



**General Assembly**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/46/633  
12 November 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session  
Agenda item 105

**REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL  
FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

Administrative, structural and other aspects of the  
improvement of the efficiency of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1 - 6	2
II. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN FIELDS .....	7 - 31	3
III. ADMINISTRATIVE, PROCEDURAL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ....	32 - 56	9
A. Human resources management .....	32 - 39	9
B. Conference services .....	40 - 43	10
C. Common procurement system .....	44 - 45	11
D. Technological innovations .....	46 - 54	12
E. Standards of workload analysis .....	55 - 56	13
IV. CONCLUSION .....	57 - 62	14

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. After considering the analytical report of the Secretary-General (A/45/226) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/254, in which it emphasized that "the strengthening of the effectiveness of the Organization is a continuing process ..." and encouraged "the Secretary-General and Member States to pursue the objectives of resolution 41/213, particularly those that have yet to be met". Furthermore, the General Assembly decided to "continue considering annually the administrative, structural and other aspects of the improvement of the efficiency of the Organization, and invites the Secretary-General to report accordingly".
2. In response to the above-mentioned requests by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General submits the present report, which reflects selected information on certain ongoing organizational (mainly in the economic and humanitarian fields), administrative and personnel improvements in the Secretariat. Accordingly, information concerning other initiatives under consideration, e.g., peace-keeping, coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance, financing of development, technical cooperation and environmental activities have not been incorporated in the body of the present report.
3. Furthermore, since reform and improvements in the administrative functioning of the Organization are, by definition, ongoing and multifaceted processes, the present report does not seek to constitute a comprehensive statement of all the measures being carried out within the Secretariat, and it should be read in conjunction with other reports on specific issues, currently before the General Assembly and its main committees. Such reports include: review of the capacity, experience and coordination arrangements in the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance (A/46/568), human rights questions (A/46/603), Narcotic Drugs (A/46/480), report of the Secretary-General of the Conference on Environment and Development (A/CONF.151/PC/80), facilities management (A/45/796 and Add.1), status of technological innovations in the United Nations (A/C.5/46/1) and Status of telecommunications activities in the United Nations (A/C.5/46/5).
4. For the purpose of this report, efficiency is defined as "the extent to which an activity's outputs are produced at a minimum level of inputs" <sup>1/</sup> with key aspects of cost efficiency, rationalization of work and procedures and optimal steering and governance. Effectiveness is defined in terms of "external" performance and in relation to optimal fulfilment of tasks comprising ability to set priorities and to meet tasks optimally with adaptability to changing environment, challenges and responsiveness to political guidance (A/45/1001). In that context, efficiency can contribute to effectiveness.
5. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), during its debate on the implementation of resolution 45/254, *inter alia*, recommended that "the search for more efficient and effective organization should be intensified in

order to enable the United Nations to achieve its objectives and respond to challenges". 2/

6. To date, the greatest challenge facing the Secretariat is the need to respond effectively to ever-increasing demands and new mandates while at the same time operate in a constrained budgetary environment. A clear indication of the increased work-load of the Organization is its involvement in peace-keeping and related operations. Since 1988, nine such operations were launched. While the expansion of the tasks entrusted to the Organization is a positive sign and represents a high level of confidence in the capacity of the United Nations to meet the needs of the international community, there is a serious imbalance between what is expected from the Organization and the resources available to translate such responsibilities into reality. A separate report on the financial situation of the Organization is before the present session of the General Assembly (A/46/600).

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN SECTORS

7. The subject of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields has preoccupied the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for many years. Since 1986 in particular following the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (Group of 18), both principal organs have dealt with the subject on a continuous basis without significant results. At its resumed session, on 13 May 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/264 on the subject. In that resolution, the General Assembly adopted a number of specific measures to enhance the role of the Economic and Social Council as a central forum for major economic, social, policies and coordination related issues. The Assembly also agreed on the agenda and the timetable for the continuation of the process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. These include a review of the subsidiary bodies of Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session and a review of the complementarity between the work of the Assembly and the Council as well as the composition of the Economic and Social Council to be presented to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Furthermore, the Secretary-General was requested to review the secretariat structures on the basis of agreements to be reached in the restructuring and revitalization process and to report with such recommendations as may be appropriate to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session. In preparing this report, the Secretary-General will take fully into account the outcome of a number of ongoing intergovernmental deliberations, including the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the strengthening of the regional commissions as well as the upcoming deliberations of the General Assembly on United Nations emergency response.

