability of establishing budgetary and financial cooperation with the United Nations” was recognized by the Commission. Studies concerning financial and budgetary matters of mutual interest might be undertaken and the Commission agreed “to follow, as far as may be practicable and appropriate, the standard budgetary and financial practices and forms used by the United Nations.”⁶

5. Lastly, the creation on 1 January 1995, of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ought to be briefly mentioned. Listed in United Nations documents among the “other organizations” of the United Nations system, the WTO is, obviously neither a specialized agency nor a “related organization.” It falls outside the scope of Article 57 of the Charter, and, *a fortiori*, of Article 17 (3). Instead of concluding an “agreement” with the United Nations, the WTO signed, on 15 November 1995, a document called “*Arrangements for Effective Cooperation with Other*

⁴ See GA resolution 54/280 of 15 June 2000, Agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Annex.

⁵ Ibid, Annex, paragraph 1.

⁶ Ibid, Annex, Article X, paragraphs 1 and 2, and Article XI, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

Intergovernmental Organizations – Relations Between the WTO and the United Nations.” The WTO is not part of the “common system” for the staff of the secretariats of international organizations, nor of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.⁷ “Given the origins of the WTO, however, history could have taken a different turn, and this is the reason for mentioning it in this review.⁸ Nevertheless, an institutional link exists between the United Nations and the WTO, in the form of a jointly financed entity, the International Trade Center (ITC). The ITC was established decades ago between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to assist developing countries in their participation in the growth of world trade. It remained in operation under the aegis of the UNCTAD and the WTO.

6. Turning now to the question of the role of the General Assembly on budgetary and administrative matters of relevance to the specialized agencies and related organizations, the main fact to be noted is that, for the United Nations, the second part of the 1990s was marked by a number of significant commemorations, reports and events, starting with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, ending with the adoption of the Draft Millennium

⁷ See below, section D.6

⁸ The predecessor of the WTO was the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Agreements on trade, consisting essentially in the reduction of tariffs, had been negotiated successfully in Geneva in 1947. On October 30, 1947, eight of the negotiating countries signed the *Protocol of Provisional Application of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*, known as “ GATT 1947”. In parallel, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) had adopted a resolution in February 1946 calling for the convening of a conference to draft a charter for an International Trade Organization (ITO). The objective of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment, meeting in Havana, was to establish the ITO, as the third leg of a system of which two of the institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) had been agreed upon in Bretton Woods in July 1944. In March 1948, these negotiations on the ITO Charter were successfully completed. It gave to the new institution a large mandate on trade and economic policy, including questions of employment. Ratification for entry into force, however, proved difficult, notably in the United States Congress. After several unsuccessful attempts, President Truman announced on 6 December 1950 that he would no longer seek Congressional Approval of the ITO Charter. Then, the only framework left for multilateral negotiations on trade was the GATT. Including the first Geneva 1947, eight rounds of trade negotiations were successfully completed under the GATT, generating an unprecedented growth in world trade. The last of these Rounds, the Uruguay Round, (1986-1994), concluded in Marrakech with the creation of the WTO.

Declaration, and including the report “Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform.” The question is: What was the presence of the United Nations system, and particularly of issues pertaining to Article 17(3), in such texts of an overall nature debated by the General Assembly?

7. First to be considered is the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.⁹ In its report to the 50th session of the Assembly, the Preparatory Committee for this anniversary affirmed that “an extraordinary opportunity existed to highlight the mutually reinforcing goals of the United Nations and its sister organizations.” It reported that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had worked towards the consolidation of the messages that the Organization would address to the general public during the year 1995; a Forum on the Future of the United Nations had been convened in Vienna with the participation of a number of distinguished personalities; the organizations of the system had been contacted “for inputs such as slides, video footage, facts, for global projects on the fiftieth anniversary, such as the multimedia exhibit, the youth leadership training summit, the book *A World in Our Hands, and so on.*” In addition, there were specific projects with the UNESCO and the FAO. And finally, the report mentioned that “continued efforts were being made to interest the staff of the organizations of the system in the commemoration.”¹⁰

8. The Declaration itself, a relatively brief document of seventeen paragraphs, has an introduction and five sections devoted respectively to “Peace”, “Development”, “Equality”, “Justice” and “United Nations organization.” It was presented as a list of solemn pledges of “We, the Member States and observers of the United Nations, representing the peoples of the World.”

⁹ GA resolution 50/6 of 24 October 1995, Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

¹⁰ A/50/48/Rev.1, 5 December 1995, Fiftieth session, Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations; Part III, section C. Activities within the United Nations system, paragraphs 28 to 31, pages 17 and 18.

It has three references to the United Nations system. The first is the commitment to “improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system for development and strengthen its role in all relevant fields of international economic cooperation.” The second is in the context of a paragraph explaining that it was “essential that the United Nations itself be reformed and modernized.” The General Assembly should be “revitalized”, the Security Council should be “expanded” and its “working efficiency and transparency” should be “improved,” the role of the Economic and Social Council should be “strengthened.” And, “these and other changes within the United Nations system should be made if we are to ensure that the United Nations of the future serves well the peoples in whose name it was established.” The third reference to the system is the following: “The Secretariats of the United Nations system must improve significantly their efficiency and effectiveness in administering and managing the resources allocated to them. For their part, Member States will pursue and take responsibility for reforming that system.”¹¹

9. Also adopted during the 50th session of the Assembly, the second overall text potentially relevant for this review of Article 17 (3) was the resolution on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the Assembly invited “the specialized agencies, organizations and other bodies of the United Nations system to implement the measures for restructuring within their respective areas of competence, as appropriate.”¹² These “measures” are detailed in a fifteen page Annex essentially devoted to the “substantive” aspects of the coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and the

¹¹ GA resolution 50/6, fifth preambular paragraph (second sub-paragraph) and paragraphs 8 (third sub-paragraph), 14 and 15.

