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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution
 contained in document A/SPC/35/L.26

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

1. The Special Political Committee, at its 51st meeting held on 9 December 1980 adopted the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/35/L.26. It also had before it a statement of financial implications, document A/SPC/35/L.30.

Part I

2. Under operative paragraph 5 of section 1, the General Assembly would call upon the Secretary-General to render full co-operation and support to the International Programme for the Development of Communications and to seek and encourage interagency co-operation and participation of the agencies in the activities of the Programme and its Intergovernmental Council. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of one new post at the P-4 level in the newly established Planning, Programming and Evaluation Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, to carry out these added tasks. Travel funds would also be required for necessary liaison and co-ordination but would however be absorbed. The establishment of the new post would entail in 1981 additional resources in the amount of \$30,100, as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs	23,900
Common services costs	6,200
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Total	30,100
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Part II

3. Under the terms of operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would reiterate the recommendations of the Committee on Information that additional resources for the Department of Public Information should be commensurate with the increase in the activities of the United Nations that the Department is called upon to cover for the purposes of public information, and would recommend that the Secretary-General provide such resources to the Department for this purpose and would request the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to review the relative growth of the Department and report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

4. In respect of resources provided to the Department of Public Information, it has been the practice, whenever major activities are undertaken, such as international years and conferences, to include in related statements of administrative and financial implications provision for the Department of Public Information for its activities whose implementation are required but cannot be ensured from existing resources. It would be the intention of the Secretary-General to continue this practice.

5. With regard to the relative growth rate in respect of public information, it should be noted that since the formulation of the recommendation of the Committee on Information, the General Assembly has, in its resolution 35/9 dated 3 November 1980, considered that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should no longer continue to set relative real growth rates and has requested the Committee to determine new criteria and methods to be employed in setting programme priorities. It would be the intention of the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination the request contained in operative paragraph 10 of the present draft resolution.

6. Under operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would reaffirm that continued publication of Development Forum as an interagency project is essential and would request the Secretary-General to review its financial status and to continue to seek to ensure long-term financial support for the Forum. A separate report on this matter has been presented to the General Assembly at its current session in document A/C.5/35/52 in which a sum of \$200,000 is requested as a subvention to the Forum in 1981.

Part III

7. Under operative paragraph 1 (c) of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to ensure that United Nations efforts to provide broadcast media with programming on women be continued. A separate statement of administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution relating to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (A/C.3/35/L.23/Rev.1) is contained in document A/C.5/35/73/Corr.1 and provides an estimate of \$147,500 as the cost for the continuation and expansion of the radio programmes on women in 1981.

8. Under operative paragraph 4 the Secretary-General would be requested to report to the Committee on Information on a plan to regionalize the Radio and Visual Services Division in a manner that would permit each Regional Section to be responsible for all radio, television and film productions to their respective region. The Secretary-General would expect to be able to produce such a report within resources available to him in the 1980-1981 biennium budget. It would also be his intention to seek the assistance of the Administrative Management Service in developing a plan for such regionalization. Given the new concepts of the combined radio, television and film production, it may be necessary to seek outside expertise to assist in the development of such a plan. In such a case, it would be the intention of the Secretary-General to accomplish this through resources already available in the regular budget.

9. While the Secretary-General would review the present Information Centres' network, taking into account the request addressed to him in operative paragraphs 5 and 6 regarding the evolving relationship between DPI (Headquarters) and the Centres, as well as the views of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), he proposes an increase in the operating funds for the Centres at an average of \$1,250 per centre for 1981 for a total of \$75,000 to assist in meeting the increased volume and complexity of the activities in the United Nations Information Centres.

10. Under operative paragraph 6 (a) of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to improve the network of the information centres by reviewing their functions and role in the Department of Public Information and by establishing, to the extent possible, within existing resources, new ones, where deemed necessary, in particular one in Zimbabwe and one in Bangladesh taking into account, inter alia, the need to ensure regional balance.

11. The review of the functions and role of the network of information centres with a view to improving their operation would not lead to the closing down of any centres. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his comments in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the information centres, 1/ the possibility of closing down a number of centres in order to operate the network more efficiently is a course of action that is virtually precluded for political reasons. The establishment of new centres in Zimbabwe and Bangladesh would not therefore be possible within existing resources and would require, for each centre the creation of six new posts: one Director at the P-5 level and five local staff members comprising an information assistant, a reference assistant/librarian, one administrative assistant, one secretary and one mimeograph operator/messenger. In addition for each centre provision would need to be made for the purchasing of furniture and equipment. An amount of \$20,000 for each centre is therefore proposed, as a non-recurrent item. Furthermore, a provision of \$7,500 for each centre would be necessary in respect of supplies and materials.

