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EQUITABLE USE OF WORKING LANGUAGES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Text of statement to be made in the Fifth Committee
by the Canadian Representative, Mr. Lloyd Francis,
under Item 82, concerning personnel questions.
Tuesday, November, 21, 1967.

My delegation wishes to recall General Assembly Resolution 2(1) of February 1, 1946, and subsequent resolutions which laid down the rules of procedure regarding the use of languages in the United Nations Organization. The recognition of official languages and the adoption of some of them as working languages is the concrete expression of the spirit of universality which characterizes our Organization. Howeverover the years a situation has developed in which English has become the dominant working language in use at all levels of the Secretariat.

Bearing in mind the principles established by the rules of procedures of the main organs of the United Nations and the interest of member states in the equitable utilization of the working languages, 35 French- and Spanish-speaking delegations have submitted a draft resolution (A/C.5/L.914) with the object of contributing in a constructive and practical way to improving the linguistic balance, thus correcting a situation which has to a certain degree impeded the effectiveness of the work of our Organization.

The Canadian delegation has examined the report published as Document A/6860 relating to the composition of the staff of the Secretariat. We have studied carefully the section of the report concerning the use of working languages which was included by the Secretary-General in accordance with Resolution 2241B (XXI). As other delegations have pointed out clearly during the course of the debate, paragraphs 42 to 68 and the recommendations contained in paragraphs 69 and 70 of this report do not get to the bottom of the language problem and suggest only incomplete solutions. To