

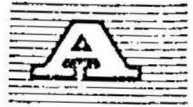
UNITED NATIONS
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COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS
Twentieth session, 9 May 1961
New York

REQUESTS RECEIVED FROM SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its fourth session the General Assembly adopted the following resolution (311 B (IV)):

"The General Assembly,

"Believing that there is room for closer relationship between the assessments of Member States in the contributions both of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies,

"1. Recognizes that, to the extent that the contributions of members of the specialized agencies are assessed in accordance with principles similar to those on which the contributions of Members of the United Nations are based, it is desirable that the same data should be utilized for the assessment of those contributions;

"2. Authorizes the Committee on Contributions to recommend or advise on the scale of contributions for a specialized agency if requested by that agency to do so;

"3. Requests the Secretary-General to inform each agency that the Committee is available to perform this service."

2. In its 1950 report^{1/} the Committee on Contributions outlined the procedure to be followed in implementing this resolution. It authorized the Secretariat to make available to the specialized agencies upon their request the basic statistical data used by the Committee. It has also supplied at the request of specialized agencies "theoretical probable percentages in the United Nations scale" for States that are not Members of the United Nations.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/1330), paras. 22-26.

3. The following requests have been received from specialized agencies for consideration by the Committee on Contributions at its twentieth session:

World Health Organization

Extract from letter of 17 March 1961.

"At the present time it appears that the following States are members of the World Health Organization, but are not Members of the United Nations:

Germany, Federal Republic of
Korea
Monaco
Switzerland
Viet-Nam
Kuwait
Mauritania

"Of the above, all but Kuwait and Mauritania will be reviewed by the Committee in order to set their assessments for their participation in certain UN activities and these assessments should enable us to compute their assessments in the WHO. However, we would appreciate it if the Committee could set the assessments of Kuwait and Mauritania. We assume that you will be able to ensure that the Committee will base their recommendations on full application of the per capita ceiling principle."

International Atomic Energy Agency

Extract from letter of 17 March 1961.

"The Holy See is the only Member of the Agency which is neither included in the scale of assessment of Members' Contributions to the United Nations nor, as far as I can see, in the list of proposed assessments for Non-Members of the UN. On the basis of information provided by you to Dr. Jolles in September 1957, the Holy See has been assessed by the Agency at the minimum rate of 0.04 per cent in all our scales. I suppose there has been no reason for a change, but since the Holy See is not mentioned in any of the UN documents on assessment of contributions which we received, I should be grateful for your confirmation that our assumption is correct."

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Extract from letter of 15 March 1961.

"There are two points on which it would be useful for Unesco to have the views of your Committee either at this session or at some future session, before the next meeting of our General Conference which will not take place until November 1962..."

/...

"The two points have arisen as the result of the discussion which took place during the 11th session of the Unesco General Conference when the matter of the scale of contributions was being considered.

They can be summarized as follows:

"(1) Could the United Nations Committee on Contributions express an opinion as to whether the minimum percentage assessment of 0.04 per cent is appropriate for those specialized agencies which do not pay the cost of travel of representatives of member states to their Assemblies.

"(2) Would the Committee agree to the submission to the next Unesco General Conference of the statistics used by the Committee in establishing the minimum percentage for those member states assessed at 0.04 per cent.

"As regards the first of these questions the point arose as the result of certain passages contained in the report of the United Nations Committee on Contributions for 1958 to the 13th session of the General Assembly (Supplement No. 10 (A/3890)). 2/

"In this document, paragraph 17 deals with the question of minimum assessments and refers to the fact that the United Nations does meet the cost of the travel of delegates to sessions of the General Assembly, using this as one of the arguments to justify the minimum assessment of 0.04 per cent.

"This point was picked upon by certain delegations who pointed out that whilst Unesco uses the minimum percentage of United Nations, it does not in fact reimburse any travel expenses for delegates.

"The second point was raised by certain delegations who are at present assessed at 0.04 per cent and who feel that perhaps there is a considerable range of difference in the actual statistics for member states who are assessed at 0.04 per cent.

"The tendency of these members is to make a case for differentiating between the members who are better off and those who are worse off but who are still assessed at 0.04 per cent. These same members have in the past urged that the scale of assessments should be taken to three places of decimals rather than two and, if this were done, one would presumably see some differentiation which is at present not apparent, but in many cases it would be necessary to fix a new minimum in order to reflect differences for those members whose strict percentage comes out at less than 0.04 per cent.

2/ The text of the relevant paragraph of the Committee's 1958 report is reproduced in the annex to this document.

"I know that the Committee has expressed the view in the past that the statistics used by it in fixing the scale of contributions are confidential and should not be published and it is for this reason that I ask you now whether the Committee would object to a comparative statement being issued for those members assessed at the minimum.

"I apologize for taking your time on these matters but the Director-General has been requested by the General Conference to submit a report on these two points to the 12th session of the General Conference."

ANNEX

Extract from Report of the Committee on Contributions -
General Assembly Official Records: Thirteenth Session
Supplement No. 10 (A/3890)

Minimum Assessment

"17. At the twelfth session of the General Assembly it was suggested in the Fifth Committee ^{3/} that the Committee on Contributions should examine the possibility of a reduction in the minimum assessment of 0.04 per cent. The Committee has given careful consideration to this suggestion, but does not consider that, on balance, there is a convincing case for any reduction. It is true, as has been pointed out, that since the minimum assessment was fixed at 0.04 per cent, the total budget of the United Nations has considerably increased. But even on the basis of the provisional figures for the budget estimates of 1959, an assessment of 0.04 per cent represents a total payment of no more than about \$19,000, and it is difficult to believe that payment of such a sum would seriously strain the resources of even the smallest Member States, particularly as a substantial part, ranging up to nearly \$10,000 in the case of countries furthest away from New York, is reimbursed by the Organization in respect of the travel of delegates to the sessions of the General Assembly. In return for its contribution, the country concerned acquires all the advantages, both tangible and otherwise, which accrue from membership in the United Nations, as well as a share in the equity of the value of the Headquarters building in New York and of the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Even if these advantages are left out of account, as well as the advantages derived from the many operational programmes of the United Nations, from which the smallest countries benefit no less (and it may be proportionately more) than others, a considerable part of the annual expenditures of the United Nations is undertaken for the common benefit of all Member States in respect of the upkeep and maintenance of the Headquarters building and its contents, for utilities such as heating, lighting and telephone services, and for the various common services, such as translation and documentation, which are at the disposal of all delegations alike. It is difficult to assign any precise figure for the proportion of these costs which could properly be attributed to any particular Member State. The provision in the 1959 budget for direct maintenance costs of premises and equipment is rather more than \$3 million, while for printing, stationery and office supplies it is about \$2.1 million. These figures take no account of the costs of the staff concerned, which fall as a charge to the Headquarters Secretariat, and they may therefore be regarded as a minimum estimate of the direct charges involved in keeping the purely mechanical side of the Organization's activities in being. If they were divided equally between the eighty-one present Member States, the cost per Member would be approximately \$63,000. Even making all due allowance for the greater use that may be made by the larger delegations of the facilities provided by the Organization, it is clear that even the smallest States receive more value in the form of Headquarters services than is represented by the amount

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Session, Annexes,
agenda item 44, A/3798, para. 8.

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of their net subscription. Any reduction in the present floor of 0.04 per cent would thus seem not only to be unjustified in terms of services received, but would press inequitably on other Members and particularly on those 'middle income group' countries which under the present arrangements benefit neither from the 'ceiling' provisions nor, except to a limited extent, from the provisions relating to low per capita income."
