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ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

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Twenty-fifth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the tenth session of the General Assembly

1. In its first report<sup>1/</sup> to the tenth session of the General Assembly (A/2921, paragraphs 7 and 8),<sup>1/</sup> the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions stated that it would report separately on the organization and budget estimates for 1956 of the overseas offices after receiving the Secretary-General's conclusions on the review of those offices undertaken during 1955 by the Survey Group. The Advisory Committee has accordingly reported on the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/3006), the information centres (A/3031), and the European Office (excluding the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe) (A/3049). The present submission concerns the

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 7.

organization and budget estimates for 1956 of the secretaries of the three regional economic commissions and of the Technical Assistance Administration, which is also the subject of certain new proposals of the Secretary-General. For the reasons explained below, this submission represents no more than a preliminary memorandum to the General Assembly on the various proposals presented by the Secretary-General.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

2. In continuation of the 1954 survey of Headquarters departments, the Secretary-General constituted a group of four senior officials to undertake a review of the functions, organization and staffing of the main overseas offices of the United Nations. The Advisory Committee is glad to note that, following its suggestion of last year (A/2745, paragraph 6),<sup>2/</sup> which found wide support in the Fifth Committee, the Secretary-General invited Mr. R. Fenaux, of Belgium, and Dr. Sumitro, of Indonesia, to participate as additional members of the Survey Group, Mr. Fenaux participating in the survey of the European Office and of the Economic Commission for Europe, and Dr. Sumitro in the survey of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. The Committee also notes that besides Dr. Sumitro, only one other member of the Group was associated with the field survey of the ECAFE secretariat. The entire field survey covering the several offices extended over a period of some three months, from February to May 1955.
3. The findings and recommendations of the Survey Group on the secretariats of the regional economic commissions and the Technical Assistance Administration are contained in parts II and III of the report of the Survey Group of 15 November 1955. In his report on the organization of the Secretariat (A/3041), the Secretary-General concurs generally in the Survey Group's recommendations concerning the offices under review.

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<sup>2/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Annexes, agenda item 53, p. 15.

Comments on the Survey Group's report - Regional Economic Commissions

4. The Survey Group's report on the regional economic commissions covers a relatively wide field and contains some important conclusions, which are summarized in paragraphs 12 to 30 of the Secretary-General's report (A/3041). These conclusions fall into the following broad categories:

(a) Conclusions concerning the programmes and activities of the regional commissions in relation to their terms of reference;

(b) Recommendations designed to improve and strengthen the working relations between the Headquarters Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariats of the regional commissions;

(c) Recommendations involving a changed emphasis in the reporting responsibilities of the Headquarters Department and the regional commission secretariats;

(d) Recommendations for a strengthening of the regional commission secretariats reflecting a certain expansion in the work programmes and responsibilities of the commissions, including increased participation in the technical assistance programme;

(e) Recommendations for a large measure of decentralization of the organizational arrangements affecting work in the social fields;

(f) Recommendations for consequential changes in the organization and staffing of the Headquarters Department; and

(g) Recommendations aimed at a greater degree of rationalization or administrative streamlining of the offices under review.

5. It follows that some of the recommendations of the Survey Group have administrative and budgetary implications only and do not involve questions of substantive policy. Among recommendations of this nature which may be isolated are those touching ECE, where no changes are proposed either in the basic structure or in the responsibilities of its secretariat, and the Transport and Communications Division at Headquarters, in respect of which certain possible economies are attributable solely to considerations of prudent management.

6. But the more important of the Group's recommendations, which are covered largely by categories (b), (c), (d) and (e) above, may give rise to important and far-reaching considerations of substantive policy in the economic and social fields which are of interest to Governments of Members generally and, in particular, to the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary commissions and committees including the regional economic commissions.

7. The central problem in the relationship between the Headquarters Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariats of the regional economic commissions is the appropriate measure of regional autonomy consistent, on the one hand, with a unified United Nations policy and, on the other, with the increasing emphasis on the provision of direct assistance in the solution of problems affecting the development of the economically under-developed countries. This necessarily raises the further question of the nature and extent of the programme responsibilities of the regional economic commissions, particularly of ECAFE and ECLA, in relation to the programmes undertaken by the several functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The responsibilities vested in the regional economic commissions in regard to the social aspects of economic development and the Organization's general responsibilities concerning advisory social welfare services, as exercised primarily through the Social Commission, are relevant in this context. In addition to a strengthening of the regional economic commission secretariats in the field of economic development (including its social aspects), the Survey Group's proposals involve a considerable measure of regionalization of the arrangements for the provision of advisory social welfare services (paragraphs 161 to 173 of the Survey Group's report). It is thus suggested that such regional arrangements would, besides helping the regional secretariats to deal more adequately with the social aspects of economic problems, "allow stronger support to be given to technical assistance in the social field and to the programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund" (A/3041, paragraph 16). In ECAFE and ECLA, the Executive Secretaries will have the responsibility of preparing the work programmes in the social field in accordance with the basic policy directives and

