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ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND  
THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

General co-ordination matters

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary  
Questions to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is one of several which the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions is submitting to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session on matters falling within the scope of agenda item 81, or having a bearing on interorganization co-ordination. The others are:

(a) The Committee's annual report on the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose agreements with the United Nations provide for transmittal of their budgets for review by the General Assembly. The budgets or budget estimates dealt with in that report relate to 1972;

(b) A report on the administrative and management procedures concerning the programme and budget of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/8447);

(c) The comments of the Advisory Committee on the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit covering the period 1 July 1970 - 30 June 1971 (A/8503); 1/

(d) A report on the standardization of the organizations' financial regulations governing external audit (A/8482). 2/

2. In chapter II below, the Advisory Committee deals with:

(a) The functioning of the central machinery for co-ordination in the past year;

(b) Developments in electronic data processing in the agencies during the past year and future plans;

(c) The productivity of the translation services of the United Nations and the agencies;

(d) The methods used by the United Nations and the agencies to allocate the extra costs which can arise when meetings are held away from Headquarters; and

(e) Reproduction facilities at Geneva.

3. When considering the functioning of the central machinery for co-ordination in the past year (chapter II (A)), the Advisory Committee took note of chapters XXI and XXII of the report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session, 3/ entitled "Development and co-ordination of the

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1/ Submitted under agenda item 82 (Implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies).

2/ Ibid.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly. Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/8403); and A/C.5/1394.

activities of the organizations within the United Nations system and relations with non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations" and "Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit", respectively.

4. In the light of Economic and Social Council resolution 1479 (XLVIII) the General Assembly may wish to request the Secretary-General to transmit this report to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination for information and comment.

5. The Assembly may also wish, as in past years, to request the Secretary-General (a) to refer to the executive heads of the specialized agencies and IAEA, through the consultative machinery of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), any matters arising out of this report and the discussion thereof in the Fifth Committee which call for attention by ACC; and (b) to transmit the report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit for their information.

6. Finally, the Assembly may wish to bring to the attention of the legislative organs of IAEA the report on the administrative procedures concerning the programme and budget of that organization, along with any related comments or action by the Fifth Committee or the Assembly itself.

## II. INTERORGANIZATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE CO-ORDINATION

### A. The central machinery for co-ordination

7. At the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee took note of the Secretary-General's report on bodies and organs established for purposes of administrative and budgetary control investigation and co-ordination (A/7938) and of the Advisory Committee's comments thereon. 4/ The Fifth Committee requested the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Joint Inspection Unit to take those reports into account, as appropriate. 5/ In the past year, States Members of the United Nations have given a great deal of attention to ways of bringing about better co-ordination of the Organization's multiple activities, and between them and those of the specialized agencies and IAEA. The concern with the effectiveness of the central machinery for co-ordination, particularly in the economic and social area, led to searching examinations in the Economic and Social Council and in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. At the inter-secretariat level, it found a reflection in the deliberations of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and its subsidiary bodies.

8. The major developments of the year were as follows:

(a) The Economic and Social Council carried out an extensive review of its organization of work, which culminated in a series of resolutions. In resolution 1621 A (LI), the Council looked forward to an eventual doubling of its membership, and took steps to double at once the number of Governments participating in its work; it decided to review its co-ordinating machinery, including the possibility of holding intersessional meetings of its Co-ordination Committee to deal with tasks currently entrusted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. In resolution 1622 (LI) the Council recommended action by the General Assembly intended to clarify the Council's role of review and decision in economic, social, scientific and technical matters; in particular, the Council referred to the need for greater precision and efficiency in the exercise of its regulatory and co-ordinating functions, and recommended that the Assembly instruct it to propose effective measures to remedy "present shortcomings" in the co-ordination of economic and social development programmes. Further, in resolutions 1623 (LI) and 1624 (LI), the Council acted to improve its working methods and its documentation.

(b) The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination completed its review of the sphere of activities and competence of ACC. 6/ The Economic and Social Council

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4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda item 79, document A/8131.

5/ Ibid., document A/8265, para. 13 (a).

6/ See the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on its eighth and ninth sessions (Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 5, (E/4989); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 9 (E/5038).

adopted, with amendments, a resolution recommended by CPC which addresses a number of specific requests to ACC and sets out the manner in which the Council wishes it to operate (resolution 1643 (LI)).

