

## Fourth report

International Computing Centre: 1991 budget estimates

[Original: English]

[1 November 1990]

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/45/9) on the 1991 budget estimates of the International Computing Centre (ICC). Prior to its consideration of this question, the Committee met with the Director of the Centre who provided additional information, including his annual report for 1989 and his interim report for 1990.
2. The total ICC budget estimates for 1991, which are denominated in Swiss francs, amount to SwF 16,930,000. This compares with a 1990 approved estimate of SwF 16,215,000.
3. As stated in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report, the total estimates in respect of the share of the United Nations for the use of ICC in the biennium 1990-1991 amount to \$US 4,952,700 at an exchange rate of SwF 1.61 to the United States dollar, in excess of the current appropriation of \$4,289,700 under section 28D (Office of General Services, Headquarters) of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that in view of the recent further depreciation of the United States dollar against the Swiss franc, the exchange rate for 1990 will average SwF 1.40 and for 1991 it is estimated at SwF 1.30; this would raise the estimate for the share of the United Nations to \$5,125,500. However, as indicated in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report, "based on experience, it is expected that actual expenditures for the biennium might show a significant decrease against projected funding estimates. Any adjustments required at the end of the biennium would be reflected in the second performance report on the programme budget for the 1990-1991 biennium." On this basis, the Committee has no objection to the 1991 estimates for ICC and the related share for the United Nations.
4. The discussion the Advisory Committee held with the new Director of the Centre revealed a number of institutional problems which the Committee believes should be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. For example, the Committee was informed that in September 1990 over 1,000 requests for service by participants were pending, some dating back to 1982. The Committee expressed serious concern about this state of affairs.
5. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the vacancy rate at ICC remains at over 40 per cent; 6 out of 15 Professional posts and 12 out of 28 General Service posts are vacant despite the increasing demand for service and the urgent need to respond more quickly to requests of participants. The Centre was therefore dependent on few experienced key staff working on advanced technology in a difficult working environment which is seriously hampering its effective functioning.

6. In view of the increasing demand of the participating agencies and the urgent need to provide the participants with universal and standard communication links to other networks, users and databases in a more effective manner, the Advisory Committee calls upon the Centre to expedite the recruitment of qualified staff to fill all vacant posts. In this connection, the Committee was informed that the Centre is now carrying out a major reorganization and that its structure and operation are being streamlined to respond adequately to the needs of the participants in developing more effective coordination in data processing and in performing their computing work. The Committee believes that the recruitment of qualified staff will also enable the Centre to implement the restructuring of its network services branch by separating the programming functions from the operational activities. The Committee trusts that the Centre will be fully staffed upon completion of its reorganization to respond quickly to the need of its participants.

7. In another area of concern, the Advisory Committee was informed that ICC is facing continued operational difficulties at the premises of the World Health Organization. The Committee trusts that appropriate arrangements will be made to solve these difficulties.

8. The Advisory Committee was informed about a serious breach in security at the Centre this year. The Committee considers that a highly reliable and secure operations environment is essential to provide proper and effective communications support to participants and trusts that the reorganization of the Centre, as indicated above, will improve the situation.

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that a Working Group has been established to study the objectives of the Centre and the role of the Management Committee. The Advisory Committee understands that the Working Group will meet shortly to examine whether the objectives and roles of the Centre and the Management Committee adequately meet the provisions of the ICC charter with due regard to the divergent interests of the participants. The Advisory Committee welcomes this review and requests the Centre to provide it with relevant information on further developments.

10. The Advisory Committee would like to point out that the Secretary-General's report on the 1991 ICC budget estimates does not contain any information with regard to the present administrative and operational status of the Centre and its current reorganization nor does it contain any information with regard to current or proposed staffing levels of ICC, including the proposed reclassification of posts. This information was made available to the Committee in separate documentation provided by the Director of the Centre. However, in future, the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly should include relevant information on the administrative and operational status of ICC as well as staffing information.