12. In respect of rental and maintenance of premises, it will be recalled that the General Assembly had in its resolution 1405 (XIV) requested the Secretary-General to enlist the co-operation of the Member States concerned in providing all possible

1/ A/34/379/Add.1.

facilities for the establishment of such new centres. In his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on information centres, 2/ the Secretary-General stated that he could not but support the idea that Governments of host countries should provide for the rental and maintenance of premises of information centres in their country.

13. The possibility of obtaining rent-free premises for the two new centres will be explored. Should it, however, not materialize, it is estimated that an amount of \$10,000 would be required for each centre in 1981 and would be reflected in the final performance report for the biennium 1980-1981.

14. The additional requirements for the establishment in 1981 of the two new information centres is therefore as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs	141,800
Furniture and equipment	40,000
Supplies and materials	15,000
	<u>196,800</u>

15. Under operative paragraph 6 (b) of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to strengthen the capabilities of the Centres by providing staff at a level commensurate with their responsibilities, particularly in the case of Centres with large jurisdictions. The strengthening of the capabilities of the Centres, particularly those with large jurisdictions, would require the establishment of four Information/Reference assistants in 1981 the cost of which is estimated at \$31,600.

16. In paragraph 6 (c), the Secretary-General would be requested to improve the availability of technical equipment including telex facilities to the Information Centres. The gradual acquisition of equipment for all information centres is a policy that has been pursued for many years. A portion of the resources available under section 27 of the programme budget for the 1980-1981 biennium has been earmarked to provide or update certain technical equipment for the Centres. This has included telexes, movie projectors, movie screens, short-wave radios, tape recorders and microfiches. As indicated in the Secretary-General's comments in the Joint Inspection Unit report, 3/ 48 of the 60 existing centres as of 1979 were equipped with telex facilities. The Secretary-General proposes to undertake a further examination of this question to determine to what extent a more rapid provision of technical equipment will assist the centres in meeting the objectives of the draft resolution. His proposals in this regard will be contained in section 27 of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983.

2/ Ibid.

3/ Ibid.

17. Under operative paragraph 8, the Secretary-General would be requested to take immediately the necessary measures to ensure balance in the use of official languages in the publications and programmes of the Department of Public Information and to strengthen the effectiveness of the adaptation unit created for that purpose.

18. It will be recalled that, in connexion with the adoption of resolution 34/182 at the thirty-fourth session, 11 new posts, 5 at the Professional level and 6 at the General Service level were established for the production of Arabic, French and Spanish information materials, pursuant to the request that the Secretary-General take the necessary measures immediately to ensure a balance in the use of official languages through the establishment of a small adaptation unit. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the unit and further ensure a balance in the use of official languages, the creation of two posts would be necessary, one P-3 and one General Service, to initiate the production of information material in Russian. The salaries and common staff costs in respect of these two posts is estimated at \$31,000. A provision of \$25,000 would also be required for printing, reproduction and distribution of additional adapted material. Common services costs in respect of the new posts are estimated at \$12,100.

19. Under operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to initiate as early as possible in-service training programmes for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries as envisaged in his report to the General Assembly, ranging from two to four months, designed to benefit the maximum number possible of such persons, to coincide to the maximum extent possible with the sessions of the General Assembly.

20. Annual in-session training programmes would be undertaken for 12 broadcasters and 4 journalists for an average period of three months and would require additional resources estimated at \$108,000 annually comprising \$72,000 for the payment of stipends to the journalists and broadcasters (\$1,500 per month per trainee), \$32,000 in respect of travel to and from Headquarters for the trainees, and \$4,000 for the acquisition of training material. In addition, an amount of \$49,600 would be required in respect of common services such as accommodation and office space.

21. Under operative paragraph 10 (a), the Secretary-General would be requested to take the necessary measures to strengthen and improve the regional structure of the Radio Service of the Department of Public Information, paying particular attention to adequate programming in the various languages of the regions and in this regard to provide the Committee of Information at its next session with a plan for the establishment, as a matter of priority, of a separate Caribbean Unit and for the expansion of the African Unit of the Radio Service.

22. In this context, it should be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/182 had requested the Secretary-General in consultation with the Committee on Information, to review the distribution of regional units within the Radio Service of the Department of Public Information so as to better meet the particular needs of the various regions and to ensure their greater efficiency.

23. Pursuant to resolution 34/182, the Administrative Management Service of the Secretariat has been asked to undertake a review of the Radio Service. Upon completion of this review and in pursuance of operative paragraph 10 (a) of the present resolution, the Secretary-General would present his proposals for the improvement of the regional structure in the Radio Service of the Department of Public Information including the establishment of a separate Caribbean Unit and the expansion of the African Unit of the Radio Service. In the meantime, the establishment of two posts at the P-3 level is proposed to enhance the programming capability of the Service in Chinese and in Portuguese.