¹² GA resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields; paragraph 5.

other organizations of the United Nations system. Only the first section of this Annex, “Funding of operational activities for development in the United Nations system,” is relevant to this study. It is examined below in section D.8.

10. By its resolution 51/241, “Strengthening the United Nations system,” the General Assembly adopted the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.¹³ The Assembly calls upon “the relevant intergovernmental bodies to implement fully the measures specified in the text to strengthen the work of the United Nations system, in particular of the General Assembly and the Secretariat” and invites “other principal organs, the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system to implement the measures for strengthening the system that are specified in the text and that are within their respective areas of competence, as appropriate.”¹⁴ Yet, in the annexed report of the Group, it is hard to find those “measures” of direct or indirect relevance to the specialized agencies. Paragraph 69 states that “the specialized agencies are also (like the funds and programmes of the United Nations) to consider uniform terms and term limits for their executive heads.” And paragraph 9 reads as follows: “The report on the work of the Organization shall, *inter alia*. Contain an analytical and concise annex elaborating the costs by major programmes and activities of all bodies of the United Nations system, located both in and outside New York, according to their mandates, so as to improve Member States’ overview of only one paragraph of

¹³ GA resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, Strengthening of the United Nations system. The report of the Open-ended High-level Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System was annexed to this resolution. The constitution of this Group by resolution 49/252 was mentioned in this *Repertory, Supplement No8, General Review*.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Annex, paragraphs 2 and 5.

one short sentence, requesting the Secretary-General “to elaborate further ways to strengthen system-wide coordination.”¹⁵

11. This is all that the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group had to offer in terms of observations or recommendations to the United Nations system. But, such was actually the intention of the Group. In the first paragraph of its report it indicated that it had “focused on improving the capacity of the General Assembly to discharge effectively and efficiently its functions, role and powers and that of the Secretariat to carry out effectively and efficiently the mandates of intergovernmental processes with the necessary transparency and accountability.” Moreover, the Group had proceeded “on the assumption that adequate resources will be provided to support the United Nations system.”¹⁶

12. The fourth text of general scope considered by the Assembly during the period 1995-1999 was the report on the Agenda for Development. In its resolution 51/240 of 20 June 1997 the Assembly adopted this Agenda for Development.¹⁷ Contrary to the text analyzed above, which was also adopted in the summer of 1997, the Agenda for Development is addressed to all organizations of the United Nations system and contains a number of observations and recommendations to the members of this system, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as leaders of the cooperation and coordination within the United Nations family. One of the relatively new ideas is the insistence on the links between peace and security and development and on the attention that the United Nations system as a whole should

¹⁵ Ibid, Annex, paragraphs 9, 47 and 69.

¹⁶ Ibid, Annex, paragraphs 1 and 2. On the last point, the Group said that the “current financial crisis “ was being considered by the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations..

¹⁷ GA resolution 51/240, of 20 June 1997, Agenda for Development, containing in its Annex the Agenda for Development as prepared by an ad-hoc open-ended working group of the Assembly established by resolution 49/126 of 19 December 1994.

give to such links. Also somewhat new, is the idea that the system “must be prepared to address the capacity requirements of different national development partners, including, in addition to Governments, members of civil society, such as the private sector and non-governmental organizations,”¹⁸ It has sections entitled “Enhancing the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in development”, “Specialized agencies of the United Nations system”, “Inter-agency coordination” and “Interaction between the United Nations and other multilateral development institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.” But all recommendations included in this long document are of a general character and none of them is even indirectly relevant to Article 17 (3).

13. The report “Renewing the United Nations: a Programme for Reform” was issued on 14 July 1997, less than seven months after the new Secretary-General of the United Nations had taken its functions.¹⁹ In his letter of transmittal to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General wrote that he was pleased to submit “what I believe to be the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the fifty-two year history of this Organization (...) The Organization needs to be significantly reconfigured in order to do better what the international community requires it to do. Undertaking those changes will also realize significant administrative efficiencies and thus produce savings (...)”²⁰

14. In this report, measures and recommendations for reform are centered on the restructuring of the Secretariat and the reduction of posts financed by the regular budget of the

¹⁸ Ibid, Annex, paragraphs 3 and 226.

¹⁹ A/51/950, 14 July 1997, Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform, Report of the Secretary-General. By resolution A/51/200 of 17 December 1996, the General Assembly had appointed Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term starting 1 January 1997 and ending on 31 December 2001. On the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution 51/201, Tribute to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

²⁰ Ibid, Letter of Transmittal, first and second paragraphs.

United Nations. One proposed measure concern directly the United Nations system. This is “the establishment of a ministerial-level commission to examine the need for fundamental change through review of the Charter of the United Nations and the legal instruments from which the specialized agencies of the United Nations derive their constitutions.”²¹ The rationale for this proposal was “to examine how the weaknesses of the decentralized system can best be corrected while preserving its advantages.”²² If the objectives of the United Nations “are to be fully realized, a much greater degree of concerted will and coordinated action is required throughout the system as a whole.”²³ Further, the Secretary-General expresses its intention to strengthen the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). Noting the “gaps in the existing structure,” notably concerning energy and technology, he suggests that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) be “restructured and revitalized.”²⁴ And he informs the Assembly that he had “initiated consultations with the President of the World Bank in order to strengthen cooperation and achieve greater rationalization and coordination between the Bank and the United Nations.”²⁵

15. The General Assembly, having debated this report in plenary, adopted resolution 52/12. In part B of this resolution the Assembly invited the Secretary-General, “to elaborate further his proposals” on, *inter alia*, “The special commission at the ministerial level to examine the need for possible amendments to the Charter of the United Nations and the treaties from which the specialized agencies derive their mandates.”²⁶

²¹ Ibid, Highlights, last but last paragraph.

