

This year, the Committee on Conferences presented its report and its mandate ended. Canada co-sponsored a resolution, later adopted, to establish the Committee on Conferences on a permanent basis. Mr. Claude-Andre Lachance, M.P., delegate on the Fifth Committee, made a statement in the Fifth Committee on November 2, 1977 noting the Committee's positive record and giving Canada's views on the calendar of conferences and the alternations which were made to it, the utilization and allocation of conference services and the monitoring of the application of criteria for drawing up reports of meetings.

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My delegation has studied with interest the third report of the Committee on Conferences (A/32/32) containing the results of the Committee's work during the final year in the experimental period of its mandate as well as the excellent statement of the distinguished Chairman of the Committee at our second meeting last Tuesday.

To begin, let me state, my delegation shares the view of the Chairman that the Committee on Conferences has justified its existence. On balance, its performance has improved since its inception, as both its members and its Secretariat gained experience in dealing with the large and complex programme of conferences and meetings by means of an intergovernmental mechanism. The achievements of the Committee to improving the Conference Programme have not yet reached a level that can be described as fully satisfactory. However, thanks to the hard work of the Secretariat and the patient, competent and dedicated guidance of its former Chairman, Mr. Thomas, as well as of his successor, Mr. Okeyo, solid achievement can be reported. There are also reasonable prospects for further improvement, particularly in making the Conference Programme more efficient and responsive to the needs of member states. In view of the positive expectations my delegation is prepared to consider favourably continuing the life of the Committee. A review of its mandate by the General Assembly is also considered desirable. My delegation is prepared to support the draft resolution attached to the Committee's report in Annex II. I now wish to turn to several other topics dealt with in the report of the Committee.

Intersessional Departures

From the very beginning the Committee's activity in considering and approving intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences has been a significant task, resulting in several important decisions. Member states have found the Committee a suitable instrument to reach certain political decisions which it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to reach in its absence. For example, this year the consideration of the arrangements for the UN Conference on the Establishment of UNIDO as a specialized agency was both timely and fruitful. The financial implications of intersessional