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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIAL NEW PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE 1980s FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.57

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. REQUESTS CONTAINED IN THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 9, 12 and 13 of the draft resolution contained in A/C.2/45/L.57, the General Assembly would:

(a) Endorse the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (operative paragraph 1);

(b) Decide to strengthen the Special Programme of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the Least Developed Countries and to provide that Programme with sufficient resources, over and above its existing level of resources, to enable the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to discharge effectively its mandate concerning the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s on a timely basis and provide the secretariat services specified in the report of the Secretary-General 1/ (operative paragraph 9);

1/ A/45/695.

(c) Request the Secretary-General, in conformity with paragraph 142 of the Programme of Action, to ensure the full mobilization and co-ordination of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action, in close collaboration with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the secretariats of the regional commissions and the lead agencies for the aid groups (operative paragraph 12);

(d) Request the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the role of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation in the United Nations development system and his mandate concerning the implementation of the Programme of Action, to provide his Office with the necessary facilities and support for activities related to the least developed countries (operative paragraph 13).

II. BACKGROUND

Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

2. The provisions of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s are reviewed in detail in the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Conference. ^{1/} The Programme of Action is a comprehensive statement of strategy and policy with the objective of the sustained development of the least developed countries. A basic and notable aspect is the recognition therein that development centred on human welfare is broader and more complex than a linear progression of growth, but that without economic growth none of the Programme's other objectives can be achieved. Other noteworthy and novel features of the Programme of Action include the basic principle that commitments should be measurable, transparent and amenable to monitoring; the establishment of a macro-economic policy framework to provide the basis for the structural transformation of the economies of the least developed countries; a new, more realistic approach to external resources, including a menu of options for external development assistance; a comprehensive treatment of the external debt of the least developed countries; and the need for strengthened and effective arrangements for implementation, follow-up and monitoring.

3. The recognition of effective follow-up and monitoring as a key to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action is a feature of major significance. The related mechanisms put into place must permit the monitoring of progress in fulfilling the commitments made by the least developed countries and development partners, must ensure that the global context is not neglected in national planning and action, and permit flexible responses to changes in the external environment, and must secure the active and enduring involvement of all parties.

A. Provisions for implementation, follow-up, monitoring and review of the Programme of Action for the 1990s

4. The Conference agreed on a three-tiered mechanism covering national, regional and global follow-up to monitor the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, set out in section VI therein. A common understanding underlying the provisions of the Programme is that the effectiveness of its implementation would stand or fall on the effectiveness of the follow-up mechanism at each of those levels. Those mechanisms, which have been viewed as complementary and mutually supportive, are to maintain focus on national situations and priorities, ensure responsiveness to changing exogenous conditions and provide for the sharing of national experiences as a basis for strengthening and deepening the development partnership. For them to be fully realized, all parties participating in the Conference have agreed that the review and monitoring mechanisms in place need to be adequately strengthened and supplemented and that appropriate linkages must be established between the various levels.

1. Follow-up at the national level

5. The core of responsibilities at the national level, the leadership for which devolves on the Governments of the least developed countries, is a more consistent and strengthened country review process, which should "continue as the principal means of policy dialogue and co-ordinating the aid efforts of development partners with the development programmes of the least developed countries, as well as mobilizing the required resources for their implementation. The UNDP Round Tables and World Bank Consultative Groups will continue to constitute the backbone of the process to translate the principles and commitments of the Programme of Action into concrete measures at the national level". The Programme of Action envisages that country review meetings should "discuss policy framework papers and national plans, take a comprehensive approach to the financial flows needed, considering, inter alia, the debt of the least developed country concerned and the possible need for debt and debt-service reduction" and that such country review meetings should be "convened every one or two years" and be "buttressed by adequate follow-up arrangements, including sectoral and other ad hoc consultations".

6. While this process requires specific action by UNDP and the World Bank, the Programme of Action calls for the UNCTAD secretariat to participate in the strengthened process of country meetings in relation to its responsibility for the global review process, and for ensuring the necessary linkages in follow-up at the various levels.