²² Ibid, paragraph 89.

²³ Ibid, paragraph 86.

²⁴ Ibid, paragraphs 87 and 88.

²⁵ Ibid, paragraph 75.

²⁶ GA resolution 52/12 A,B, of 18 November 1997 and 19 December 1997.

16. The convening of a Millennium Assembly had been one of the proposals of the Secretary-General included in “Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform.” The Secretary-General presented his Draft United Nations Millennium Declaration at the 54th session of the General Assembly. In its resolution 54/282 of 5 September 2000, the Assembly decided “to refer the annexed draft United Nations Millennium Declaration to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, to be held from 6 to 8 September 2000, for its consideration.”²⁷ This transmitted draft has one specific mention of the United Nations system. In section VIII, Strengthening the United Nations, Member States resolve, *inter alia* :”To ensure greater policy coherence and better cooperation between the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as other multilateral bodies, with a view to achieving a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development.”²⁸

17. Two observations emerge from this review of six resolutions or major texts adopted by the General Assembly during the second part of the 1990s. First, the statements the Assembly made on coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system were general in nature and not particularly forceful. They were sort of lost in an ocean of comments and decisions on the reform of the United Nations itself. Second, the Assembly largely ignored the financial and budgetary aspects of the relations between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, namely those that fall within the scope of Article 17(3).

²⁷ GA resolution 54/282 of 5 September 2000, second paragraph, and Annex. It might be noted, although the 55th session of the General Assembly is outside the scope of this *Supplement No 9*, that the final text adopted by the Summit was identical to the Draft annexed to resolution 54/282.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Annex, paragraph 30, ninth sub-paragraph.

18. The first observation is not amenable to quick conclusions. Coordination on substantive questions within the United Nations system is within the purview of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and, primarily, of the Economic and Social Council. The Second Committee, notably, regularly passes resolutions on operational activities for development and the financing aspects of these will be mentioned below in section D.8. Moreover, the Administrative Committee on Coordination, depending on circumstances and personalities, is in itself in a position to be more or less effective. Its role on coordination of the activities of the organizations of the system is above all in support of the Economic and Social Council.

19. The second observation, however, is corroborated by an examination of the work of the Fifth Committee. In these five years, the Fifth Committee did not pass a single resolution directly or indirectly relevant to the budgets of the specialized agencies. In fact, and this was a confirmation of a trend that was already well under way at the turn of the 1990s, the General Assembly ceased to “examine the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies” as stipulated in Article 17 (3).²⁹ It left entirely this task to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.³⁰ The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) continued to produce biennially tables on the budgets of the organizations of the United Nations system, but only for the purpose of information.³¹ And the joint meetings of the CPC and the ACC were discontinued.³² Moreover, the role of the Fifth Committee in the examination of

²⁹ See *Repertory, Supplement No8 (1989-1994), Article 17(3)*, General Survey.

³⁰ This point is elaborated in section D.3.

³¹ See below, Part II, section C.

³² See GA resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, page 8, paragraph 7: (The Assembly) Requests the Secretary-General to delete the funds budgeted for joint meetings between the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, since these meetings are no longer held.”

the programmes attached to the budgets of the specialized agencies became also much reduced. In the three resolutions on programme planning adopted during the period under review,³³ the Assembly did little more than endorsing the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). These are examined in section D.8.³⁴

20. Less and less concerned with the budgets and the detailed programmes of the specialized agencies, the Assembly, however, gave growing attention to the administrative and personnel facets of the life of the organizations of the United Nations system. This was done through the traditional resolutions on the reports of the International Civil Commission, of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, and, to a limited extent, of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). And there was also new interest in questions such as procurement, outsourcing, mobility of staff within the system, and employment of spouses. The work of the Assembly on these administrative and personnel issues is considered in various sections of the Analytical Summary of Practice.

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 budget**

**** 3. Coordination of the form of the budget**

³³ GA resolutions 51/219 of 18 December 1996, 53/207 of 18 December 1998 and 54/236 of 23 December 1999, all entitled Programme planning.

³⁴ See A/51/16, A/53/16 and A/54/16, reports on the thirty-sixth, thirty-eight and thirty-ninth sessions of the Committee. The few recommendations on system-wide coordination contained in the reports that were singled out by the General Assembly are examined in section D.7 below.

**** C. Nature and scope of examination of administrative budgets**

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 regulation and salary system

21. Every year the General Assembly adopted a detailed resolution entitled “United Nations Common System: report of the International Civil Service Commission.”³⁵ In all these resolutions the Assembly reaffirmed the fundamental principles and objectives of a “single, unified United Nations system as the cornerstone for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system.” This system “constitutes the best instrument to secure staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity for the international civil service, as stipulated under the Charter of the United Nations. And the Assembly also regularly reaffirmed “the central role of the Commission (the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)) in the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system.”³⁶

22. The subjects routinely treated by the Assembly included the Noblemaire principle and its application, the comparator with the highest paid national service, the margin between net remuneration of officials in the Professional and higher category in New York and officials in comparable positions in the United States federal civil service, the Flemming principle and the

³⁵ GA resolutions 50/208 of 23 December 1995, 51/216 of 18 December 1996, 52/216 of 22 December 1997, 53/209 of 18 December 1998, and 54/238 of 23 December 1999, all entitled United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission..

