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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Revised estimates under section 1, Executive Direction
and Management, Office for Special Political Questions

Thirty-first report of the Advisory Committee
on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the revised estimates under section 1, Executive Direction and Management, Office for Special Political Questions, in which the Secretary-General recommends the establishment of a post of Under-Secretary-General to accommodate the head of the Office for Special Political Questions (A/C.5/33/113).
2. For the reasons explained by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 1 to 5 of his report, an official at the Assistant Secretary-General level has been in charge of that Office since the reorganization of the top echelon of the Secretariat in 1973. Prior to that reorganization, an Under-Secretary-General (provided on a temporary-assistance basis) had been in charge of the Office, which was known at that time as the Office of the Special Adviser on African Questions.
3. In his report (A/C.5/33/113, para. 6), the Secretary-General stated that "because of the increased responsibilities attaching to the post, it should now be established at the Under-Secretary-General level, thus restoring it to the level at which it was originally authorized in 1972-1973". The Secretary-General then went on to say that the "responsibilities of the Office for Special Political Questions have greatly increased in the last few years", and then he described the manner in which this had taken place.
4. In support of the Secretary-General's statement that the responsibilities of the Office for Special Political Questions had increased, the representatives of the Secretary-General indicated that, consequent upon the accession to independence of many former colonial territories in Africa, the scope of the Office, while retaining its political intent and orientation, was now enlarged and included work involving, inter alia, surveys and missions in Africa, in particular to assess special economic

assistance requirements in various countries. The Committee's attention was drawn to the "five special assistance programmes arising from Security Council resolutions and eight programmes arising from General Assembly resolutions" (A/C.5/33/113, para. 6) (see annex below).

5. The Advisory Committee does not disagree with the Secretary-General's view that the work and scope of the Office for Special Political Questions have grown, with consequent increase in responsibility for the head of the Office. The Committee understands that the staffing table of the Office for Special Political Questions consists of one D-2, one P-3 and three General Service staff in established regular-budget posts and of the following extrabudgetary staff at levels established by the Secretary-General:

<u>International assistance programmes</u>	<u>Assistance programmes</u>
1 Assistant Secretary-General	1 P-3
2 P-5	2 General Service
1 P-4	
3 General Service	

(of which one P-5 and one P-3 post are currently vacant).

6. In its consideration of the request by the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee recalled that it had consistently taken the position that posts should not be reclassified half-way through a biennium.

7. The Committee notes that the present arrangement has been in existence since 1973. Bearing in mind the Secretary-General's statement that the scope and responsibilities of the Office for Special Political Questions had increased, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should review the functions of the Office with a view to the most efficient and optimum use of available resources in the Offices of the Secretary-General. The Committee recommends further that he should submit his conclusions from such a review, together with the proposal in his report (A/C.5/33/113), to the General Assembly in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, which will be considered by the Advisory Committee during the first half of 1979.

ANNEX

Resolutions establishing current special economic assistance programmes

A. Under Security Council resolutions

Benin	405 (1977)	14 April 1977
Botswana	403 (1977)	14 January 1977
Lesotho	402 (1976)	22 December 1976
Mozambique	386 (1976)	17 March 1976
Zambia	329 (1973)	10 March 1973

B. Under General Assembly resolutions

Angola	31/188	21 December 1976
Cape Verde	31/17	24 November 1976
Comoros	31/42	1 December 1976
Djibouti	32/93	13 December 1977
Guinea-Bissau	32/100	13 December 1977
Sao Tome and Principe	31/187	21 December 1976
Seychelles	32/101	13 December 1977
South African refugee students	31/126	16 December 1976