(c) On the proposal of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Economic and Social Council recommended guidelines for the establishment of the World Tourism Organization; the Council expressed the view that that Organization should have "the decisive and central role" in world tourism, in co-operation with the existing machinery within the United Nations, and recommended that the Secretary-General propose measures to improve the planning and co-ordination of activities undertaken in tourism by the United Nations system.

(d) The Economic and Social Council decided that, at its summer session each year, it should examine in depth the reports of two or three of the specialized agencies; it expressed the view that, over a five-year period, the reports of all the agencies should receive such detailed consideration (resolution 1642 (LI)).

9. The Advisory Committee believes that the interest shown by Member Governments during the past year in co-ordination and related matters bears witness to the importance they assign, especially at the outset of the Second United Nations Development Decade, to the orderly operation of the United Nations system and, in particular, to getting maximum advantage from the resources made available to it.

10. The series of resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council on the organization of its work - some of which are in the form of recommendations to the General Assembly at its current session - provide a legislative framework which should place in a clearer perspective the co-ordination role conferred on the Council by Article 63 of the Charter. Moreover, the streamlining of the Council's working methods may give it more time to investigate and to reflect on the myriad related activities of the United Nations system and to act quickly to counter centrifugal tendencies. In this connexion, the Committee welcomes the Council's intention to carry out periodic "in depth" studies of the agency reports. The Council's decision on the proposed World Tourism Organization is proof of its concern lest existing co-ordination problems be exacerbated by the creation of new organs.

11. The experience of recent years has been that co-ordination has become more difficult as the volume and scope of the activities of organizations in the United Nations system have expanded. Since that expansion seems likely to continue, the task of co-ordination is unlikely to become easier. This is a challenging prospect, particularly in view of the Economic and Social Council's judgement - with which the Advisory Committee would agree - that the existing situation is unsatisfactory (see Council resolution 1622 (LI)). Nevertheless, the difficulties were foreseen at least in part when the United Nations Charter was drawn up and later when the agreements were negotiated between the United Nations and the agencies. The system was conceived as an entity, each of whose component parts would function in relation to all the others, and not in a vacuum. The Advisory Committee considers that concept equally valid today; however, if it is to become a working reality, genuine efforts are needed by the secretariats of the organizations, on the one hand, and by the Member States, on the other.

12. As far as the secretariats are concerned, the situation has been clarified by the review of the sphere of activities and competence of ACC, which is referred to in paragraph 8 (b) above. The related resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council calls on ACC, inter alia, to provide more information than in the past on the workings of the system, and in particular to call the Council's attention to unresolved problems and other difficulties. The Advisory Committee notes that before the Council's action, ACC had indicated its willingness to add to the information which it regularly provides to the Council and to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. 7/ Moreover, the Advisory Committee is encouraged by the better understanding reached by ACC and CPC at their joint meetings in Geneva on 1 and 2 July 1971. 8/

13. The best form of co-ordination is positive co-ordination. This involves the joint elaboration of programmes and projects so that the activities of all interested parties are taken into account from the outset, thus removing the need for difficult and costly attempts at ex post facto co-ordination. Positive co-ordination can sometimes be encouraged by consultation among the secretariats, within the framework of ACC. However, a basic requirement is that the legislative bodies of each of the organizations, when discussing proposed new activities, take fully into account the responsibilities of other organizations. It is also essential that representatives of Member States on such legislative bodies, be they generalists or technicians, view the United Nations system as an integrated one and act accordingly. It is unproductive for delegations to urge greater co-ordination of effort in the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly if their approach in the legislative bodies of the agencies is influenced mainly by sectoral considerations.

#### Other matters

14. In paragraph 12 above, the Advisory Committee has referred to the desire of the Economic and Social Council for more extensive reporting by ACC. The thirty-seventh report of ACC (E/5912), prepared for the fifty-first session of the Council, deals separately with programme questions, the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, public information matters and administrative questions; some other matters are dealt with in a fifth section. The Advisory Committee notes that the treatment of programme matters is largely descriptive; however, in one area - the application of space technology - the report points to the possible emergence of co-ordination difficulties, which would be kept under review by the machinery of ACC.

15. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note from the subsection of the report on financial and budgetary questions that ACC and its subsidiary bodies are continuing their efforts to get agreement throughout the system on the implementation of certain of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. The Committee notes the recommendation of ACC that those organizations which face no constitutional obstacles change to a two-year budget cycle as soon as possible, and that others

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7/ Letter dated 7 May 1971 from the Secretary-General, Chairman of ACC, to the Chairman of CPC (E/5045/Add.1).