³⁶ See the preambular paragraphs of GA resolutions 50/208, 51/216, 52/216, 53/209 and 54/238.

salaries of the General Service and related categories, dependency allowances, education grants, the post adjustment system, and the methods of work of the International Civil Service Commission, notably the participation of the representatives of personnel in its deliberations.

23. Among the relatively new subjects of interest to the Assembly, was the question of the supplementary payments that some Member States were attributing to their nationals under contract with organizations of the United Nations system. In its resolution of December 1996, the Assembly recalled that the ICSC had declared that “such arrangements are unnecessary, inappropriate and undesirable, and are inconsistent with the staff regulations of the organizations.”³⁷ The Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the executive heads of the organizations of the common system “to take such measures and make such proposals as they consider appropriate in order to end such practices” and requested further all organizations “to issue, as appropriate, instructions to staff regarding the unacceptability of receiving supplementary payments.” It also “invited Member States to discontinue such practice.”³⁸

24. At its 52d session the Assembly expressed its preoccupation for “gender balance in the common system.”³⁹ It recalled its previous requests and noted “the intention of the Commission to submit in 1998 a report on the representation of women, which will include ways of

³⁷ GA resolution 51/216, section D, preambular paragraph. The Assembly had first expressed concern over supplementary payments at the level of the United Nations system in its resolution 45/241 of 21 December 1990, section IX. c

³⁸ Ibid, section D, paragraphs 1,2 and 3.

³⁹ GA resolution 52/216, section G, Gender balance in the common system. In resolution 45/241 of 21 December 1990, the Assembly had requested organizations to make “coherent plans in the course of 1993” for putting into practice measures for enhancing the status of women. Such plans were to include not only such measures as necessary to achieve the recruitment of more women, equal pay and equal opportunities, or facilitation of working life and family life, but also the “creation of an organizational climate conducive to the equal participation of women in the work of the organizations.” (section XI). Then, in resolution 47/216 of 23 December 1992, the Assembly had recalled this demand and requested the ICSC to report regularly on the progress achieved (section VI).

improving the situation.” It also noted “the intention of the Commission to continue to report on a regular basis both on the extent of the implementation of previous recommendations in this area and on new initiatives proposed or introduced by the organizations to enhance the status of women in the common system.”⁴⁰ At its next session, in December 1998, the Assembly noted the “the continuing work of the Commission in achieving gender balance,” endorses “the requests of the Commission to the organizations” and noted that “the Commission will revert to the matter in 2001.”⁴¹

25. Three more subjects studied by the ICSC during the period and commented upon by the Assembly deserve mention. The first concerned appointments of limited duration in the secretariats of the organizations. Having, in 1995, requested the Commission to continue its review on the subject, the Assembly, in 1997, “endorsed the principles and guidelines for the use of appointments of limited duration” as contained in the report of the Commission.⁴² The Commission “agreed in principle that appointments of limited duration arrangements within the common system were an appropriate modality to the extent that the scope of the practice did not impinge on the existence of the international civil service.” Then the Commission enumerated a set of “principles and guidelines for the use of appointments of limited duration.” Among these, were the respect for these appointments of “the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;” the preservation of the “independence and international character of the international civil service;” the points that such appointments “should not be at the expense of the core international civil service;” that they should not be “used abusively to extent the appointment of staff;” that “due regard should be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a

⁴⁰ Ibid, paragraphs 1 and 2.

⁴¹ Ibid, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

⁴² GA resolution 52/216, section C, second paragraph.

geographical basis as possible;” and that the staff recruited under these appointments of short term duration shall have the same entitlements that the regular staff.” This last principle, wrote the Commission was to “support the concept of the United Nations system as a good employer:” also, these appointments “should not create competition for staff among organizations.” They should be for a maximum of four years. And the Commission decided that it will monitor closely all arrangements regarding this type of contract.⁴³

26. The second subject was the possibility for the organizations of the United Nations system to grant “performance awards and bonuses.”⁴⁴ At its 51st session the Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to make operational proposals to their respective governing bodies “on the possibility of introducing a system of performance awards or bonuses, in the context of the performance appraisal system, to a limited number of staff in recognition of their outstanding performance and specific achievements in a given year.” Further, the Assembly requested the ICSC “to provide general comments on the concept of performance awards and bonuses.”⁴⁵ At its 52^d session, the Assembly welcomed the information and guidance provided on that matter by the Commission, recognized “the different organizational strategies and cultures prevailing in the common system,” considered that “a flexible approach to performance management would be desirable,” invited the executive heads “to develop their performance management programmes

⁴³ See A/52/30, Report of the International Civil Service Commission, paragraph 249, and Annex XX.