8. Further measures to ensure orderly restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields were put forward in General Assembly resolution 45/177 addressing the working methods, presentation of documentation, more analytical reports and a reduction of the overall volume of documentation (A/45/714, para. 7).

9. In support of the reform process, at the level of individual intergovernmental bodies and the Secretariat offices, certain measures have been introduced, a summary of which is presented below.

10. At its spring session in April 1991, the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) adopted resolution 718 (XXVI) on the "Revitalization of the Mandate and Operational Framework of the Economic Commission for Africa", calling upon the Secretary-General to launch a comprehensive process of reviewing and updating the legislative framework of the regional commissions, and to improve their existing institutional arrangements for funding. It further called upon the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation to consider the convening of an ad hoc group meeting of high-level experts during the second half of 1991 to discuss these revisions and provide input to the current process of restructuring and decentralization.

11. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its forty-sixth session, decided to convene a meeting of eminent persons to review its organizational structure. Taking into account the momentous changes occurring in the world and the new challenges confronting the region, the Group presented to the Commission a series of recommendations relating to the reorientation of ESCAP's future programmes and activities. The reorganization of the work of the ESCAP secretariat along thematic lines as decided by the Commission, required some degree of reorientation in terms of inputs to foster closer cooperation and coordination between divisions.

12. The Commission, at its forty-seventh session, generally endorsed the recommendation of the Group of Eminent Persons that the work of the Commission should be organized on the basis of a thematic approach, as proposed, and adopted a resolution on the "Restructuring the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission". Agreement was reached, in principle, on the setting up of three thematic committees, namely, on regional economic cooperation, the environment and sustainable development, and on poverty alleviation and economic growth. That resolution requested the Executive Secretary to convene before the end of 1991 a meeting of senior officials to consider and finalize the detailed recommendations to encompass the terms of reference, operational modalities, frequency of meetings and other relevant aspects of the revised subsidiary structure of the Commission on the basis of the report of the Group of Eminent Persons.

13. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), convened a special session to review the structure, programme of meetings, documentation, publications programme as well as the working methods of the Commission. The meeting adopted a supplementary report containing a number of proposals (E/ECE/1150/Rev.1) such as: rationalization of the Commission's programme of

work with a reduction of programme elements by 18 per cent; merger of two of the 16 principal subsidiary bodies and a redefinition of subsidiary bodies which resulted in the elimination of 60 such bodies, a reduction of 15 per cent of the ECE calendar of meetings and of 20 per cent of its documentation. In order to maintain the restructuring exercise as an ongoing process, the Commission decided to set up a special working group to define, inter alia, the priority areas and to develop practical measures in order to improve the usefulness of the work undertaken by the Commission. As a result, the work of the Commission on environment, transport, trade facilitation, statistics and economic analysis were identified as main priorities.

14. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in paragraph 3 of its resolution 489 (PLEN. 14) recommended that the current institutional structure of ECLAC and its system should be maintained, but decided to abolish the sessional committees on water and on human settlements-topics which would henceforth be dealt with in the same way as other aspects of the Commission's work programme at each session.

15. At the Secretariat level, the need for constant structural readjustment to respond more effectively to the requirement of a climate created by new attitudes and expectations, has been recognized. Such readjustments have been initiated in a number of Secretariat entities, some of which are reviewed subsequently to highlight the ongoing quest for more effectiveness.

16. One of the most urgent management challenges for the United Nations is the growing number of peacemaking and peace-keeping operations. The longer duration and more complex pattern of peace-keeping and related missions, as well as the increase in numbers, have created a need for sustained planning and monitoring support. In this connection, the Secretary-General has established a senior-level monitoring and planning group on peace-keeping activities.

17. Over the years, the United Nations has increasingly been called upon to provide humanitarian assistance to a wide range of complex emergency situations. Many such emergencies have their root causes in poverty and environmental degradation, others are the result of civil or international conflicts and some represent a combination of all factors. The succession of recent emergencies has again highlighted the important role that the United Nations must play to provide leadership to the international community for swift and effective response. This includes the effective mobilization of the political, humanitarian and development capacities of the United Nations system in foreseeing emergencies through early warning, adopting preventive measures where possible, responding to them when they occur as well as finding effective ways to address their root causes. The United Nations system must be in a position to make advance arrangements, on the basis of both its existing and stand-by capacities, to assist emergency-prone and affected countries. To that effect, a number of operational organizations have already strengthened their emergency capacity. Others are in the process of doing so with the active involvement of their respective bodies. One of the important lessons learned from the experience of the Office for Emergency Operations in

Africa was the great value of a focal-point with necessary authority and capacity to advise the Secretary-General on a continuing basis on various aspects relating to humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies.