the over-all requirements of the work programme of the Social Commission. The regional programmes which are approved successively by the Social Commission and the Economic and Social Council, will then be implemented under the direction of the Executive Secretary concerned. In the Middle East, the projected arrangements envisage the establishment of a Social Affairs Office under the direct supervision of Headquarters. Responsibility for the preparation of work programmes for the Middle East and their implementation would presumably rest with the Bureau of Social Affairs at Headquarters, assisted by the officers detailed to the area.

8. The question whether the work of the Organization in the social field should be undertaken on a regional basis in the same way as its responsibilities in the economic field - with its potential repercussions on the composition and terms of reference of the regional economic commissions - is too important, from a substantive point of view, to be resolved through a purely budgetary approach. Furthermore, this involves a change in the existing arrangements for effective liaison between the units responsible for the social programmes and Member States. Similarly, the relationships that exist in this field between the United Nations and the specialized agencies will need to be reviewed so as to be re-established at the most suitable points.

9. The proposals and considerations mentioned in the preceding two paragraphs have, in the Advisory Committee's view, far-reaching implications transcending the purely administrative and budgetary scope of management problems. They involve the appropriate allocation of responsibility for programming and planning functions, in addition to the question of the most effective organization and deployment of staffing resources for the successful execution of approved programmes. From this point of view, the full substantive implications of the Survey Group's proposals will need to be studied by the competent substantive organs and, in particular, by the Economic and Social Council, before these proposals can be adequately appraised from an administrative and budgetary point of view. From that angle, proposals such as the number and levels of staff should, of course, be considered exclusively by the General Assembly on the basis of proposals of the Secretary-General.

10. The Advisory Committee recalls in this connexion that the proposals which the Secretary-General made last year (E/2598)<sup>3/</sup> concerning the re-organization of the work of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields were reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its eighteenth session and approved in a formal resolution (resolution 557 A (XVIII) of 5 August 1954).<sup>4/</sup> The Committee is also aware of the growing emphasis within the United Nations programme, on the promotion of the economic and social development of under-developed countries and of the general approval by the Council of the policy of increasingly devoting the resources of the Secretariat to direct assistance to Governments in these fields. There is no evidence, however, that, within the framework of these broad principles, the continuing work programmes of the regional economic commissions have been subject to a basic review similar to that undertaken last year in respect of the Organization's work of a global nature in the economic and social field or that, with the apparent exception of providing information to the Social Commission about the implementation of some of these proposals (A/3041, paragraph 16), the proposals now made have been reviewed by the organs concerned with reference to their substantive implications.

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3/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eighteenth Session, agenda item 29.

4/ The relevant paragraphs of resolution 557 A (XVIII) read:

"The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered the Secretary-General's report on his review of the organization and work of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields and his memorandum on the control and limitation of documentation,

.....

"2. Endorses the approach adopted by the Secretary-General in the above documents to the problem of the concentration of the efforts and resources of the United Nations and the specialized agencies;

"3. Expresses its general approval of the suggestions relating to the priorities and programme set forth in sections II, III, IV and V of the Secretary-General's report;

"4. Invites the Secretary-General, taking into account the discussions in the Council:

.....

"(a) To pursue his review of the substantive work programme of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields and to furnish further reports to the Council; .....".

11. Account should be taken in this respect of the fact that the Survey Group's report was issued only about the middle of November. This also renders it difficult for Member States to make a detailed study of the proposals and reach final decisions during the short time remaining before the close of the current session of the General Assembly.

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee - Regional Economic Commissions

12. The foregoing considerations lead the Advisory Committee to recommend that consideration of the present proposals should be deferred to the eleventh session of the General Assembly to enable Governments of Members to study them in all their implications and, further, that the General Assembly, at its current session, should request the Economic and Social Council to study the substantive policy considerations, as distinct from considerations of a purely administrative character, related to these proposals and to report to the Assembly at its next session. The Advisory Committee proposes to present to the Assembly at its next session a further report in the light of the views expressed by the Council on these substantive considerations.

13. In making the foregoing recommendation, the Advisory Committee is aware of the possibilities open to the Secretary-General of undertaking, within the over-all budgetary appropriations to be approved for the year 1956, exploratory measures of a practical character with a view to testing the advantages and effectiveness of some of the proposals. Furthermore, it should be possible to implement within the present budgetary level, proposals, such as the one mentioned in paragraph 235 of the Survey Group's report, involving largely a rearrangement of existing staff resources within a regional commission secretariat in order to devote greater attention to the appraisal and promotion of economic development. The Committee is also confident that such of the proposed measures as are concerned with a streamlining of existing procedures and relationships will be implemented during 1956 although the Committee does not recommend at this stage any formal budgetary action for this specific purpose.