2. Follow-up at the regional level

7. The Programme of Action envisages a new specific mandate for the United Nations regional commissions within their areas of competence to monitor progress in economic co-operation between least developed countries and other developing countries, particularly countries in the same region, in close co-ordination with UNCTAD. It calls for them to organize cluster meetings regularly, preferably every two years, with all countries concerned, "in order to improve and strengthen existing co-operation arrangements at the regional and subregional level". The

Programme also calls on the regional commissions to ensure that the needs and problems of the least developed countries are addressed as part of their ongoing work and, in this manner, to contribute to the follow-up process. UNCTAD is requested to provide support to the process at the regional level.

3. Follow-up at the global level

8. In co-operation with other organizations concerned, organs and agencies of the United Nations system, UNCTAD would serve as the focal point for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and the follow-up at the global level. As noted above, it is also to provide support at the regional level, and to make the necessary links between the national and global levels. Each session of the Trade and Development Board would review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries would conduct a mid-term review of the situation of the least developed countries and report to the General Assembly on progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and consider new measures as necessary.

4. Overall arrangements for co-ordination within the United Nations system

9. The Programme of Action calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close collaboration with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and the lead agencies for the aid groups, to "ensure at the secretariat level the full mobilization and co-ordination of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for the purpose of implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action", and for the establishment or strengthening of least developed country focal points in each United Nations agency to ensure their involvement in the implementation of the Programme of Action throughout the 1990s.

10. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation will continue to discharge his responsibilities regarding the least developed countries, particularly in co-ordinating and mobilizing the activities of organizations of the system in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the 1990s, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and the lead agencies for the aid groups. He will continue to maintain contact with, and provide guidelines to, resident co-ordinators in the least developed countries regarding arrangements for system-wide collaboration at the country level. The Director-General will also ensure, within the United Nations, the coherence, co-ordination and efficient management of the activities of the United Nations secretariat entities in respect of the Programme of Action for the 1990s.

11. It would be the intention of the Director-General, on behalf of the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, to sensitize and mobilize support for the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action, particularly in the context of attaining the resource targets identified therein. The Director-General, in consultation with the

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Secretary-General of UNCTAD and other concerned organizations of the United Nations system, will also organize the necessary inter-agency meetings to ensure coherent and co-ordinated implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action. The Office of the Director-General will closely follow activities at the regional and country level in order to ensure the overall co-ordination of programmes system-wide.

III. MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED TO THE APPROVED PROGRAMME OF WORK

12. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.57, the programme of work approved for 1990-1991 would be modified as indicated below.

Section 5A. Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation

13. The responsibilities relating to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation falling under section 5A of the programme budget for 1990-1991 would be revised as follows:

Section 5A. Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation

A. Global economic and social issues

Paragraph 5A.5 (d) (i) would be replaced by the following: "The Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s."

Section 11. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

14. Activities to be undertaken in the ESCAP region would fall under chapter 10 (Development issues and policies), programme 7 (Development issues and policies in Asia and the Pacific), subprogramme 3 (Special measures in favour of the least developed countries), of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1991, and section 11 (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), programme 3 (Development issues and policies in Asia and the Pacific), subprogramme 3 (Special measures in favour of the least developed countries), of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. The activities approved in the programme budget for 1991 in respect of least developed countries are detailed below, as well as new activities which would be added to the work programme in the light of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.57:

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Programme 3. Development issues and policies in Asia and the Pacific

Subprogramme 3. Special measures in favour of the least developed countries

3.1 Monitoring and review of progress in the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, and assistance in the development of related programmes and policies in the least developed countries of the region

Output:

(a) Report to the Commission on the socio-economic performance of the least developed countries of the region within the context of the Substantial New Programme of Action (first quarter 1991).

(b) Operational activities: Support to member countries for the improvement of project planning and implementation capabilities in the least developed countries (1991).

New outputs to be added in 1991:

Add: (c) Monitor progress in economic co-operation between least developed and other developing countries in the region in the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

Add: (d) Substantive servicing of cluster meetings to improve co-operative arrangements at the regional and subregional level.

3.2 In-depth studies on problems of special concern to the least developed countries of the region

Output:

(a) Technical publication: Studies on efforts for the mobilization of domestic savings and on financial resource requirements of the least developed countries of the region (1991).