18. In order to exercise such leadership, the Secretary-General has put forward a comprehensive set of recommendations to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to provide an effective response to emergencies (A/46/568). These recommendations include the appointment of a high-level official to assist him personally in this regard.

19. With respect to emergency operations in Africa, the recent developments in the Horn of Africa alone have been catastrophic for tens of millions of people and required an immediate response. Based on an assessment of immediate requirements by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations assumed the lead role in mobilizing the international community in coordinating relief efforts. The Unit for Special Emergency Programmes in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship was strengthened and in addition to the coordination function, it was assigned to collect and disseminate up-to-date information on needs and responses for the Horn of Africa along the lines of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa approved in 1985. Arrangements have also been made for regular liaison with donor Governments and affected Governments, the non-governmental organizations and also for appropriate public information activities. These measures are introduced without prejudice to the wider arrangements needed for handling of emergency situations world wide. A separate report on this issue will be submitted to the General Assembly.

20. The General Assembly recognizing, inter alia, that the global character of environmental problems, including climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, transboundary air and water pollution, the contamination of the oceans and seas and degradation of land resources, including drought and desertification, necessitates action at the global, regional and national levels; and the commitment and participation of all countries, decided by its resolution 44/228 of 22 March 1990, to convene the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992. To date, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference has held few organizational meetings and recommendations regarding the question of institutional arrangements in consideration of the substantive issues, related financial and other cross-sectoral measures, have been considered (A/CONF.151/PC/36 and 80). The Secretary-General is expected to consider the question of institutional arrangements of the Conference and provide certain proposals to the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

21. As a result of recent global changes and a series of new mandates, principally those of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, human rights activities of the United Nations have experienced an unprecedented expansion. Against this background, the Secretary-General has initiated a review of the structure, functions and staffing of the Centre for Human Rights to evaluate the effectiveness of the

existing organizational structure in relation to its evolving mandate and to assess the adequacy of its staffing and other resources vis-à-vis its functions.

22. That review concluded, inter alia, that while there was a need for clear delineation of responsibilities among various organizational units dealing with the issue of human rights, the Centre was experiencing an acute shortage of expert manpower in coping with its growing mandates. Taking into account the priorities assigned to certain activities of the Centre by the legislative organs, the review identified a more rational and simplified organizational structure which could meet more efficiently the objectives of the core programme activities of the Centre. The proposed new structure envisages systematic coordination and better linkages among various organizational elements and provides for more efficient monitoring of the work and use of staff time.

23. With respect to United Nations activities on drug control, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/179 of 21 December 1990, the Secretary-General established the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which is responsible for pertinent concerted international action. The Programme integrates the structures and the functions of existing organizational elements previously handling the issues in a parallel manner in an attempt to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations mechanism.

24. As provided in General Assembly resolution 45/179, the Programme is to be structured along the following lines:

(a) Treaty implementation, which will integrate, with due consideration to treaty arrangements, the functions of the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board and the treaty implementation functions of the Division of Narcotic Drugs, taking into account the independent role of the Board;

(b) Policy implementation and research, with responsibility for implementing policy decisions of the relevant legislative bodies and conducting analytical work;

(c) Operational activities, with responsibility for coordinating and carrying out the technical cooperation projects currently executed mainly by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the secretariat of the International Narcotic Control Board.

25. Separate reports on the above arrangements are presented to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/460 and A/C.5/46/23).

26. In response to the General Assembly resolutions calling for the strengthening of the substantive and administrative functions and structures of the United Nations office in Vienna (UNOV), a review of the present administrative and common and conference services related arrangement is initiated. The finding and recommendations pertaining to this review will be presented to the present session of the General Assembly.

27. Furthermore, to maximize the effective use of scarce resources and with a view to respond more effectively to the concept of a social development nucleus in the Secretariat, certain organizational changes were introduced in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA). Accordingly, some functions were reassigned within the Social Development Division and a Planning and Inter-Sectoral Projects Unit established to study emerging issues and macro-social policy aspects of social development and to provide practical assistance to countries in social policy design, planning and coordination. The effectiveness of the new arrangements is under review and further changes may be made as a result of consideration for upgrading of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme requested by the Intergovernmental Group on the Creation of an Effective International Crime and Justice Programme.