8/ See the report of the joint meetings (E/5045).

try to produce comparable information on a two-year basis. The ACC adds that "The process of budgeting and programming and its synchronization would be greatly helped if the United Nations were to adopt biennial programme budgeting". 9/ This is a question on which the Advisory Committee will report separately to the General Assembly at its current session.

16. Separate ACC reports to the Economic and Social Council dealt with the "green revolution" in agriculture (E/5012 (part II)), recent developments in the use of computers and common information needs in the United Nations system (E/5013, Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1), and expenditures of the system in relation to programmes (E/5014). The Advisory Committee is reporting separately to the General Assembly on the subject of computers, particularly in the context of the new International Computing Centre at Geneva. The Committee notes that, in its report on expenditures, ACC used a new, less arbitrary classification of activities; in its resolution 1646 (LI), the Economic and Social Council welcomed this new format, which it believed would be "helpful to the Council in carrying out its policy-making and co-ordinating roles".

#### Joint Inspection Unit

17. At its twenty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided to continue the Joint Inspection Unit on the existing experimental basis for a further two years beyond 31 December 1971 (resolution 2735 (XXV)). At its twenty-seventh session, in 1972, the Assembly intends to examine further the future of the Unit; thus, those parties whose views the Assembly wishes to have before taking its decision - the Secretary-General (as Chairman of ACC), the governing bodies of the agencies, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Joint Inspection Unit itself - will have to formulate their attitudes during the next 12 months.

18. In its first report to the Assembly on the budget estimates for 1972, the Advisory Committee reported on the contacts it had had with the Joint Inspection Unit and the reports which it had considered in the past year. 10/ Since then, the Committee has received other reports by the Unit, some of which are to be considered by the General Assembly at its current session. 11/ The Advisory Committee looks forward to meeting with the Joint Inspection Unit again at its session at Geneva in May 1972.

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9/ E/5012 (part I), para. 72.

10/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/8408 and Corr.1 and 2), paras. 63-65.

11/ Report on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (A/8446); report on United Nations documentation and on the organization of the proceedings of the General Assembly and its main bodies (A/8319 and Corr.1); report on recurrent publications of the United Nations (A/8362).

## B. Electronic data processing

19. In recent years, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has followed with interest the increasing use of electronic data-processing equipment by organizations in the United Nations system. The Committee has sought in particular to promote co-operation between those organizations which have felt the need to develop and use computer techniques. The Committee believes that an integrated, co-operative approach to the possibilities offered by computerization - in administrative as well as substantive areas - is essential at this relatively early stage in order to avoid unnecessary expenditure and to ensure that organizations do not develop incompatible systems and methods. For these reasons, the Committee supported the establishment, early in 1971, of the International Computing Centre at Geneva, in which the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme have become full partners, and urged that, to the extent possible, other organizations which were using or which proposed to use computer techniques join the three founding partners of the Centre and dispense with computers of their own.

20. To provide the General Assembly with a broad view of the present and prospective situation in the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Advisory Committee, in 1971, asked each of them for information on their present computer activities and plans for the future. The data provided show clearly that the use of computer techniques continues to expand appreciably: traditional computer applications are being more widely used and new ones are regularly being added. In addition, the costs - especially in terms of equipment rented or purchased, and labour - continue to rise. It is difficult to determine whether such costs are always commensurate with the undoubted benefits that the new techniques can offer. However, the general view of the executive heads of those agencies which have computerized to a greater or lesser degree is that the costs are fully justified by the advantages; moreover, for certain specialized tasks the use of computers is regarded as essential, because traditional methods are unable to provide quickly enough the information management needs.

21. The Advisory Committee believes that the following table, showing which agencies are using computers and the extent to which installations are shared, will be of interest to the General Assembly. It is based on information provided in varying detail by the organizations. Account has not been taken of the United Nations, WHO and UNDP, which, as noted above, share the large computer (IBM 360/65) of the International Computing Centre at Geneva. The United Nations also operates its own residual computing centre in New York (IBM 360/40), which carries out work for UNDP.