Comments on the Survey Group's report - Technical Assistance Administration

14. The comments and recommendations of the Survey Group, in part III of its report of 15 November 1955, relating to the Technical Assistance Administration are intended to reflect the following objectives:

(a) At policy levels, a closer degree of collaboration between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and TAA;

(b) At the working level, an improved use of the combined staff resources of TAA and the Department, including the regional commission secretariats; and

(c) The desirability of a separate retention of operational responsibilities in the hands of TAA.

15. The Secretary-General concurs in the Survey Group's findings, and states, in paragraph 32 of his report (A/3041), his conclusion that "for the time being at least, a formal merger of TAA with the recently reorganized Department of Economic and Social Affairs would offer little, if any, advantage in terms either of administrative economy or, more importantly, of the more efficient and expeditious prosecution of technical assistance programmes". The Secretary-General further states that, "on the contrary... any arrangement which would result in greatly enlarging the already extensive and complex responsibilities carried by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would be bound to create difficulties and delays to the detriment of technical assistance activities".

16. While this position is not entirely consistent either with the view expressed by the Advisory Committee during 1954 (A/2688, paragraph 225),<sup>5/</sup> or with the position generally taken by the Fifth Committee at its last session (A/2884, paragraph 20<sup>6/</sup>), it represents (with the important reservation mentioned above concerning the positive disadvantages of an immediate merger)

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<sup>5/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No.7.

<sup>6/</sup> Ibid., Annexes, agenda item 53, pages 46-47.



essentially the position which the Secretary-General took last year (A/2731, paragraph 11<sup>7/</sup>). The Advisory Committee is still inclined to believe that the normal arrangement should be a merger of TAA with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and it hopes that the maintenance of TAA as a separate entity will be the subject of further review at an appropriate time. The Committee also trusts that, independently of the proposals now made concerning the secretariats of the regional economic commissions and TAA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will continue to provide the essential substantive advisory services to TAA.

17. An important aspect of the Survey Group's proposals concerning the relationships between TAA and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, including its regional economic commission secretariats, is the proposed partial decentralization of the Programme Division of TAA. Under the proposed arrangements, certain functions and responsibilities of the present "area" offices of the Programme Division would be taken over by the Office of the Director of that Division; the residuary "area" units would be outposted to the regional commission secretariats, with the exception of the Middle East and Africa unit, which would continue to be located at Headquarters. Thus, TAA at Headquarters would be responsible, in addition to the over-all control of the programme, for financial and budgetary control, recruitment and administrative servicing of experts and fellows and publication and distribution of their reports, and organization of seminars. Substantive support for the programme would be drawn from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commission secretariats. It is stated in paragraph 333 of the Survey Group's report that the outposted "area" units of TAA would "co-ordinate and expedite TAA matters referred to the regional commissions" and would be "the channel through which TAA matters would be referred to and from the regional commissions". The Advisory Committee understands that it is also intended that these TAA units would participate in the activities indicated in paragraph 338 of the report as coming within the responsibility of the regional commission secretariats.

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<sup>7/</sup> Ibid., pages 2-3.

18. The arrangements described in the preceding paragraph are closely inter-related to the proposals concerning the regional commission secretariats. The considerations advanced in paragraphs 9-10 above seem to the Advisory Committee to be equally applicable to the proposed arrangements for the decentralization of TAA. Furthermore, the suggested arrangements might give rise to certain other questions. Thus, while the resident representatives of the Technical Assistance Board, the regional commission secretariats and the TAA units outposted to the regional commission secretariats would all have some clearly defined functions, there might be an area of responsibility, covering these three points of authority, which would be vague and ill-defined. This in turn would add to the problem of co-ordination within the United Nations itself. Any decentralization of TAA which results in an organizational structure parallel to, but not merged with, the structure of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its regional commission secretariats must be approached with caution. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee has some misgivings lest the arrangements lead to delays in the formulation and approval of requests and in the recruitment and servicing of experts, and especially if, as is to be expected, recipient Governments often prefer to deal directly at the highest level with TAA at Headquarters.