28. In the area of international trade and development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in recent years has undertaken a number of organizational reforms affecting both the structure and methods of work of the secretariat and the functioning of the intergovernmental bodies.

29. The most recent reorganization has resulted in the establishment of two Programme "clusters" dealing, respectively with International Trade and Resources for Development, new structures for the remaining substantive Divisions in the secretariat dealing with Commodities, Shipping and Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, and a consolidation of data processing and statistical services. The process of reorganization is being subjected to continuing internal monitoring and assessment, particularly as regards its impact on policy coordination and programme management, the effective utilization of resources, and the secretariat's flexibility to respond to evolving mandates. In conjunction with the organizational rearrangements certain measures regarding substantive preparation of intergovernmental meetings were also introduced. Other procedural improvements have included a greater use of informal mechanisms for intergovernmental consultations, such as holding a monthly meeting between the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and members of the Trade and Development Board.

30. Further adjustments in the secretariat structures are currently being introduced to reflect new developments and orientations in UNCTAD's activities, particularly the expanded responsibilities entrusted to UNCTAD by the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, developments in Central and Eastern Europe, and new mandates concerned with sustainable development. Further orientations for UNCTAD's activities may be expected as a result of the eighth session of UNCTAD, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, in February 1992.

31. The work programme of the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has twice been substantially revised and updated in the course of the last 10 years to reflect the current state of knowledge and priorities in the sector. Currently, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 provides the backdrop for all activities of the Centre in research and development, technical cooperation and information dissemination. Similar attention has



been directed to the Centre's operational activities, leading to a shift away from individual projects towards programme orientation. An internal reorganization of the Centre's Technical Cooperation Division is being implemented in order to achieve a more rational distribution of responsibilities and hence more intensive coverage of countries.

### III. ADMINISTRATIVE, PROCEDURAL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

#### A. Human resources management

32. Emerging changes in the international and political environment have resulted in an increasing demand upon the Organization and its staff, which is called upon to deal effectively with an expanded range of problems, often requiring specialized expertise. To that end, one of the crucial tasks facing the Secretary-General in the area of human resource development is the need to establish the machinery and sufficient resource levels capable of coping with large-scale operations of growing scope and complexity.

33. The renewed confidence placed in the Organization and the expansion of the peace-keeping related operations have, however, coincided with the post reduction exercise which time and again, resulted in certain bottlenecks for the proper human resources planning and operation of the Secretariat.

34. Despite these constraints, a number of measures to improve the capacity of the staff to meet emerging and future requirements have been instituted. The Secretary-General has continued his efforts to place the remaining staff whose posts have been abolished in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of resolution 41/213.

35. In accordance with resolution 45/239, the Secretary-General has initiated measures for the establishment of a comprehensive career development system for all categories of staff. This system will, inter alia, focus on such factors as performance evaluation, mobility, training and promotion. In order to ensure its successful initiation, the proposed system will be discussed with the staff prior to its finalization and submission to the General Assembly. At the moment the scarcity of posts has reduced the possibility of promotion for many deserving staff. Moreover, this situation is affecting the Secretary-General's efforts in meeting the mandates of the General Assembly regarding the percentage of women in posts at the D-1 level and above.

36. In order to safeguard the consistent implementation of personnel policies and recruitment guidelines and provision of a more structured advice in consideration of candidates, the Secretary-General has decided to establish a Senior Review Group to advise him on the filling of posts at the D-2 level. In addition, efforts are under way to review and strengthen other personnel management subsystems such as mobility policy and mission assignments. A new policy for mission assignments is therefore being developed.

37. In light of the expansion of peace-keeping operations, the training programmes has given priority to the organisation of briefing sessions, providing special job training, mission-specific language training and communication skills. These demands drew on the limited resources earmarked for other training activities, e.g., the enhancement of management-related skills, despite the recognition that better-qualified managers will contribute to a more effective Organisation. An evaluation of the impact of small management group training - the present practice - suggested that it was not sufficient to strengthen managerial capabilities adequately. To achieve a conducive organizational environment, large-scale systematic management training should be offered to all staff corresponding to their seniority and expertise. Consequently, there is an urgent need to develop a more effective and comprehensive training policy which is responsive to programmatic goals and capable of advancing staff development and bolstering morale.