<u>Organization</u>	<u>Computer type</u>	<u>Date computer first acquired</u>	<u>Uses outside computer</u>		<u>Computer used by other bodies</u>	
			<u>In United Nations system</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>In United Nations system</u>	<u>Other</u>
International Labour Organisation . . .	IBM 360/40	1966	ICC Geneva <u>a/</u>	-	WMO	-
Food and Agriculture Organization . . .	Honeywell 1250	1969	-	yes <u>b/</u>	-	-
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization . . .	ICL 1902 A	1970	-	-	-	-
International Civil Aviation Organization . . .	- <u>c/</u>	- <u>c/</u>	-	-	-	-
Universal Postal Union . . . . .	-	-	-	- <u>d/</u>	-	-
International Telecommunication Union . . . . .	UNIVAC 1050 Model III <u>e/</u>	1962	ICC Geneva	- <u>f/</u>	-	-
World Meteorological Organization . . .	-	-	ICC Geneva ILO <u>g/</u>	-	-	-
Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization	-	-	-	-	-	-
International Atomic Energy Agency. . .	IBM 360/30 <u>h/</u>	1965	-	-	UNIDO	- <u>i/</u>

a/ Used the computer of the International Computing Centre to a very limited extent during the period 1 March to 31 July 1971 (A/C.5/1378 and Corr.1, appendix 3).

b/ Since September 1970, has used a terminal connected to an outside computer for certain applications.

c/ Has invited tenders for a small computer.

d/ Has in the past used an outside computer for special tasks.

e/ To be replaced early in 1972 by a Siemens 4004/Model 135 (262 K).

f/ Has used "other facilities" for non-recurring or special tasks.

g/ May also use UNESCO's computer for its Integrated Global Ocean Station System.

h/ Has placed letter of intent to substitute an IBM 370/145 from mid-1972.

i/ Has done small amount of work for various clients.

22. Leaving aside the Centre at Geneva and the United Nations computing centre in New York, five of the organizations operate their own computers. 12/ A sixth organization (ICAO) is preparing to do likewise, while two agencies (ITU and IAEA), which have operated computers for some years, intend to replace them shortly with more powerful models. The ILO installed a larger computer (the IBM 360/40 shown in the table) in December 1970.

23. Thus, the United Nations and the ten agencies currently operate seven separate computer installations in five cities: New York (United Nations), Geneva (the International Computing Centre), the ILO and ITU), Rome (FAO), Paris (UNESCO) and Vienna (IAEA). Only four of those installations carry out significant amounts of work for more than one organization: the International Computing Centre, the United Nations centre in New York, the IAEA computer and (to a lesser extent) that of the ILO. It can therefore hardly be said that, from the viewpoint of sharing equipment, a common approach has yet developed. Agencies such as FAO, UNESCO and IAEA point to their geographical location as a justification for investing in their own equipment; communications problems have so far rendered difficult the joint use of computers in distant cities. The FAO intends to use the International Computing Centre to the extent possible for work requiring a large machine: UNESCO informed the Advisory Committee that, when high-speed data transmission in Europe becomes economical, it intends gradually to give up its computer and use the Centre; the Director-General of IAEA would favour full participation of the Agency in the Centre if it could be shown that the costs would be less than those of its own machine while maintaining comparable efficiency.

24. The argument of communications difficulties has been a valid one in the past - at least in Europe. But the concept of large, central electronic data-processing units serving a number of clients in different locations now appears to be accepted and should accelerate the improvement of the communications systems. Moreover high-speed data transmission is not essential for all computer applications; thus UNDP, with its headquarters in New York, has found it possible to use the Centre at Geneva, to which it sends data by air mail; WMO and UNESCO are contemplating a system for joint support of the Integrated Global Ocean Station System that would use both the Centre's machine at Geneva and that of UNESCO in Paris. The Advisory Committee urges, therefore, that the feasibility (technical and economic) of using the International Computing Centre should be kept under constant review by those agencies whose headquarters are geographically remote from Geneva.

25. In Geneva, where there are three separate computer installations (the Centre, the ILO and ITU) and where four of the agencies have their headquarters, the immediate possibilities for the sharing of equipment seem greater. However, both ITU and the ILO have decided to retain their independent computer capability. To maintain its master register of radio frequencies, the International Telecommunication Union considers it essential to have "a computer suitable for its purposes and under its management". 13/ The Director-General of the ILO considers that the Organisation should maintain sufficient "in-house" computer capacity to deal with applications on which the ILO operations have become entirely dependent, and which require prompt and uninterrupted processing and maximum flexibility of

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12/ In most cases the equipment is rented from the manufacturers.

13/ See ITU, Administrative Council resolution No. 679.

scheduling, and also to handle tasks where user units need continuous close contact with the computer staff and ready access to the machine. This view has been endorsed by the Governing Body of the ILO and the International Labour Conference.