24. The additional costs in respect of the two new posts are as follows:

	\$
- Salaries and common staff costs	39,600
- Common services	12,400
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Total	52,000
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25. In paragraphs 10 (b) and (c), the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to make specific proposals to expand short-wave broadcasts in order to place them on a daily schedule and to prepare a study on the technical, financial and legal aspects regarding international short-wave broadcasts using facilities and frequencies of the United Nations. The Secretary-General expects to be able to produce a report containing his proposals, in this regard, within the resources available to him in the 1980-1981 budget.

26. In paragraph 10 (d) the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to clarify urgently the legal questions concerned with the proposal to introduce frequency modulation broadcasts by the United Nations in the Headquarters area. It would be the intention of the Secretary-General to request the Office of Legal Affairs to examine the legal aspects of this question.

27. In paragraph 10 (e) the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to provide the Information Service in Geneva with the equipment necessary for the electronic recording and dissemination of visual information concerning United Nations activities, as far as possible from within existing resources. A basic set of combined 3/4 and one inch video equipment of a suitable type and professional standards (with one camera) would cost \$266,400. The list of such equipment required to give UNIS Geneva a video capability as requested in the draft resolution would require the provision of \$199,400 in 1981 as a non-recurrent item which together with an amount of \$67,000 already in the 1980-1981 programme budget would make a total of \$266,400.

28. Under operative paragraph 10 (f) of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would be requested to take the necessary measures to provide adequate resources to the Department of Public Information to enable and to ensure full coverage through press releases of all important meetings and events in the United Nations.

29. It will be recalled that in his proposed programme budget for the biennium the Secretary-General had indicated that due to the increasing number of meetings there would be curtailment of or selectivity in coverage during busy periods and that selective coverage would result in the issuance of press releases summarizing the results of the meeting without details of the deliberations. ^{4/} The reinstatement of full coverage as requested in paragraph 10 (f) of the present draft resolution would entail the establishment of three new posts for press officers at the P-3 level. No new general service posts would be required in view of the increased productivity resulting from the introduction, in 1980, of word processing equipment. The additional costs in respect of the three posts are as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs	59,400
Common services	18,600
	<u> </u>
Total	78,000
	<u> </u>

30. Under operative paragraph 10 (h) the Secretary-General would be requested to allot equitable permanent working space at the United Nations Headquarters to representatives of news media with special attention to be given to the needs of those from the developing countries. A review of the critical space shortage prevailing at Headquarters is currently being undertaken and the Secretary-General would intend to take into consideration the present request in his future plans regarding space allocation.

31. As would be requested by the General Assembly under operative paragraph 10 (i) the Secretary-General would intend to examine, within existing resources, the possibility of strengthening the participation of developing countries in the utilization of satellites, and would make a report to the Committee on Information at its next session.

32. Under operative paragraph 10 (i) the Secretary-General would be requested to initiate the production of television programmes in Spanish. In order to meet this request, the establishment of new posts would be required - a television producer at the P-4 level and a production assistant at the G-5 level. In addition, an amount of \$40,000 would be required in 1981 in respect of additional contractual and operational costs. The total cost for the introduction of television programmes in Spanish would be as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs	39,500
Contractual and operational costs	40,000
Common services costs	12,100
	<u> </u>
Total	91,600
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^{4/} A/34/6, para. 27.48.

33. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolutions contained in document A/SPC/35/L.26, additional appropriations totalling \$980,200 would be required in 1981 - \$869,200 under section 27, Public Information, and \$111,000 under section 28D, General Services, Headquarters. These amounts may be summarized as follows:

	<u>Section 27</u>	<u>Section 28D</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Paragraph 2	23,900	6,200	30,100
Paragraph 9	75,000	-	75,000
Paragraph 14	196,800	-	196,800
Paragraph 15	31,600	-	31,600
Paragraph 18	56,000	12,100	68,100
Paragraph 20	108,000	49,600	157,600
Paragraph 24	39,600	12,400	52,000
Paragraph 27	199,400	-	199,400
Paragraph 29	59,400	18,600	78,000
Paragraph 32	79,500	12,100	91,600
	<u>869,200</u>	<u>111,000</u>	<u>980,200</u>

34. An amount of \$77,000 would also be required under section 31 in respect of staff assessment which would be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1.

35. The full cost, excluding those of a non-recurrent nature, of the financial implications arising out of the draft resolutions contained in document A/SPC/35/L.26 over a biennial period is estimated at \$1,728,300 for section 27, Public Information, or an increase of 4.3 per cent over the current appropriations for that section.