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee - Technical Assistance Administration

19. As in the case of the proposals concerning the regional commission secretariats, the recommendations relating to TAA involve, as stated above, substantive policy considerations which call for careful study by the appropriate programme organs such as the Technical Assistance Committee and the Economic and Social Council. The Advisory Committee is, therefore, reluctant to recommend the immediate adoption of these proposals, and suggests instead that their consideration should be postponed until the eleventh session to enable the Governments of Members to examine them closely and, further, that the General Assembly should request the Economic and Social Council to study the proposals in conjunction with those relating to the regional economic commissions. In

view of the fact that the regional economic commissions (with the possible exception of ECE), as well as TAA, have as their primary responsibility the provision of direct assistance, in various forms, towards the economic development of under-developed countries, it is only appropriate that the organizational arrangements best fitted to achieve these objectives should be regarded as a single problem.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR 1956

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION SECRETARIATS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

20. The Advisory Committee offers in the following paragraphs its recommendations concerning the 1956 budget estimates for the secretariats of the regional economic commissions and the Technical Assistance Administration. In accordance with the Committee's suggestion in the preceding paragraphs to defer final action on the Secretary-General's reorganization proposals, the budgetary recommendations that follow are based on the original estimates for 1956 submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/2904.<sup>8/</sup>

### Section 18 (chapter IV). Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe

	\$
Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General . . . . .	985,000
Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . .	985,000

Budget amounts  
(total for chapter)

\$			
937,188	1954	Posts authorized . . . . .	155
(actual expense)			
985,000	1955	Posts authorized . . . . .	155
985,000	1956	Posts requested . . . . .	155
985,000	1956	Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . .	155

8/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 5.

21. The Secretary-General's original estimate for 1956 amounts to \$985,000, the same amount as was approved for 1955. The small increase in the monetary provision for established posts resulting from salary increments and other related factors is offset by a corresponding decrease in the items for consultants and temporary assistance.

22. The Advisory Committee recommended in its report (A/3049) on the European Office an appropriation for chapter IV of section 18 in the amount of \$985,000 and expressed its confidence that, although this amount covers a slightly larger number of posts than is contemplated in the Secretary-General's revised estimates (A/3041, annex VI, page 6), the Secretary-General will in fact achieve all possible economy under this account. As pointed out in paragraph 5 above, the recommendations of the Survey Group directly concerning the Economic Commission for Europe are related solely to an administrative streamlining of the secretariat of the Commission, and do not give rise to any considerations of substantive policy. The Advisory Committee recommends this exceptional treatment of this estimate so as to be consistent with its general recommendations concerning the regional commission secretariats.

Section 21. Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East

Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General . . . . .	\$ 1,158,200
Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . .	1,158,200

Budget amounts

(total for section)

\$			
1,052,046	1954	Posts authorized . . . . .	154
(actual expense)			
1,152,800	1955	Posts authorized . . . . .	154
1,158,200	1956	Posts requested . . . . .	154
1,158,200	1956	Posts recommended by the	
		Advisory Committee . . . . .	154

23. The provision in respect of section 21 in the original 1956 budget estimates amounts to \$1,158,200 reflecting the costs of the establishment at its approved 1955 level. The Advisory Committee recommends an appropriation at the figure submitted by the Secretary-General of \$1,158,200.

Section 22. Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America

Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General . . . . .	\$ 1,015,100
Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . .	1,015,100

Budget amounts  
(total for section)

\$		
958,140	1954	Posts authorized . . . . . 133
(actual expense)		
968,800	1955	Posts authorized . . . . . 157
1,015,100	1956	Posts requested . . . . . 157
1,015,100	1956	Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . . 157

24. The original estimate for 1956 in respect of section 22 amounts to \$1,015,100 representing an increase of \$46,300 over the 1955 appropriation. Apart from an increase in the monetary provision for established posts, the major items entailing a higher expenditure in 1956 are home leave and rental of premises.

25. An appropriation of \$1,015,100, the figure submitted by the Secretary-General, is recommended for this section in respect of the year 1956.

Section 26. Technical Assistance Administration

26. Pending the receipt of proposals resulting from the survey of TAA and the regional economic commissions, the Advisory Committee recommended, in its first report to the tenth session of the General Assembly (A/2921, paragraph 194<sup>2/</sup>), a provisional appropriation of \$386,700 towards meeting anticipated costs under section 26. In presenting his reorganization proposals concerning TAA, the Secretary-General suggests (A/3041, paragraph 38) that, in view of the

9/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 7.

necessarily gradual implementation of the proposals, no change should be made in the 1956 budget estimates for TAA. In any case, since the Committee recommends, in paragraph 19, above, that further consideration of the proposals by the General Assembly should be deferred, it agrees that the 1956 budget estimates for section 26 should be maintained at the level previously recommended.

Other sections

27. As indicated in annex VI in document A/3041, the Secretary-General's reorganization proposals concerning the regional economic commissions and TAA have financial implications in respect also of certain other sections of the 1956 budget estimates. In keeping with its recommendation, in the first part of the present report to defer further consideration of the proposals, the Advisory Committee refrains from suggesting any action on the Secretary-General's revised estimates in respect of sections 8, 14, and 15.

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