38. Another challenge facing the Organisation is to keep abreast of technological innovations. While specific training is offered at Headquarters, this proved to be more complicated at other duty stations. This was mainly due to the fact that the prevailing levels of automation and expertise in overseas offices differ widely. As a result, the design of a unified training programme for all levels of staff and the preparation of corresponding manuals have been complicated and impeded the timely implementation of improved systems within the available tight budget.

39. Greater utilization of the consultative staff management machinery resulted in improved staff management relations. The matters currently under consultation with programme managers and staff representatives include a new performance evaluation system, staff redeployment and career development.

#### B. Conference services

40. General Assembly resolution 43/222 B mandated the Committee on Conferences to examine the proposals of the Secretary-General on the draft calendar and to recommend to the General Assembly a draft calendar of conferences and meetings designed to meet the needs of the United Nations while ensuring the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources. Under the guidance of the Committee on Conferences, it has been possible to plan a more even calendar which has yielded considerable gains in terms of producing a programme of meetings while taking into account the related levels of documentation requirements and the foreseen ability of the Secretariat to deliver the required level of services. In addition, managerial measures such as the over-programming of meetings, or the under-recruitment of meetings servicing staff, have maximized the use of internal capacity. However, recent trends, most notably the greatly increased activity of the Security Council, the uncertain timing of its requirements and the volume of documentation, have greatly inhibited the Secretariat's ability to employ such measures and reap their full benefit.

41. In an expanded effort to ensure the more timely issuance of documentation for consideration by intergovernmental organs, close cooperation has been established between Department of Conference Services and the Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services as well as other author units in adhering more closely to deadlines for the submission of manuscripts for processing.

42. Inter-agency consultations on the standardization of methods and procedures in the meetings servicing, documentation and publications processes, including editing, translation and interpretation policies of the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the application of technological innovations to conference servicing areas, are currently carried out by an Inter-Agency Meeting for Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP). Subjects under consideration encompass the establishment of cost-efficiency standards for conference-servicing, common and joint conference service arrangements, financial arrangements for common, joint and coordinated conference services, establishment and application of progressive workload standards (ACC/1991/PER/R.25).

43. In compliance with recommendation 34 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (Group of 18) concerning the publications programme of the United Nations, collaborative efforts on the part of the Publications Board, author departments and the sales operation to rationalize the Organization's publishing activities have been directed towards applying more exacting criteria when selecting and creating titles for issuance as sales publications, so that the limited resources available can be most effectively invested. To enhance the marketability of publications, a number of measures have been taken, such as reworking the manuscripts with manifest sales potential, and acquiring the rights to material designed for specific age groups and readerships combined with energetic promotional campaigns and cooperative advertising with book agents.

#### C. Common procurement system

44. General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 21 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sector of the United Nations recommended, inter alia, that "measures should be taken to achieve maximum uniformity of administrative, financial, budgetary, personal and planning procedures, including the establishment of a common procurement system".

45. To achieve better coordination of procurement activities and take advantage of economies of scale, the Secretary-General decided to establish a coordinating body in Copenhagen. This will ensure better coordination in procurement for the system, including benefits resulting from standardization. Significant savings are expected to be realized, particularly in the procurement of items most frequently used by organizations such as vehicles, tires, paper, office supplies, furnishings, personal computers and related electronic data-processing equipment. Practical aspects of these arrangements are now under development, including a standard coding system for these items. Particular benefits would accrue to smaller

organisations and offices included in the effort because they would have at their disposal the resources of a procurement office with the capacity to undertake extensive global market surveys. It is expected that coordinated procurement would begin to function in 1991 and become fully operational by the end of 1992.

#### **D. Technological innovations**

46. The introduction and use of new information technologies - in telecommunications and office automation - requires the development of common policies, standards and procedures to ensure the efficient acquisition and use of such equipment, related facilities and software. In this connection, the activities of the United Nations Technological Innovations Board (TIB), an interdepartmental body under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, have been expanded to include "software and hardware related to microcomputers and mini-computers, all aspects of mainframe computer applications and operations, and local and global telecommunications". 3/ The Working Group of TIB is also conducting an in-depth survey of existing United Nations databases and measures to improve their accessibility. Well coordinated development of the acquisition of new technology ensures compatibility in equipment and software and provides added efficiencies in training and support.

47. The new integrated management information system (IMIS) is the first significant step in establishing a global information strategy for the Organization. Its application may result in a more effective operation of the programme budget, improve accounting, processing personnel administration transactions, travel administration, procurement and inventory management practices and reduced payroll related functions. These improvements have been described in detail in the second report of the Secretary-General on the IMIS project (A/C.5/45/20).