26. The Director-General of the ILO has assured the Advisory Committee that, while retaining a medium-range computer in the ILO, he does not intend to install a large computer even if the volume and complexity of the work to be done increase substantially. The ILO would take full advantage of outside facilities - in the first instance of the International Computing Centre - for such work as the Organisation's machine could not handle itself. In the case of ITU, the Advisory Committee, in 1970, suggested that, in the light of decisions being taken within the United Nations system to rationalize computer use - notably through the creation of the Centre at Geneva - the Union's Administrative Council might with advantage review its decision to acquire a larger computer (A/8155, paras. 121-128). But that decision has been maintained and the larger machine is scheduled to be installed early in 1972. The Committee has been informed, however, that the Union uses the International Computing Centre and other facilities for non-recurring tasks or tasks which require a substantially larger and faster computer than the one installed (or to be installed) by ITU.

27. Since the inauguration of the International Computing Centre, progress towards the sharing of equipment has been disappointing, but the effort being made by the agencies to work out compatible computer systems and methods is more encouraging. A major role has been assumed by the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities, which was set up at the same time as the Centre. Most of the agencies are participating in the work of the Board and several of them are members of task forces which it has appointed to develop common computer techniques. In addition, the ILO is working jointly with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FAO, UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop further its Integrated Scientific Information System (ISIS) for document storage and retrieval. The WMO has developed systems which are of interest to other organizations for the computer preparation and updating of multilingual glossaries of technical terms and definitions. The Advisory Committee welcomes these developments.

28. In those agencies which operate computers of their own, the past year has seen a steady increase in their utilization. Many of the uses are administrative: payrolls, accounts, personnel information, pension fund statistics. Others are concerned with speedy storage and retrieval of information. A third category is more substantive in character: the elaboration of mathematical models and projections, the compilation of statistical reports, the analysis of replies to questionnaires, the monitoring of reports by Governments under the terms of Conventions, etc. An increasing amount of computer time is devoted to substantive matters, although the more traditional administrative applications still constitute the bulk of the work done by the agencies' computers. As machine capacity expands, the temptation to use the computer unnecessarily for tasks which can be done as well and more cheaply by other methods will increase. The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that, before adopting new computer applications, the executive heads consider thoroughly the cost-benefit relationship.

29. In this context, submerged costs of computerization must not be forgotten. The expenses are not confined to the rental or purchase of the machine and the cost of housing and maintaining it and providing expendable supplies. Systems

development and programming account for an appreciable part of the cost of computerization. In the budgets of most of the agencies, the total cost of computerization is not identifiable by the legislative bodies whose consent is sought to computer proposals submitted by the secretariats. The grouping of costs in an annex to the budget would therefore seem desirable.

30. The Advisory Committee recognizes that the benefits of computerization are more difficult to quantify. The Committee was informed that the ILO will save \$100,000 net in 1972/1973 by introducing a computerized test storage and amendment system that will reduce the need for repetitive retyping. Such specific economies, however, appear to be rare; in the United Nations system, the advantages of computerization seem to be to expedite decisions and improve the information available to management rather than to produce identifiable budgetary economies.

### C. Productivity of translation sections

31. In 1970, the specialized agencies and IAEA spent approximately \$10 million from their regular budgets on the translation (and related typing) of documents (A/8158 and Corr.1, paragraph 97). The magnitude of this expenditure prompted the Advisory Committee to inquire into the productivity of the translation sections of the agencies; in particular, the Committee sought to ascertain whether the experience of individual agencies might help other agencies to improve their productivity.

32. The average productivity, as reported by the specialized agencies, is summarized in the following table. The figures are given in words per day because, although agencies do have "standard pages", they are standard to the agencies concerned but not on an interagency basis. <sup>14/</sup> The data requested by the Advisory Committee were for revised-output averages (that is, output divided by number of translators and revisers: broadly speaking, one reviser revises the work of two translators). The Committee did not inquire into the methodology used by individual agencies in establishing their statistics; for instance, whether the figures are net of tables and lengthy quotations from previously translated documents, whether any system of weighting was used for difficult texts (as used to be the practice in some Geneva-based organizations), and whether the wordage applies to the original or the translation. For these reasons, and also because the statistics do not cover an identical space of time, they cannot be regarded as quite comparable.

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<sup>14/</sup> Sizes of "standard page": the ILO, WMO - 250 words; ITU, IMCO - 300 words; WHO - 315 words; UNESCO - 325 words; United Nations, UPU, IAEA - 330 words; ICAO - 400 words; FAO has no "standard page".

