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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Revised estimates under section 4 in respect of the
United Nations Conference on Desertification

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its thirtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 3511 (XXX) "United Nations Conference on Desertification" providing, inter alia, that the cost of the Conference would be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations. In that connexion, the General Assembly had been informed by the Fifth Committee that additional appropriations not exceeding \$540,000 might be required under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977, but that the exact extent of those requirements was not as yet ascertainable and would be the subject of a separate submission by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session.
2. It will be recalled that when the matter was considered by the Fifth Committee, it had before it a statement by the Secretary-General 1/ containing an estimate of the additional expenditure which the holding of the Conference would involve. That estimate, amounting to a total of \$540,000, was based on a series of assumptions, including the assumption that "the languages of the Conference would be Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish". In its related report, 2/ the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had noted inter alia

1/ A/C.5/1719.

2/ A/10008/Add.15.

that at that early stage "it was very difficult for the Secretary-General to take into account the full impact of the United Nations year-round capacity for language services" and also felt that "there appeared to be a need for a careful review of the Secretary-General's assumptions on the volume of in-session documentation".

3. Subsequently, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), at its fourth session held in April 1976, adopted resolution 73 (IV), "United Nations Conference on Desertification". In that resolution, the Governing Council, inter alia, invited the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, when considering the financial and administrative implications for the United Nations regular budget of servicing the Conference, to give favourable consideration to authorizing the inclusion of Arabic as a working language of the Conference. At its sixty-first session, the Economic and Social Council invited 3/ the General Assembly to approve the recommendations contained in the report of the Governing Council of UNEP, and in particular those relating to the United Nations Conference on Desertification.

4. In accordance with the above decisions and requests, the Secretary-General now submits revised estimates for the Conference, taking into account the following developments which occurred subsequent to the previous session of the General Assembly:

(a) The recommendation by the Governing Council of UNEP and by the Economic and Social Council that Arabic be included as a working language of the Conference;

(b) A detailed review of the conference servicing requirements to be met by the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Department of Conference Services in New York; and

(c) The need to provide for a minimum level of information coverage with respect to the Conference, which, because of an oversight, had not been included in the initial estimates.

5. All other assumptions on which the initial estimates were based remain valid, namely:

(a) The main source of the financing for the preparations of the Conference rests with the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme, with additional funds being provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). The United Nations would be expected to provide direct conference servicing facilities;

(b) The Conference will be held at Nairobi over the period 29 August-9 September 1977 and will be immediately preceded by two days of informal consultations which would require interpretation and translation services;

(c) Invitations to participate in the Conference will be extended to all States, interested specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations

indicating an interest to participate, liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), organizations which have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices in the capacity of observers in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), the United Nations Council for Namibia, as well as interested non-governmental organizations;

(d) No summary records of the meetings of the Conference will be established;

(e) The premises for the Conference will be made available free of charge to the United Nations by the Government of Kenya.

6. On the basis of the above assumptions, the total cost of the Conference under the United Nations regular budget is estimated as follows:

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| (a) <u>Travel</u> | \$
21,000 |
| <p>It is estimated that the attendance of the following senior officials from Headquarters will be required during the Conference: the Secretary-General and three assistants for the official opening of the Conference (\$8,600); one senior official of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and one member of the Water Conference secretariat (\$6,100); one legal officer and two conference officers from New York for the duration of the Conference (\$6,300)</p> | |
| (b) <u>Travel of participants</u> | 4,000 |
| <p>In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of resolution 3280 (XXIX) on co-operation between the United Nations and OAU, it is proposed to provide for travel and subsistence costs incurred by representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by OAU</p> | |
| (c) <u>Temporary assistance for meetings</u> | |
| (i) <u>Interpretation</u> (\$272,600) | |
| <p>It is estimated that the schedule of meetings for the Conference will require the services of three teams of 18 interpreters each for Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. One team would arrive at the Conference site three days earlier in order to service the informal consultations. The corresponding cost to be incurred for 54 interpreters is estimated as follows:</p> | |
| <p>Travel</p> | |
| <p>45 interpreters from Geneva (\$91,400) and
9 Arabic interpreters from Cairo (\$7,200)</p> | 98,600 |

Subsistence	\$
18 interpreters for 20 days (including those needed for informal consultations) and 36 interpreters for 17 days	28,200
Salaries	
18 interpreters for 20 days (\$45,900) and 36 interpreters for 17 days (\$75,600)	145,800
	<u>272,600</u>

(ii) In-session documentation (\$377,200)

The number of pages to be issued in six languages during the Conference is estimated at 350, as follows:

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Daily Journal</u>	12
Draft report of the Conference for adoption by plenary	150
Conference room paper reporting on the outcome of the informal consultations held on the eve of the Conference	5
Report of the Committee	30
Report of the Credentials Committee	5
Resolutions, amendments and revised draft resolutions, and revisions to the draft plan of action to combat desertification	150
	<u>352</u>

The related costs of translating, typing and reproducing that documentation are analysed below, taking into account the fact that an advance party of six revisers and six stenotypists would have to be in Nairobi three days early in order to service the informal consultations:

	\$
38 translators: Travel (30 from Geneva and 8 from Cairo)	67,400
Subsistence	15,400
Salaries	57,500
	<u>140,300</u>

	<u>\$</u>
19 revisers:	
Travel (15 from Geneva and 4 from Cairo)	33,800
Subsistence (6 revisers for 20 days and 13 revisers for 17 days)	9,900
Salaries (6 revisers for 20 days and 13 revisers for 17 days)	46,000
	<u>89,700</u>
38 stenotypists:	
Travel (30 from Geneva and 8 from Cairo)	67,500
Subsistence (6 for 20 days and 32 for 17 days)	19,250
Salaries (6 for 20 days and 32 for 17 days)	50,450
	<u>137,200</u>
Documents reproduction and distribution staff	10,000
	<u>377,200</u>

(iii) Conference supervisory staff (\$77,800)

It is estimated that the services of the following staff would have to be obtained from Geneva: one Conference co-ordinator; one secretary from the Co-ordination Unit; one chief, Interpretation Service; one chief, Languages Service; three secretariat and clerical assistants for languages and interpretation units; one chief, conference room attendants; two documents reproduction supervisors; three documents distribution supervisors; two documents control clerks and two documents reference clerks. The related costs are estimated as follows:

	<u>\$</u>
Travel	34,400
Subsistence	11,900
Salaries	31,500
	<u>77,800</u>

(iv) Other supplementary staff (\$23,000)

Taking into account the staff which UNEP will provide from its own resources, it is estimated that the following additional staff, to be recruited locally, will be required: 20 secretaries, 10 messengers, 16 security guards and 6 conference room attendants. The corresponding cost is estimated at \$23,000.

(d) Overtime and night differential (\$4,000)

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\$

(e) General operating expenses (\$97,250)

Rental and maintenance of equipment, including 42 typewriters and 5 copying machines for three weeks	4,250
Miscellaneous services:	
Local transportation	5,000
Freight (an estimated 10 tons from Geneva)	84,000
Hospitality	<u>4,000</u>
	<u>97,250</u>

(f) Supplies and materials (\$15,000)

It is estimated that this provision would include \$7,000 for 3,000 reams of in-session reproduction paper.

(g) Information coverage (\$21,095)

It is proposed to send to Nairobi an information team consisting of four staff from New York (one chief of information, one coverage officer, one radio officer and one desk editor) and five from Geneva (two coverage officers, one radio officer and two French typists/proofreaders). It is estimated that the above staff members would have to be absent from their duty stations for 19 (Geneva) and 20 (New York) days, respectively. During that period, temporary assistance funds would be required for the replacement of one radio officer and one coverage officer from New York, and one other coverage officer from Geneva.

The relevant costs are estimated as follows:

	\$
Travel	10,620
Subsistence	4,975
Salaries (replacements)	<u>4,000</u>
	<u>19,595</u>

In addition, it is proposed to hire locally a film team, with all equipment, for a period of five days at an estimated cost of \$1,500.

7. In summary, the total cost of the Conference is estimated at \$912,945, in accordance with the following breakdown by object of expenditure:

\$

(a) Temporary assistance:

Travel	301,700	
Subsistence	84,650	
Salaries	<u>368,250</u>	754,600
(b) Overtime and night differential		4,000
(c) Contractual services (public information)		1,500

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(c) Travel of participants		\$	4,000
(d) Travel of staff:			
	Substantive staff	21,000	
	Information staff	<u>15,595</u>	36,595
(e) General operating expenses			97,250
(f) Supplies and materials			15,000
			<u>912,945</u>

8. Pending the adoption of the 1976-1977 calendar of conferences by the General Assembly, it is not possible to determine to what extent the cost of conference servicing staff salaries (\$368,250) can be absorbed from within resources already allocated to the United Nations Office at Geneva or the Department of Conference Services in New York (in so far as Arabic language staff is concerned). These costs will be included in a consolidated statement to be prepared towards the close of the current session of the General Assembly, and which will recapitulate the estimated conference costs of all of the substantive decisions taken during the year, item by item, and would then show how much can be absorbed from within existing resources and the net additional appropriations required to service the revised level of meetings in 1977. Accordingly, an appropriation is being requested under section 4 at this time to cover only the balance of the requirements listed above, in a total amount of \$544,700.
