In accordance with the request made by staff members to the staff representatives, a meeting was held on 20 February, 1958 at which the Executive Secretary made the statement summarized below on the task of the Review Board which was set up following a decision by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at the Twelfth Session.

M. WILLSON F. K. LIEBICH

Statement of the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary said that the Review Board had started its work, with the following membership:

Chairman: Mr. A. Pelt
Members: Mr. van Asch van Wijk (Netherlands Delegation)
         Mr. M.G. Clark (Canadian Delegation)
         Mr. Russel Cook (United Nations)
         Mr. P. Sobels (ILO)

He had met with the Board at its first meeting on 19 February and had outlined the considerations which had led the CONTRACTING PARTIES to set up a Review Board with a view to giving the staff conditions of employment similar to those enjoyed by the secretariat of other international organizations.

* This summary has been approved by the Executive Secretary.
Spec/82/58
despite the fact that the Agreement establishing the OTC had not yet become effective.

1. Review of 1958 manning table (Professional)

He had told the Board that it would greatly facilitate the task of the administration to have an objective and informed judgement of the post gradings in the manning table. He considered, however, that job descriptions were not a fully satisfactory basis for assessing the responsibilities of the staff in a secretariat such as ICITO where the work and responsibilities were not completely comparable with those in other organizations, even though the job descriptions might be similar. He had added that the grades in the manning table corresponded to his own judgement of the responsibilities borne by the staff, but that the Board should not feel that any alterations to grading which they might propose would be a criticism.

He had asked the Board to give each staff member concerned an opportunity to appear before the Board in order freely to make any comments about the matters under consideration. For their part, the Board had said that they were anxious to interview the staff members concerned.

In that connexion, the Executive Secretary had discussed with the Board arrangements for preparing its report, and had made it clear that as a safeguard and guarantee of impartiality, he would prefer that the Administration not be associated with the Board's deliberations. It had therefore been agreed that the Board would keep no records, that the procedures would be confidential, and that any secretarial assistance would be provided from outside.

The Board had asked whether staff members had taken the opportunity afforded by paragraph 4 of the "Arrangements for the Review Board"* to submit written comments regarding the job descriptions and the grading of their posts. He had replied that the job descriptions had been shown to the incumbents, that there had been some modifications in the light of comments made, but that he considered that staff members were in no way bound to agree with the descriptions and should feel free to make oral comments before the Board, even though they might not have commented in writing.

* ICITO Administrative Memorandum No. 53
The Board had asked him to give them a description of the work of the secretariat, and he had replied that he was prepared to do so if required, but had suggested that the Board might first hear from the immediate supervisors of those concerned what work was actually performed in the various posts, after which he could provide any additional information that might be necessary.

2. Contracts

The Executive Secretary said that for the time being he had merely drawn the attention of the Board to what was already stated in the papers before them, and in particular to his view that a system involving a fixed percentage of fixed-term contracts in such a small secretariat would not be appropriate, and had indicated that if the Board found to the contrary, he would reserve the right to make his own comments to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on the matter. In reply to a question by the Board, he stated that United Nations practice would be followed for the granting of permanent contracts, i.e. that when a post was recommended to be a permanent post, the incumbent of a permanent post would be either given a permanent contract, be given a period of probation, or be terminated.

The Board had asked whether GATT would introduce the overall secretariat plan which had been put forward to the Budget Committee, which provided for the coupling of the P.2 and P.3 grades in a continuous career, with longevity increments at the top of the P.3 grade for staff members eligible for promotion but who had no opportunity because of lack of post, geographical distribution, etc. He had replied that the results of the General Assembly discussion had been such that he felt that it would be appropriate to proceed with the overall plan since it appeared to conform substantially with the Assembly's decision he proposed so to inform the Intersessional Committee in April, independently of any decision taken subsequently by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, since the limitations imposed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES were confined to the decisions of the Assembly, and not those of the Secretary-General.

* The relevant paragraphs of the Budget Committee Report (34 to 37) are reproduced at the end of the summary.
3. **Timing of the Review Board's work**

He had told the Board that he hoped its work could be completed in time for an overall report to be presented to the Intersessional Committee at its April meeting. On the other hand, the Board would make a very thorough review and might be unable to finish by that time. At his request, the Board had therefore agreed to give first priority to the question of grading so that a report on it could be presented to the Intersessional Committee and if necessary to leave until later the question of permanent appointments which, in his view, was not so urgent.

**ANNEX**


Replacement of temporary indefinite appointments by permanent appointments.

34. The CONTRACTING PARTIES should authorize the Executive Secretary to apply the relevant provisions of the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations concerning the granting of permanent appointments. The practice of granting temporary indefinite appointments would be discontinued and the appointments would in future be made as in the United Nations on the basis of probationary, permanent, fixed-term or conference (or similar short-term) contracts.

35. The Working Party considered a suggestion to the effect that the structure of the secretariat should include a certain proportion of fixed-term appointments as against permanent appointments. The Working Party felt that it was not possible or advisable at this Session to fix any rigid rule concerning this point and it instructed the Executive Secretary to ask the Review Board, which he intends to set up, to advise him with respect to the granting of permanent appointments and to express their views as to the most appropriate system to be applied in the case of the secretariat of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.
36. The Working Party recommends that the report of the Review Board, together with any comments which the Executive Secretary desires to make, should be submitted to the Intersessional Committee and that the Intersessional Committee be authorized to take any policy or financial decisions which may result from the recommendations made by the Review Board.

37. Permanent appointments would be granted for the present members of the staff in accordance with the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations; however, the functions of the Review Board as provided under Staff Rule 104.13 would be exercised by the Board, the composition and terms of reference of which are set forth in paragraphs 39-41 below.