⁴⁴ GA resolution 51/216, section C, paragraphs 6, 7 and 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid, paragraphs 6, 7 and 8.

within the parameters set by the Commission,” and decided to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the issue under the agenda item “Human resources management.”⁴⁶

27. The third question was an attempt by the Assembly to put together the various problems, innovations and changes in emphasis that had characterized the question of personnel, now human resources, in the United Nations and the United Nations system since the late 1980s. At its 51st session the Assembly used the terms “State of the United Nations Common System”, at its 52d session, “New Directions in Human Resources Management”, and at its 53d session “Framework for Human Resources Management.”⁴⁷ Initially, in 1995, the Assembly requested the ICSC “to take the lead in analyzing new approaches in the human resources management field so as to develop standards, methods and arrangements that will respond to the specific needs, especially regarding future staffing, of the organizations of the United Nations system, including consideration of flexible contractual arrangements, performance based pay and the introduction of special occupational pay rates, and to report to the General Assembly thereon at its fifty-third session.”⁴⁸

28. The next step that the Assembly took was to welcome “the initiative taken by the Commission to hold a forum on new direction in human resources management in 1997” and to

⁴⁶ GA resolution 52/216, section B, Performance management, second preambular paragraph and paragraphs 1,2 and 3. In resolution 52/219, Human resources management, adopted the same day as resolution 52/216, the Assembly approved the report of the Secretary-General and urged him “to adopt a step-by-step approach to, the introduction, in full consultation with the staff, of a system of performance awards or bonuses, taking into account the comments and recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission.” The Secretary-General was to keep the question under review and report to the Assembly. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its 53d session “for decision, policy proposals to deal systematically and effectively with under-performance, taking into account the comments and recommendations of the Commission.” (section III, System of Performance Awards or Bonuses”, paragraphs 1,2,and 3. The Commission had noted that whereas merit recognition and under-performance measures were “two sides of the same coin”, most “performance packages,” when they existed, did not include provisions for the detection and handling of under-performance. (See A/52/30, paragraph 213).

⁴⁷ See resolutions 51/216, section IX, 52/216, section G, and 53/209, section IV.

⁴⁸ GA resolution 51/216, section IX, State of the United Nations common system.

also welcome the Intention of the Commission “to submit in 1998 a comprehensive report on new approaches to human resources management.”⁴⁹ And the third step, in December 1998, remained at the level of intentions and requests. The Assembly expressed its conviction that the ICSC “must play a lead role in the development of innovative approaches in the field of human resources management as part of the overall reform currently taking place in the organization of the common system.” It welcomed the initiative of the Commission “to examine a framework for human management.” It invited the Commission “to examine *inter alia* the reform initiatives by all organizations (...), the facilitation of inter-agency mobility and the introduction of specialist pay.” And it urged the same Commission “to address speedily the request of the General Assembly regarding studies in the area of human resources management and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.”⁵⁰

(c) Common services

29. In 1998, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued its study on “The United Nations system common services in Geneva.”⁵¹ The stated purpose of the report was to provide “a coherent framework for the creation and strengthening of a unified, comprehensive and centralized common services entity among United Nations organizations located in Geneva in order to enable them to rationalize their overhead structures and costs and to concentrate diminishing resources on their constitutional mandates.”⁵² These Geneva-based organizations, despite their close proximity to each other and their many “institutional commonalities”, had very few services in common. Instead, these organizations had parallel support services. The JIU made

⁴⁹ GA resolution 52/216, section G, New directions in human resource management, paragraphs 1 and 2..

⁵⁰ GA resolution 53/209, section V, preambular paragraph and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

⁵¹ A/53/787

⁵² See A/54/635, Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations system common services in Geneva, Note by the Secretary-General, paragraph 1.

three recommendations: that the General Assembly and other governing bodies of the organizations concerned adopt the proposed “new framework” for common services in Geneva; that a common services committee chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva be established, and that a high-level official be appointed, “at the appropriate time” to foster “broad common services objectives and arrangements” at the Geneva duty station; and that, for “the strengthening of a regular and coherent oversight of Geneva common services”, a more active role be played by the Geneva Diplomatic Committee and by the ACABQ for administrative and budgetary issues.⁵³

30. In his note presenting his comments as well as those of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on this report of the JIU, the Secretary-General stated that “the thrust of the report (of the JIU) (was) in line with the strategy of the Secretary-General to expand and strengthen common services and with the vision of the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and his efforts to consolidate that Office (---) The comprehensive management reform at the United Nations (was) aimed at improving the quality of the services provided and at enhanced cost-effectiveness.” The contents of the JIU report were “useful at reviewing the course of action and progress achieved at the United Nations Office at Geneva and (provided) interesting material for the consideration of other Geneva-based organizations.”⁵⁴

31. The main reason for such reserved reception of the JIU report by the Secretary-General and his colleagues of the ACC was made clear a few paragraphs later: “The focus of the report (the JIU’s report) is on creating and strengthening a unified, comprehensive and centralized common services entity. It should be noted, however, that, in his reform proposals, the Secretary-

⁵³ Ibid, part III, first two paragraphs and chapeau of paragraph 17.

⁵⁴ Ibid, section II, General comments, paragraph 7.

General emphasized decentralization of functions, together with a corresponding delegation of authority to programme managers in such areas as procurement, human resources management and results-based budgeting. Other Geneva-based organizations have taken similar initiatives. Centralizing such functions under a single administrative entity at Geneva would be contrary to such emphasis. Thus, the question remains as to how an approach relying on an expansion of common services, which would further their centralization in order to obtain presumed economies of scale, can be reconciled with the policy of further decentralization in the context of management reforms.”⁵⁵ Then, the Secretary-General, while indicating that he was accepting the three recommendations mentioned above, proceeded to attach to this acceptance a number of reservations and qualifications.

32. Nevertheless, the Assembly, in its resolution 54/255 of 7 April 2000, took note of the report of the JIU and of the comments of the Secretary-General and the ACC and endorsed both their recommendations and comments.⁵⁶ Also, the Assembly stressed that “pursuit of common services at Geneva should be one of many tools available to organizations and managers to obtain goods and services in the most efficient and effective manner” and invited the JIU “to continue to examine common services at other duty stations where the United Nations system offices and agencies are established, where feasible, and to report thereon to the General Assembly.”⁵⁷

2. Establishment of a joint audit procedure

⁵⁵ Ibid, paragraph 10.