Productivity of translation sections a/  
(In words per day)

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Translation into</u>				
	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Other</u>
ILO <u>b/</u> . .	1,630	1,800	1,440	2,260	2,110 <u>c/</u>
FAO . . .	2,410	1,690	-	1,800	2,170 <u>d/</u>
UNESCO . .	1,120	1,370	1,180	1,370	860 <u>d/</u>
ICAO . . . .	1,980	1,340	-	1,480	-
UPU . . .	2,140	-	-	2,420	1,160 <u>d/</u>
WHO <u>e/</u> . .	2,030	1,310	-	1,050	-
ITU. . . .	1,650	1,650	-	1,650	-
WMO	1,800 - 2,500	1,800 - 2,500	-	1,800 - 2,500	-
IMCO	-	1,800	-	-	-
IAEA	1,440	1,400	1,040	1,630	-

a/ For United Nations see paragraph 41 below.

b/ Average for Conference Services Branch and Editorial and Translation Branch.

c/ German

d/ Arabic

e/ WHO warns that its figures represent raw averages of poor statistical quality.

33. The data in the above table apply to staff translators. The Advisory Committee was informed by most organizations that the productivity of freelance translators (many of whom are retired staff members) is comparable; in UNESCO's experience, however, the output of freelance translators is lower than that of staff translators.

34. The ILO does not employ full-time revisers. Apart from texts to be printed by letterpress, which are revised by the editors, only some 10 per cent of the texts translated are revised. Following a review in 1970, the structure and methods of work of the Editorial and Translation Branch are being changed. Translators and editors will be grouped into teams, corresponding to four different types of publications and documents: the International Labour Review, studies and manuals, official reports and records, and reports for technical meetings (together with other miscellaneous documents). Temporary transfers of staff between teams will be made to meet fluctuations in workload. The ILO hopes that these changes will increase productivity and improve standards of translation. Consideration is being given to expanding the documentation and reference unit which now consists

of one official. The feasibility of compiling a computerized multilingual glossary, perhaps in association with other Geneva-based agencies, is under study. Steps have also been taken to improve the scheduling of translation work during the year.

35. The Advisory Committee was informed by FAO that it had increased its productivity by 10 per cent in 1967 owing principally to self-revision for certain texts and the preparation of better terminology.

36. The low average output of the Arabic translation service of UNESCO was explained by the irregularity of workload and deficiencies of terminology; recent experience, however, indicates that output is rising. Generally speaking, the output of UNESCO's translators, irrespective of language group, would appear to compare unfavourably with that in other organizations. In its submission to the Advisory Committee, UNESCO stated that one reason for the low output is the careless referencing of texts by the substantive departments, which may make it necessary for the organization to strengthen its Reference Unit; other reasons adduced are cramped quarters and lack of adequate glossaries.

37. The reason for the higher output of the English translators in ICAO is that most translations into English are not revised.

38. The higher output of the English translators of WHO is also attributable to the absence of revision. The apparent low productivity of the French and Spanish translators of WHO reflects the fact that they also do technical editing and proof-reading. For French and Spanish translations, WHO has established a technical sub-unit, comprising physicians, chemists, engineers and other specialists, in addition to linguists.

39. Under consideration by WMO is the setting up of a small reference and terminology unit to save translators' time. Their high output has been attributed to the absence of revision (except for some texts translated by freelance translators) and to the fact that WMO recruits translators largely from the technical services of member States. In this way, the Organization can secure the services of technicians with the necessary linguistic skills, instead of having to rely on generalists.

40. The output of the translation services of IAEA is adversely affected by their being located in a separate building and by deficiencies in the original drafting and in referencing. The Agency also points to increasing recruitment difficulties and to the fact that translators recruited today have lower qualifications than those of 10 or 15 years ago.

41. The Advisory Committee did not ask the United Nations Office at Geneva for data on the productivity of its translators. The Committee was informed, by the Administrative Management Service, however, that their productivity is low, having declined over the years for a number of reasons, including the technical nature of the material, poor quality of some originals, overcrowding, short-comings in supervision and tendency towards perfectionism. The Office of Conference Services in New York has provided statistics for the first nine months of 1971 (separately for translation and revision), which are reproduced below. The Advisory Committee was informed that the statistics are net of tables and quotations, that no weighting was used and that they apply to original wordage. The productivity of revisers reflects the fact that their work included revision of several thousand pages of outside translations, some of which were of indifferent quality. The Advisory

Committee was informed also that productivity is higher (by about 10 per cent) during the General Assembly, when the workload is more even and the material easier (because of the large amount of meetings records). The Office of Conference Services is taking steps to increase output by improving the organization of work, training by experienced revisers, lighter revision of summary records etc; the use of computerized terminology lists is being considered.