(b) Operational activities: Support to member countries for the assessment of efforts to mobilize domestic savings in least developed countries of the region, through studies, training and seminars, and for the assessment of financial resource requirements for the development of the least developed countries of the region, through studies, training and seminars.

New output to be added in 1991:

Add: (c) In-depth study on the structural problems of least developed countries.

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa

15. Activities to be undertaken in the ECA region would fall under chapter 10 (Development issues and policies), programme 3 (Development issues and policies in Africa), subprogramme 3 (Least developed countries), of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1991, and section 13 (Economic Commission for Africa), programme 3 (Development issues and policies in Africa), subprogramme 3 (Least developed countries), of the programme budget for 1990-1991. The activities approved in the programme budget for 1991 in respect of the least developed countries are detailed below, as well as new activities which would be added to the work programme in the light of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.57:

Programme 3. Development issues and policies in Africa

Subprogramme 3. Least developed countries

3.1 Advisory services to least developed countries

Output:

(a) Operational activities: Advisory missions to African least developed countries, upon request, for the preparation and organization of donors' meetings and round tables in project preparation, plan preparation and evaluation (2 missions in 1991).

3.2 Review of economic and social conditions in individual least developed countries in Africa

Output:

None for 1991

3.3 Progress reports on the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries and the long-term development strategies and policies in the 1990s for the least developed countries*

Output:

(a) Substantive servicing of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the African Least Developed Countries and of the meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries (second quarter, 1991).

(b) Report to the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries on an assessment of the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in the context of the long-term development

* Highest priority.

strategies and policies of the African least developed countries in the 1990s (second quarter, 1991).

New outputs to be added in 1991:

Add: (c) Monitor progress in economic co-operation between least developed and other developing countries in the region in the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

Add: (d) Substantive servicing of cluster meetings to improve co-operative arrangements at the regional and subregional level.

3.4 In-depth studies on the economies of the least developed countries

Output:

Report to the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries on agricultural pricing policies in African least developed countries (second quarter, 1991).

Section 15. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

16. The activities relating to UNCTAD would fall under chapter 16 (International trade and development finance), programme 6 (Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries), subprogramme 1 (Least developed countries), of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1991, and section 15 (UNCTAD), programme 8 (Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries), of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. The activities approved in the programme budget for 1991 in respect of least developed countries are detailed below, as well as new activities which would be added to the work programme in the light of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.57:

Programme 8. Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries

Subprogramme 1. Least developed countries

1.1 Implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries

Output: None for 1991

1.2 Preparation for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, 1990*

Output: None for 1991

* Highest priority.

1.3 Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries*

Output:

(a) Report to the General Assembly on follow-up to the Conference (second quarter, 1991).

(b) Technical publication: annual report on least developed countries (third quarter, 1991).

Existing output (a) would be strengthened to read: Report of the least developed countries to the Trade and Development Board and the General Assembly containing reviews of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and proposals for ensuring its effective implementation (fourth quarter, 1991).

New outputs to be added in 1991:

Add: (c) Substantive contributions would be made to the follow-up and monitoring process at regional and sub-regional levels by the regional commissions.

1.4 Substantive contributions to country review meetings

The existing service provided under this programme element would be strengthened to read: Participation will be ensured in and substantive contributions provided to all country review meetings; close consultation and co-ordination will be maintained with other international bodies concerned - in particular, UNDP and the World Bank; assistance will be provided to individual developing countries in assessing technical co-operation needs and in the formulation of related projects and programmes.

New output to be added in 1991:

Add: (a) Report to the Trade and Development Board, regional commissions, country review meetings, Governments of least developed and donor countries, covering, inter alia: economic and social performance of least developed countries, progress in the development and implementation of a macro-economic policy framework, and country policy framework plans and country level co-ordination arrangements in support of the global and country review processes (third quarter, 1991).

* Highest priority.

1.5 Analysis of specific trade and development issues

Output:

(a) Technical publications on: (i) import cost-saving measures (one, third quarter, 1991); (ii) the role of the enterprise sector in least developed countries, including appropriate incentive systems (one, fourth quarter, 1991).

(b) Substantive support is provided to short-term advisory missions and seminars (one mission each quarter, 1991; one seminar, second quarter, 1991).