⁵⁶ GA resolution 54/255 of 7 April 2000, Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, paragraphs 1 and 2.

⁵⁷ Ibid, paragraphs 3 and 4.

33. The United Nations Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency continued its work and the General Assembly did not make specific reference to it. Similarly during the period under review, the annual resolutions of the General Assembly on the work of the United Nations Board of Auditors did not refer to issues involving the United Nations system.

34. The Joint Inspection Unit is, by its statute, “the only independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigative body” and this was reaffirmed by the Assembly in its two resolutions of the second part of the 1990s on the Unit.⁵⁸ Both resolutions were on the functioning of the JIU. At its 50th session, the Assembly formulated several criticisms. It noted with concern “that some reports of the Unit have dealt with political matters”; it requested the Unit “to seek a more reader-friendly and uniform format of reports, taking into account new publishing technologies, which would include sections containing the objectives of the report, an executive summary, the conclusions drawn (...) the actions required (...) in order to make reports as concise as possible and to comply with the existing page limit of thirty-two pages”; it requested a report on “measures taken to develop a set of internal standards and guidelines for inspection, evaluation and investigation”; it invited the Unit “to continue to take full advantage of its system-wide competence (...) and to propose harmonized, practical and concrete solutions”; and it urged Member States to pay special attention to the importance of the selection of qualified inspectors.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ GA resolutions 50/233 of 7 June 1996 and 54/16 of 29 October 1999, both entitled “Joint Inspection Unit.”

⁵⁹ GA resolution 50/233, last preambular paragraph and paragraphs 6, 7, 10 and 17.

35. At its 54th session, however, the Assembly “recognize(d) the improvements made in the functioning of the Unit, encourage(d) the Unit to continue its efforts in this respect, and decide(d) to revert to the issue of the functioning of the Unit at its fifty-sixth session.”⁶⁰

3. Development of a common form of the budget

36. It has been pointed out above in the General Survey that the General Assembly had abandoned at the turn of the 1990s the task of examining the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and making recommendations to these agencies. This work, however, continued to be done yearly by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, acting in accordance with the mandate it received from the General Assembly in 1946.

37. Taking the example of the year 1998, the process followed by the ACABQ with regard to the specialized agencies involved the holding of one session in Geneva from 28 May to 12 June and one session in Vienna from 15 to 19 June. In Geneva, apart from United Nations entities, the Advisory Committee met with the ILO, the UNESCO (headquartered in Paris), the FAO (headquartered in Rome) and the WHO. It received written submissions from the WIPO, the UPU, the ITU and the WMO. In Vienna, apart again from United Nations entities located there, meetings were held with the UNIDO and the IAEA. To the governing bodies of all these agencies, the ACABQ submitted reports on their budgetary and administrative practices and issues. And to the General Assembly it gave a summary of these reports, but in the form of a

⁶⁰ GA resolution 54/16, paragraph 3.

fairly comprehensive account of specific observations and comments, followed by a conclusion.⁶¹

38. The themes chosen by the Advisory Committee for its discussions with the specialized agencies were, in 1998, issues of reforms that had recently taken place, the application of United Nations accounting standards and, in particular, the treatment of delays in the collection of assessed contributions, joint and common services, the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the recovery of support costs and the impact of exchange rate fluctuations on programmes and budget. Two extracts might be given to illustrate the type of observations provided by the ACABQ to the General Assembly. First, the UNESCO; “In the case of UNESCO, the problem of delays in the collection of assessed contributions was quite serious. At the latest General Conference, 40 countries were two years behind their in their payments and their voting right were affected. In connection with the application of article 32 of the United Nations accounting standards, the Advisory Committee was informed that no provision for delays in the collection of contributions was reflected in the accounts for 1996-1997 and that the external auditor did not raise objections to that treatment.”⁶² Second example: “Mandatory budget reductions at UNIDO had have resulted in significant decreases in the number of established posts. The agency’s budget was reduced by 9.2 per cent in 1994-1995, by 14.6 per cent in 1996-1997 and by 27.6 percent in 1998-1999, and the established posts were reduced from 1,317 in the biennium 1992-1993 to 731 for 1998-1999.”⁶³

⁶¹ See A/53/7, 16 September 1998, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, First Report: activities of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

⁶² Ibid, paragraph 40.

⁶³ Ibid, paragraph 61.

39. As to the overall conclusions presented by the Advisory Committee, extensive quotes will illustrate the independence and professionalism of this expert body. “From its discussions on the subject of budget reform with the specialized agencies mentioned above, the Advisory Committee believes that the terminology introduced so far (e.g. results-based budgeting, budgeting by objectives, strategic budgeting, budgeting by objectives, strategic budgeting, policy-oriented budgeting, etc.) may add to the difficulties of understanding what is being reformed and what is meant by results-based budgeting in the United Nations system.” “There is also a need to be clear as to what efficiency means (---) Changes should be introduced after thorough discussions both at the Secretariat and the intergovernmental level to avoid future confusion leading ultimately to additional expenditures to correct mistakes for reforms made in a hurry. (---) There is need for the agencies to agree on the definition of terms, as was done at the time of the development of biennial budgeting and medium-term plans and the harmonization of accounting standards and scale of assessments.”