48. In conference servicing, major efforts towards technological modernization, e.g., use of optical disc and improvement of services, have been launched to provide for greater speed and accuracy of data and their transmission.

49. At present, however, the benefits of using optical disc or digital image systems for the storage, retrieval and transmission of parliamentary documents and electronic dissemination of documents is under further review (A/46/88).

50. Internal printing facilities have been significantly upgraded at Headquarters and at the Economic Commission for Africa.

51. A computer-based library management system has been installed at the United Nations Library at Geneva and is planned to be introduced in New York during the biennium 1992-1993.

52. Rapid advances in data communications technology have enabled the Organization to begin planning for a data communications infrastructure

supporting a diversity of applications which will be developed over the next few years. With the recent introduction of Local Area Networks (LANs) at the major duty stations, all data transfer functions of the Wide Area Networks will be placed at the desktop level for the entire Organization (A/C.5/46/1).

53. The Organization is also making widespread use of voice-mail messaging and fax transmission equipment as well as computerized databases and is looking into the wider use of electronic mail communications (A/C.5/46/5).

54. Through a globally integrated approach to facilities management (A/45/796/Add.1) efforts are being made to obtain the maximum benefit for the United Nations capital investment. Modern communications technology is being installed and security services are being improved on a global basis.

#### E. Standards of workload analysis

55. Over the past 15 years, various efforts have been made to develop management and workload analysis techniques for use in the allocation of personnel resources in the Secretariat. Although certain standards have been developed for work in support of conferences, such as translation, interpretation, reproduction and typing, their wider application to all categories of staff has proven to be difficult. Most recently, however, in order to comply with requests of the legislative bodies, the Management Advisory Service (MAS) conducted an analysis of contemporary workload measurement techniques used by various organizations and reviewed their potential benefits and problems in applying them to the Professional category at the United Nations.

56. Two major groups of approaches, output-oriented and value-oriented methods, were highlighted. While the first is more appropriate for assessing resources/allocation budgeting needs, the value-oriented approach has been developed mostly to promote constant improvements in productivity. The report concluded that although, in principle, workload analysis technique could be used for measuring the productivity of the United Nations Professional staff, they entail several problems and constraints that could discourage their wide application in connection with the budgetary process. In addition to considerable cost in developing the proper methodology and compilation of necessary data, certain adjustments and changes in the programme budget and performance reporting of the Organization seem indispensable. The report recommended that these workload analysis techniques be tested for their appropriateness to the work of United Nations Professionals by conducting a pilot study in a few departments. It further recommended that value-oriented techniques be applied selectively to promote a strategy of improvement in productivity.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

57. No dynamic organisation can maintain its viability and effectiveness unless it is prepared to face the challenges of the present and future.

58. Taking into account the momentous changes occurring in the world and the resulting new challenges confronting the Organization, the United Nations is continuously striving towards a creative and forward-looking role in helping to resolve many complex and diverse global problems.

59. In order to respond effectively to the emerging challenges confronting the global community, the United Nations faces two critical problems: uncertainty of its financial resources and the constraints of the present organisational infrastructure. Nevertheless, the Organization has registered achievements in tackling a wide range of problems, inter alia, peace-keeping operations, supervision of elections, protection of human rights, combating environmental degradation and drug control.

60. The process of adapting the Organization to evolving and changing needs must be ongoing and permanent. Given the present financial situation of the Organization, improvements in effectiveness and efficiency are bound to be critical for enabling the Organization to cope successfully with new tasks assigned to it. Thus, this effort must consciously be supported by every programme manager and indeed every staff member.

61. As the evolution of relevant concept and measures and their implementation inevitably requires time to mature and produce tangible results, the General Assembly may wish to consider dealing with this issue in future on a biennial rather than annual basis. The adoption of such a cycle would furthermore allow the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination to make a more specific input than currently possible.

62. It is also proposed that in between the reporting cycle an in-depth thematic approach, concentrating on a specific issue of interest to the General Assembly, be adopted, in order to assist the legislative bodies in their deliberations. The proposed reports aiming at improving the effectiveness of the Organization could be in-depth, policy-oriented and multi-disciplinary.

#### Notes

1/ Evaluation Manual of the United Nations, United Nations, New York (October 1986), p. 87.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/46/16), para. 446.

3/ Ibid., Supplement No. 6 (A/46/6), para. 33A.22.