(In words per day)

	<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>Spanish</u>
Translation . .	950	1,050	1,200	1,400	1,450	1,710
Revision. . . .	2,000	1,700	3,000	4,800	4,000	5,550

Revised-output averages would thus be of the order of 650 words per day for Arabic and Chinese, 860 words for English, 1,100 words for French and Russian, and 1,300 words for Spanish.

42. The output of translation sections depends on a number of factors. These include the technical difficulties of the original text, the quality of the drafting and referencing, the original language of the text (which may not be one of the official languages of the organization), scheduling (so as to avoid periods of unemployment), the quality and location of accommodation, the availability of dictating equipment and delays in typing. Some of these factors are beyond the control of the translation services.

43. None the less, an analysis of the figures provided by the agencies - statistically imperfect though they may be - shows that it is possible to improve output. The Advisory Committee questions the conclusion reached by an Ad Hoc Meeting on Language and Related Arrangements convened under the auspices of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in January 1969 that, since the output obtained in the different organizations was closely comparable in the languages commonly utilized, it must be accepted that there is little chance of increasing those levels of output except, to some extent, by improving the working conditions of translators and revisers.

44. The representative of one major agency informed the Advisory Committee that the output of the translation sections was largely a question of management-staff relations, that is, of morale. The Committee urges the organizations to devote special attention to this aspect.

45. The experience of several agencies shows that eliminating revision by "revisers" leads to a considerable improvement in average productivity. This is fully understandable, because the most experienced staff are thereby released for translation work. Besides, dispensing with revision should improve the morale of translators by fostering individual pride in their work for which they would be wholly responsible and accountable.

46. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that revision should normally be confined to:

(a) The work of probationer translators;

(b) The work of freelance translators and contract translations:

- (c) Documents which, because of their great length and/or urgency, have to be split up between several translators, in which case revision may be needed to ensure uniformity of terminology (see paragraph 48 below).

47. To promote greater identification of the translator with his work, the Advisory Committee also recommends that, especially in the larger agencies, translators be encouraged to specialize in particular subjects within the Agency's field of competence, and that documents on their subjects should, whenever possible, be assigned to them. With the same end in view, the Advisory Committee commends to all organizations the practice of WHO and WMO, where close working relationships appear to exist between language and substantive staff.

48. The splitting of documents among several translators should be avoided, if possible, as it leads to an impersonal approach to work.

49. The above recommendations would help to foster the self-esteem of translators and give them a stronger sense of participation in, and identity with, the work of the organizations which they serve. As a corollary, greater weight for purposes of promotion should be given to individual merit and less to seniority than has hitherto been the case.

50. The Advisory Committee also recommends that translation services should be instructed to report to the appropriate senior officials in each agency cases where badly drafted or poorly referenced texts are submitted for translation.

51. The compilation of glossaries and terminology lists appears to have received inadequate attention in many agencies. Greater emphasis should be put on this important aid to the productivity of the translators.

52. As stated in paragraph 33 above, most organizations feel that the productivity of freelance translators is approximately the same as that of staff translators. Several organizations also make use of contract translations. The Advisory Committee was informed that such translations often cost less than translations by staff members, but, as they usually require much more revision, the cost of the finished product remains about the same. The need to translate documents by specified deadlines also limits the use of contract translations.

#### D. Extra costs of meetings held away from headquarters

53. The extra costs of meetings held away from Headquarters have engaged the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations since the early years of the Organization. In its report of 18 December 1952 (A/2323), the Special Committee on Programme of Conferences deferred one of its main objectives as being "to explore all avenues of economy in connexion with meetings held outside headquarters". A few years later, the General Assembly decided, inter alia, in resolution 1202 (XII), that "as a general principle, meetings of United Nations bodies shall be held at the established headquarters of the bodies concerned". Exceptions were envisaged, one of which was that "Meetings may be held away from the established headquarters of any body in... cases where a Government issuing an invitation for a meeting to be held within its territory has agreed to defray, after consultation with the Secretary-General as to their nature and possible extent, the additional costs involved". The United Nations has since been guided



by this provision, which was reaffirmed in Assembly resolutions 2116 (XX), 2478 (XXIII) and 2609 (XXIV), with the modification that the Government concerned should agree to defray, after consultation with the Secretary-General as to their nature and possible extent, "the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved".

54. The specialized agencies and IAEA seem to be guided, in principle, by a desire to keep to a minimum the additional costs to the agency budgets, while at the same time seeking to keep the costs charged to the Governments of the host countries at a level which would not be prohibitive for potential host States.