40. With respect to management information systems, “the information provided gave the impression of uncoordinated systems development. It appeared that each agency was busy developing its own systems and would do everything to assert that what other agencies had developed was not suitable to its needs.” Overall, “in the view of the Advisory Committee, the lack of coordination in the development of management information systems and budgetary reform among the agencies of the United Nations may lead to unnecessary expenditures from funds contributed by Member States. The Committee intends to revert to the issues of

coordination and harmonization in the context of its future reports on management information systems and the programme budget for 2000-2001.”⁶⁴

****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 Pension Fund and a common system of social security for staff

41. The item “United Nations pension system” being considered every other year, the Assembly adopted two comprehensive resolutions in 1996 and 1998.⁶⁵ Matters of recurrent interest to the General Assembly continued to be actuarial questions, pensionable remuneration, pension adjustment system, administrative expenses of the Pension Fund, financial statements of the Pension Fund and reports of the Board of Auditors, and investments of the Pension Fund.

42. In resolution 51/217, the Assembly noted that the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea met “the conditions set out in article 3 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund for membership in the Fund” and, accordingly, decided to approve the admission to membership in the Pension Fund of this organization.⁶⁶

43. The same resolution 51/217 included a section entitled “Activities related to resolving problems concerning the implementation of the transfer agreements between the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the former Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.”

⁶⁴ Ibid, paragraphs 69 to 73.

⁶⁵ GA resolutions 51/217 of 18 December 1996 and 53/210 of 18 December 1998.

⁶⁶ See GA resolution 51/217, section VI, Admission to Membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, paragraphs 1 and 2.

This was a pending matter since the 48th session of the General Assembly. The legal opinion of the Legal Counsel of the United Nations had been sought. A proposed agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Joint Staff Pension Board had been negotiated. The Assembly concurred with this agreement “which would represent a first step in resolving the problems that have arisen with respect to the application of the transfer agreements.” The Assembly noted, however, that “some Member States have expressed concern that the proposed agreement only covers certain former Fund participants who are now citizens of the Russian Federation.” It “urge(d) the Governments of the Member States concerned to undertake direct discussions aimed at resolving the financial issues involved in respect of those former participants who are their citizens of permanent residents” and it requested the Board to report on developments of the matter at its 53d session.⁶⁷

44. At this 53d session, in resolution 53/210, the Assembly took note of the “information provided by the Russian Federation concerning the problems that have arisen with regard to the implementation of the proposed agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, and note(d) the intention of the Government of the Russian Federation to pursue all of the outstanding issues.” And the Assembly “encourage(d) all parties concerned to resolve the problems addressed in section IV of its resolution 51/217 (...)”⁶⁸

45. Also in its resolution 53/210, the General Assembly acknowledged the fact that the newly created World Trade Organization WTO did not wish to participate in the United Nations Joint

⁶⁷ Ibid, section V, paragraphs 1 to 6.

⁶⁸ See GA resolution 53/210, section III, Status of the Proposed Agreement between the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and the Government of the Russian Federation, paragraphs 1 and 2.

Staff Pension Fund. It was recalled at the beginning of this review that the WTO was the late reincarnation of the aborted International Trade Organization ITU). An Interim Commission of the ITU had remained legally in existence and was a member of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund to accommodate the staff of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade GATT). Thus, the non-participation of the WTO in the Pension Fund implied a withdrawal from this Fund of the Interim Commission of the ITU. The Assembly regretted “the wish of the Interim Commission to apply for termination of its membership in the Fund, effective 31 December 1998”; noted that the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board “had made a recommendation for the termination of the membership of the Interim Commission effective 31 December 1998”; drew the attention “of the members of the World Trade Organization that a staff member of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization ceasing participation in the Fund will have the possibility of electing to receive a benefit from the Fund and, at the same time, accepting an offer of employment in the secretariat of the World Trade Organization”; and the Assembly “decide(d) to terminate the membership of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization in the Fund as at 31 December 1998, upon receipt by the Secretary of the Board of an unconditional written notification from the Director-General of the World Trade Organization to that effect, no later than 15 January 1999.”⁶⁹

46. It should be pointed out that in the first operative paragraph of this section of resolution 53/210, the Assembly stated the following: (the Assembly Note(d)) the wish of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization to apply for termination of its membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund effective 31 December 1998, **in the light of the**

⁶⁹ Ibid, section VII, Application of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization for Withdrawal from Membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, second preambular paragraph and paragraphs 3,4 and 5.

strong commitment of the General Assembly to preserving the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances.” (emphasis added)⁷⁰

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

47. The main instruments for system-wide coordination potentially involving a concentration of efforts and resources remained system-wide medium-term plans and equivalent initiatives. During the period under review such instruments were the System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for the Advancement of Women (1996-2001) and the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990.

48. At its 53d session, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination regarding these two system-wide instruments for the coordination of programmes.⁷¹ For the system-wide plan for the advancement of women, the conclusions and recommendations of the CPC were contained in paragraphs 301 to 310 of its report on the work of its thirty-eight session.⁷² These conclusions and recommendations were of a general nature. For example, the CPC “recommended that measures be taken to overcome institutional obstacles to gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system;” it commended the 34 entities of the United Nations having contributed to the preparation of the progress report;” it recommended, echoing the ECOSOC, that “all entities designate focal points to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the plan;” and it reiterated “the goal of gender balance in staffing

⁷⁰ Ibid, paragraph 1.

⁷¹ See GA resolution 53/207, of 18 December 1998, Programme Planning, section VII, Other Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, single paragraph.

⁷² A/53/16, Fifty-third session of the General Assembly, Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-eight session, Chapter III, Coordination questions, section C, paragraphs 301 to 310.