1.6 Evaluation of technical co-operation and aid modalities as applied to least developed countries and analysis of the use of aid**

Output:

(a) Advice is provided to least developed countries in the identification of availability of multilateral and bilateral technical co-operation for the improvement of their planning and administrative capacity.

New output to be added in 1991:

Add: (b) Report to the Trade and Development Board, Governments of least developed and donor countries and country review meetings containing reviews of assistance in response to the needs and circumstances of least developed countries, and evaluation of technical co-operation and aid modalities as applied to least developed countries (fourth quarter, 1991).

1.7 Quantitative analysis and economic projections

Output:

(a) Quantitative analytical support is provided to all UNCTAD programmes concerning least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

New output to be added in 1991:

Add: (b) Technical publication: Basic data on the least developed countries (fourth quarter, 1991). Development and maintenance of indicators to measure qualitatively and quantitatively the performance of least developed countries and the support provided by their development partners during the decade. (To be issued periodically in the form of technical publications.)

Add: (c) Support provided to the Committee for Development Planning in its review of criteria for designating the least developed countries (first quarter, 1991); and to individual least developed countries for the collection of

** Lowest priority.

information required as a basis for development and maintenance of performance indicators.

Add two new programme elements and related outputs for 1991:

1.8 Strengthening of human and institutional capacities of the least developed countries

Output:

(a) Report to the Trade and Development Board, Governments of least developed and donor countries, on progress in the development of policies and measures, and implementation thereof, for the strengthening of human and institutional capacities for effective management of the development process; and for increasing the participation of women, enterprises and non-governmental organizations in the development of least developed countries (fourth quarter, 1991). In addition, an information base on the role of women, the enterprise sector and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the 1990s will be established and maintained.

1.9 Development and application of policies and measures relating to environmental and resource management capacity in the least developed countries

Output:

(a) Report to the Trade and Development Board, Governments of least developed and donor countries reviewing progress in the development and application of measures for strengthening the environmental and resource management capacities of the least developed countries (third quarter, 1991).

IV. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AT FULL COST

17. On the basis of new activities outlined above, additional requirements in 1991 under sections 11 (ESCAP), 13 (ECA) and 15 (UNCTAD) would be as follows:

Section 11. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

18. Under section 11 (ESCAP) of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, additional requirements would be:

(a) One officer (P-5) and one General Service staff to assist in monitoring progress in regional and subregional co-operation between least developed and other developing countries; and to assist in servicing country review meetings and regional cluster meetings for least developed countries, as envisaged in the Programme of Action for the 1990s;

(b) In addition, a sum of \$10,000 would be required for travel of staff for missions to least developed countries in the region for co-ordinating and monitoring progress in economic co-operation between least developed and other developing countries in the context of the Programme of Action.

19. Additional requirements under section 11 (ESCAP) are summarized below:

(a) Salaries and common staff costs for:

	\$
(i) One P-5 Professional staff	43 300
(ii) One General Service staff	10 800
(b) Travel of staff	<u>10 000</u>
Total	<u><u>64 100</u></u>

Section 13. Economic Commission for Africa

20. Under section 13 (ECA) of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, additional requirements would be:

(a) One officer (P-5) and one General Service staff to assist in monitoring progress in regional and subregional co-operation between least developed and other developing countries; and to assist in servicing country review meetings and regional cluster meetings for least developed countries as envisaged in the Programme of Action for the 1990s;

(b) In addition, a sum of \$10,000 would be required for travel of staff for missions to least developed countries in the region for co-ordinating and monitoring progress in economic co-operation between least developed and other developing countries in the context of the Programme of Action.

