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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977 AND
MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1976-1979

Administrative and financial implications of draft
resolutions IV, VI and IX recommended by the Second
Committee (A/10467, para. 57)

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Ahmed ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt)

1. At its 1763rd and 1769th meetings, on 8 and 12 December 1975, the Fifth Committee, pursuant to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, considered the statements by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/4719, 1736 and 1759) concerning the administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions IV, VI and IX recommended by the Second Committee (A/10467, para. 57).

(a) Draft resolution IV

2. Under the terms of paragraph 4 of draft resolution IV, the General Assembly would decide that the cost of the United Nations Conference on Desertification would be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations.

3. In his statement (A/C.5/1719), the Secretary-General recalled that prior to the adoption of resolution 3337 (XXIX) whereby the General Assembly decided to convene in 1977 a United Nations Conference on that subject, his representative had informed the Second Committee orally that it was his understanding that full responsibility, substantive and administrative, for the preparation of the Conference rested with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while the United Nations would be expected to provide direct conference servicing facilities. On the basis of that understanding and in the light of the preliminary arrangements for the Conference made by the Governing Council of UNEP at its third session, the Secretary-General

estimated that the holding of the Conference at Nairobi over the period 29 August-9 September 1977 would involve additional expenditures under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 amounting to a total of \$540,000, including \$212,500 in temporary assistance for interpretation and \$247,500 in temporary assistance for in-session documentation. The Secretary-General further pointed out that maximum use would be made of available conference services staff at the disposal of the United Nations Office at Geneva, but that it was not possible at this stage to estimate to what extent interpretation and translation costs could be met from existing resources.

4. In its related report (A/10008/Add.15), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions noted that the Secretary-General's estimate appeared to have included the maximum costs and to have assumed that no assistance would be offered by the regular language staff. The Advisory Committee further noted that account did not seem to have been taken of resources which might be available from Headquarters, New York. The Advisory Committee appreciated that at this early stage it was very difficult for the Secretary-General to take into account the full impact of the United Nations year-round capacity for language services, and also felt that there appeared to be a need for a careful review of the Secretary-General's assumptions on the volume of in-session documentation. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee was of the opinion that the Secretary-General's present estimates of financial implications of the draft resolution in question should be held in abeyance. The Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should submit revised estimates to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, by which time he should be in a position to assess more fully and evaluate the actual requirements of the Conference and the impact these would have on the regular budget.

DECISION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

5. The Fifth Committee decided, without objection, to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution IV recommended by the Second Committee (A/10467, para. 57), additional appropriations not exceeding \$540,000 might be required under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977, but that the exact extent of those requirements was not as yet ascertainable and would be the subject of a separate submission by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session.

(b) Draft resolution VI

6. Under the terms of 6 (b) of draft resolution VI, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of Member States the nature and importance of the water problems to be dealt with at the United Nations Water Conference, to give wide publicity to the Conference through the Office of Public Information and the Centre for Economic and Social Information, and to report on the action taken on the resolution to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session.

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7. In his statement (A/C.5/1736), the Secretary-General estimated that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution VI, an additional appropriation in the amount of \$140,000 would be required under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and an amount of \$3,200 would be required for staff assessment under section 25, offset by a similar amount under income section 1.

8. In its report (A/10008/Add.20), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that the additional appropriation required under section 4 be reduced to \$90,600 and that the request for staff assessment be deleted.

9. This recommendation would include \$50,000, instead of the \$81,000 originally estimated by the Secretary-General to cover the costs of the travel and subsistence of journalists and editors to an "Encounter" at the Conference.

10. The delegation of Iran proposed that the amount originally estimated by the Secretary-General for the "Encounter" be reinstated. The proposal would have the effect of adding the amount of \$31,000 to the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee.

DECISION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

11. The Fifth Committee decided, by 60 votes to 18, with 11 abstentions, to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution VI recommended by the Second Committee (A/10467, para. 57), an additional appropriation in the amount of \$121,600 would be required under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977.

(c) Draft resolution IX

12. Under the terms of draft resolution IX, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit, at its thirty-first session, a final comprehensive report which should fulfil the requirements contained in paragraph 5 of Assembly resolution 3336 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 on permanent sovereignty over national resources in the occupied Arab territories and related documents, including A/C.2/SR.1635, A/C.2/L.1385, A/C.5/1649 and A/9978/Add.1. The heads of the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organs, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Economic Commission for Western Asia, would be requested to co-operate actively and adequately with the Secretary-General in the preparation of the final and comprehensive report.

13. In his statement (A/C.5/1759), the Secretary-General estimated that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution IX, additional appropriations would be required in the amount of \$68,200 under section 5A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and in the amount of \$15,000 for staff assessment under section 25, offset by a similar amount under income section 1.

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14. In his oral statement, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions indicated that the Advisory Committee concurred in the estimates of the Secretary-General.

DECISION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

15. The Fifth Committee, by 57 votes to 2, with 23 abstentions, decided to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution IX recommended by the Second Committee (A/10467, para. 57), additional appropriations would be required in the amount of \$68,200 under section 5A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and in the amount of \$15,000 for staff assessment under section 25, offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1.
