

CANADIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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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. However over 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

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cite only one example, we could not read without concern the vague and general recommendations given in sub-paragraph F of paragraph 70. It does not inspire confidence that real efforts will in fact be made to improve the linguistic composition of the staff or to expand the language instructions programme within the Secretariat.

Admittedly the fact that the United Nations headquarters is in New York has contributed to a certain degree in making English the dominant working language but I must stress the increase in efficiency that would result for the United Nations from an equitable balance among the working languages and from the possibility for every officer to use his own language if it is one of the working languages. In all objectivity we must admit that the obstacles mentioned in the present report do not constitute sufficient grounds to justify so negative an attitude.

At the same time if we recognize that the simultaneous distribution of documents in the various working languages is a corollary of the principle of linguistic equality then it would be advisable to remedy the current situation with regard to the distribution of documents which is far from satisfactory. One can indeed find many cases where the French version of documents has not been available at the meetings of Committees or other bodies of the United Nations until long after the release of the documents in English. This is certainly not the way to ensure effective progress in the work of this Organization. We realize that there are budgetary obstacles in the way of the simultaneous release of documents in the various languages of the Organization. Nonetheless we believe these obstacles could be overcome if the services responsible for the preparation and distribution of documents would use their imagination and their resources to a maximum within, as far as possible, their budgetary limits.

In conclusion my delegation is convinced that only energetic and sustained action will, in the long run, ensure a more equitable balance among the working languages used in the Secretariat and a better balance among those languages in the recruitment of staff. This is why the Canadian delegation is happy to be one of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution which is before the Fifth Committee. We believe that the operative paragraphs of this draft propose constructive, concrete and practical ways of attaining these goals. For these reasons, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution contained in Document A/C.5/L.914 will receive the support of all members of the Committee.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from identifying a transaction to entering it into the accounting system, ensuring that all necessary details are captured and verified.

3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the accounting department in monitoring and controlling the company's financial performance. It highlights the importance of regular reviews and the use of financial ratios to assess the company's position.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges of financial management in a dynamic market environment. It suggests strategies for managing risk and ensuring the company's long-term sustainability.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key points discussed and reiterating the commitment to transparency and accuracy in all financial reporting. It also provides contact information for further inquiries.