21. Additional requirements under section 13 (ECA) are summarized below:

(a) Salaries and common staff costs for:

	\$
(i) One P-5 Professional staff	54 100
(ii) One General Service staff	11 000
(b) Travel of staff	<u>10 000</u>
Total	<u><u>75 100</u></u>

Section 15. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

22. Under section 15 (UNCTAD) of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, additional requirements would be:

(a) One senior officer (P-5) and one officer (P-3), together with one General Service staff, to be located in Geneva, to provide support to UNCTAD's Special Programme for the Least Developed Countries, and to supplement existing capacity and expertise consistent with the need for appraisal of the macro-economic frameworks and related plans of the least developed countries. Staff would be deployed in support of the global monitoring process, and of preparations for, and participation in, the expanded and strengthened country review process, and especially to assist in preparing substantive contributions for the first round of country-level meetings - a process which is to begin in 1991 and for which UNCTAD's responsibilities would extend on a regular and consistent basis to all country-level meetings to be held every two years in least developed countries, in order to make the necessary links between the national and global level processes; to co-ordinate and co-operate with UNDP and the World Bank in substantive preparations for such meetings; to maintain close co-ordination with, and provide substantive support to, the regional commissions in their activities for monitoring at the regional and subregional levels and in connection with their related biennial cluster meetings;

(b) One officer (P-4) together with one General Service staff, to be located in the New York office of UNCTAD; to work in close collaboration with the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation; to provide support to the permanent missions of least developed countries in New York on substantive matters in following up the Programme of Action; to assist those permanent missions in co-ordinating with other groups and international bodies; to assist in servicing the annual ministerial consultations among least developed countries; to consult with agency representatives in New York and attend meetings held in New York relating to the Programme of Action, drawing on a continuing basis on the substantive output of the UNCTAD Special Programme for Least Developed Countries and other sectoral programmes of UNCTAD, and providing the Special Programme with inputs resulting from the above activities;

(c) In addition, a sum of \$20,000 would be required for travel of staff for consultative missions to least developed countries and the relevant regional commissions in the context of follow up to the Programme of Action.

23. These additional requirements under section 15 (UNCTAD) are summarized below:

(a) Salaries and common staff costs for:

	\$
(i) 3 Professional staff (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3)	143 400
(ii) 2 General Service staff	66 700
(b) Travel of staff	<u>20 000</u>
Total	<u><u>230 100</u></u>

V. POTENTIAL FOR ABSORPTION

24. The above proposals are made on the assumption that the ongoing work programmes of the United Nations would be adjusted to accommodate much of the added responsibility devolving from the Programme of Action for the 1990s. The additional requirements proposed for ESCAP (\$64,100), ECA (\$75,100) and UNCTAD (\$230,100), are related to new activities, particularly those to be initiated in 1991 and necessary to avoid adversely affecting implementation of other essential, mandated activities. The programme budget for 1990-1991 does not provide for the additional activities described above, and it is not anticipated that the combined estimated cost of \$369,300 can be absorbed within existing appropriations.

VI. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

25. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in A/C.2/45/L.57, it is estimated that additional requirements of \$64,100 would arise under section 11 (ESCAP), \$75,100 under section 13 (ECA), and \$230,100 under section 15 (UNCTAD), totalling \$369,300 for the biennium 1990-1991.

VII. CONTINGENCY FUND

26. It will be recalled that, under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 and in effect starting with the biennium 1990-1991, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under the same procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed resources available from the contingency fund, those activities can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of projected activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred until a later biennium. A consolidated statement of all programme budget implications and revised estimates will be submitted to the Assembly towards the end of its current session.

27. The Secretary-General has considered the possibility of curtailing activities programmed under section 15 (UNCTAD), programme 7 (Trade among countries having different economic and social systems), in order to offset the additional resources required to implement the activities proposed for UNCTAD. In the event, therefore, that such resources are not available from the contingency fund, it would be the Secretary-General's intention to curtail activities funded from the appropriation under section 15, programme 7, in order to meet the additional requirements under section 15 resulting from the adoption of the draft resolution contained in A/C.2/45/L.57.

28. No activities are proposed for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification in the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 in order to finance the activities proposed under section 11 (ESCAP) and section 13 (ECA). In the event, therefore, that such resources are not available from the contingency fund, these activities would have to be postponed, as provided for in the guidelines for the use of the contingency fund adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 42/211.

VIII. SUMMARY

29. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in A/C.2/45/L.57, it is estimated that additional requirements of \$64,100 would be needed for section 11 (ESCAP), \$75,100 for section 13 (ECA), and \$230,100 for section 15 (UNCTAD), amounting to \$369,300 for the biennium 1990-1991. In addition, an amount of \$81,700 would be required under section 31 (Staff assessment), to be offset by an increase in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).