(and) reemphasized that this goal “should be achieved in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter.”⁷³

49. There were eleven conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on the system-wide special initiative for Africa. Results achieved were “interesting and constituted some progress compared with the previous situation” said the CPC. The ACC should be requested “to intensify its efforts to mobilize fully the analytical and operational capacities of the United Nations system at the service of the Special Initiative.” The different lead agencies should be called upon “to develop, in their respective areas, a common strategic framework for action”. The secretariat of the Special Initiatives should be “strengthened.” In the area of coordination, the CPC requested “that effort be intensified (...), in particular as regards the orientation and the advocacy role of the Secretary-General, the follow-up and catalytic role of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and the operational role of UNDP and ECA.” “Programmes should be rapidly prepared in the two priorities areas of regional cooperation and integration and economic diversification.” And, the Committee called “for a greater involvement of the Bretton-Woods institutions in the increased mobilization of resources for capacity-building of African countries.”⁷⁴

50. This Special Initiative for Africa was again considered by the CPC during its thirty-ninth session in 1999 and the Committee had ten conclusions and recommendations on the subject. They ranged from concern over the “limited number of countries covered by the Initiative,” to “appreciation for the active involvement of the Bretton-Woods institutions” and “appreciation of the closer collaboration” of the various United Nations entities involved in the Special

⁷³ Ibid, paragraphs 304, 305, 307 and 309.

⁷⁴ Ibid, paragraphs 324,327,328,329,330,331 and 332.

Initiative.⁷⁵ The Assembly, in its resolution 54/236, endorsed the conclusions and recommendation of the CPC, mentioning explicitly the ten relevant paragraphs of the report.⁷⁶ The Assembly, however, noted “that in the context of coordination questions, the proposals relating to performance indicators requested by the Committee (the CPC) and contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative (...) have not been approved by the General Assembly.” Also, the Assembly noted “that the matter addressed in paragraph 566 of the report of the Committee is being considered by the General Assembly under a separate agenda item.”⁷⁷ Paragraph 566 referred to questions of security and safety of United Nations staff and to the ratification of the 1994 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

8. Coordination of budget procedures in relation to technical assistance and other extra-budgetary programmes involving voluntary contributions

51. In a context of relative decline of voluntary contributions for the financing of operational activities for development, the Assembly, in December 1998, adopted its traditional resolution entitled “Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,” and formulated a comprehensive set of policy guidelines for such activities. These guidelines were generally well established and a few of them were addressed specifically to the United Nations system. The Assembly “strongly reaffirm(d) that the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, *inter alia*, a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of

⁷⁵ A/54/16, 54th session of the General Assembly, Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-ninth session, Chapter IV, CoOrdination questions, part B. paragraphs 587, 588 and 592.

⁷⁶ GA resolution 54/236, of 23 December 1999, Programme planning, paragraph 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, paragraphs 4 and 5.

developing countries;” it stressed “the need for continuous overall improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the United Nations system in delivering its development assistance;” it noted “with appreciation the sustained contributions of many donors and recipient countries to operational activities for development in a spirit of partnership;” it noted “the importance of non-core resources, including cost-sharing, trust funds and non-traditional sources of financing, as a mechanism to enhance the capacity and to supplement the means of operational activities for development;” it encouraged “greater cooperation between the World Bank, regional development banks and all funds and programmes;” and it requested “that the United Nations system strengthen its efforts, in consultation with recipient countries, to ensure that the lessons learned from both monitoring and evaluation exercises are systematically applied to programming processes at the operational level and that evaluation criteria are built into all projects and programmes at their design stage.”⁷⁸

9. Other recommendations

52. In its report of August 1999 entitled “Review of the ACC and its machinery”, the Joint Inspection Unit recommended that the Secretary-General and his colleagues of the organizations of the United system “should pursue more actively their consideration of a new name for ACC which would better reflect the changes in its scope and functions and submit in due course a proposal to the Economic and Social Council in that respect.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ GA resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998, Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 15, 35 and 57.

⁷⁹ A/54/288, 30 August 1999, Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, Review of the ACC and its machinery, Recommendation A.1.3, page 4.

53. It might be noted under this rubric “Other recommendations” that the General Assembly continued to adopt every year a resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).⁸⁰ These comprehensive resolutions touched only very marginally budgetary and administrative questions. A welcoming of the measures taken by the Agency “to strengthen and fund its technical cooperation activities” might be mentioned.⁸¹ Also, the Assembly called on the Director-General “to further integrate the Platform for Action developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women into the Agency’s relevant policies and programmes.”⁸² All these were adopted by vote.⁸³ In November 1997, the Assembly expressed “its appreciation for the sixteen years of distinguished service by Mr. Hans Blix as Director-General of the Agency, and extends its best wishes to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the incoming Director-General of the Agency.”⁸⁴

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

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

⁸⁰ See GA resolutions 50/9, 1 November 1995, 51/10, 29 October 1996, 52/21, 12 November 1997, 53/21, 2 November 1998, and 54/26, 15 November 1999, all entitled “Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.”

⁸¹ See GA resolution 50/9 paragraph 5; and also on the same subject, resolution 51/10, paragraph 5, and resolution 52/11, paragraph 5.

⁸² See GA resolution 51/10, last preambular paragraph.

⁸³ Resolution 50/9: 164-1-8; resolution 51/10: 141-2-8; resolution 52/21: 151-1-5; resolution 53/21: 113-1-8; resolution 54/26:122-1-6.

⁸⁴ See GA resolution 52/11, paragraph 12.