55. Except for IAEA (see paragraph 58 below), there is little variation between the actual practices of the agencies. Governments of host countries are expected to provide certain basic facilities, such as premises for the meeting, offices for the secretariat of the conference, local transport, required equipment where available, personnel for maintenance and security services and, in some cases, local clerical staff. The agencies usually make provisions within their budgets for such costs as the travel expenses and allowances of staff members attending the meetings, preparation and printing of conference documents and reports and language facilities where the Government of the host country is not able to provide them.

56. The ILO and FAO specify in great detail the nature of the costs which would be charged to the Government of the host country and those for which the agency would be responsible. However, actual arrangements often vary depending on the resources at the disposal of the host Government. Other agencies (UNESCO, ICAO and WMO) apply the United Nations principle that the Government of the host country bears all the additional costs of holding the meeting away from headquarters.

57. Agencies which do not apply the United Nations formula do not necessarily spend more on meetings held away from headquarters than they would have done under the formula. For instance, the Advisory Committee was informed by IMCO that on two occasions when the Government of the host countries had provided free premises, furniture, equipment and the required local staff and IMCO paid the expenses of its own personnel and the necessary temporary Professional staff, the costs to the organization were, on balance, the same as they would have been had the conferences been held at headquarters.

58. The practice of IAEA differs somewhat from that of the other agencies. Originally, IAEA charged Governments of the host countries with all additional costs resulting from holding meetings away from headquarters. This practice placed the member countries further away from headquarters in Vienna at a greater financial disadvantage. A different system was therefore introduced for symposia and similar small conferences, whereby Governments of the host countries were charged a fixed amount (developed countries \$6,500, developing countries \$3,000 or less) for each such meeting. In 1971, with the introduction of programme budgeting, it was decided that meetings would be provided for in the budget a standard rate of \$7,000 for each symposium and that programmes would be charged with the costs which would have been incurred had the meetings been held at Vienna. Additional costs would be charged to a pool into which all government contributions would be paid. The Advisory Committee understands that the new arrangements are working well, although it is expected that there will be a deficit of about \$12,000 in the pool at the

end of 1971 owing to the rising costs of meetings. The Agency proposes to remedy the situation by increasing the budget provision for each symposium to \$8,000 and by raising the level of contribution of developed countries to \$7,500.

59. It appears to the Advisory Committee that, in general, the arrangements with regard to the costs of meetings held away from headquarters are satisfactory.

#### E. Reproduction facilities at Geneva

60. In its report on general co-ordination matters submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session, the Advisory Committee surveyed the internal production of documents in the United Nations system (A/8158 and Corr.1, paragraphs 83-105). At its 1417th meeting, the Fifth Committee agreed that the Secretary-General should explore with the heads of the specialized agencies at Geneva the formation of an interorganizational working-level group to co-ordinate publication schedules with a view to the more efficient utilization of existing publication facilities at Geneva. 15/

61. The Advisory Committee has been informed by the Secretary-General that the interorganizational working-level group has been constituted. The group surveyed the existing internal-reproduction capacities of the Geneva-based organizations and reached the conclusion that there was no unutilized capacity in the Geneva secretariats in 1971. Nevertheless the group recommended its continued existence and that it meet regularly in order to explore methods of improving the scheduling of the reproduction workload of the organizations, to study the possibility of transferring work from one organization to another so as to avoid unnecessary expenditure of funds, to co-ordinate the reproduction of documents in common use, and to discuss technical, administrative and other questions relating to the reproduction of documents.

62. The Advisory Committee understands that the working group's agenda for 1972 includes a study of the internal reproduction workloads with a view to ascertaining whether work can be transferred from the plant of one organization to that of another, and an exchange of views on how to reproduce documents of short press-runs rapidly, economically and flexibly. In this connexion, the organizations intend to compare the equipment already available to them. A further topic on the agenda is an assessment of reproduction requirements that would arise if Chinese were to become a working language.

63. The Advisory Committee trusts that the forthcoming discussions will lead to the setting up of co-operative arrangements between organizations. In this connexion, the Geneva-based organizations may wish to study the arrangements between IAEA and UNIDO, which appear to be working very satisfactorily.

64. The Advisory Committee recalled that in his report, Inspector Robert M. Macy discusses the relative advantages and disadvantages of internal reproduction versus external printing. 16/ The Committee will address itself to this report after it has received the related observations of the Secretary-General.

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15/ A/8265, para. (c).

16/ A/8362, paras. 30-34.