

1176 (XLI). United Nations public information activities in the economic, social, human rights and related fields

The Economic and Social Council,

*Noting with interest that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination "is arranging for a review to be undertaken of certain aspects of the information programmes of the organizations in the United Nations family",*¹²⁴

Agreeing with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination that there are increasing world needs for impartial information about the objectives and work of the United Nations family and that these needs should be considered in the light of present and newly emerging public information practices and of rapidly growing technical advances in mass communications,

Recognizing in particular the importance of improving, and of making more effective, information on the work of the United Nations in the economic, social, human rights and related fields,

Believing that there should be the widest possible understanding of and support for United Nations programmes by the peoples of Member States because of the contribution of these programmes to the growth of world-wide economic and social progress,

1. *Looks forward* to receiving the results of the review to be made by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination of certain aspects of the information programmes of the organizations of the United Nations family;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) *To undertake, with such assistance as he deems necessary, through the use of consultants or governmental experts selected on an equitable geographical basis, a study of the information activities of the United Nations with respect to its economic, social and human rights work, including the financing, staffing, publication and press relations programmes and their effectiveness and the relationships with the information services of the organizations of the United Nations system;*

(b) *To inform the Council at its forty-third session on measures taken to improve the information activities on the economic, social and human rights work of the United Nations and to suggest further steps to be taken to that end;*

3. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to suggest, after appropriate consultation with Governments, the ways in which information programmes of Governments of Member States and, as appropriate, educational institutions, civic or community groups, could give support to the United Nations through the Press, radio, television and the cinema.

4. *Decides* to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-second session the reports mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, together with such comments as the Council may deem appropriate.

*1445th plenary meeting,
5 August 1966.*

¹²⁴ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 3, document E/4191, para. 98.*

1177 (XLI). Work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields and its budgetary requirements

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1046 (XXXVII) of 15 August 1964 and 1093 (XXXIX) of 31 July 1965 on the presentation by the Secretary-General of a work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields together with adequate information on its budgetary implications,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,¹²⁵ the comments thereon submitted by the Special Committee on Co-ordination in its report on its fourth session¹²⁶ and the statement of the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs in the Council,¹²⁷

Considering that the increase in the scope and importance of United Nations activities in the economic, social and human rights fields and the diversification of those activities reinforce the need constantly to seek to ensure better use of resources in the execution of programmes and therefore necessitates a continuing review of the procedures obtaining with respect to those activities,

Considering the desirability of more forward planning of programmes, on a realistic basis, with an assessment of priorities, where necessary,

Reaffirming the importance it attaches to making, each year, a careful scrutiny of the United Nations work programme in the economic, social and human rights fields in the light of the budgetary implications of that programme,

Bearing in mind the importance of relating the expenditure on administrative and substantive services to the corresponding field activities for programmes in the economic and social fields,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 2049 (XX) of 13 December 1965 by which the Assembly established the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, and without prejudice to future consideration, by the Council, of any recommendations which, following the Assembly's consideration of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee, may be adopted by the General Assembly or transmitted by it to the Council,

1. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's report on the work programme¹²⁸ as a constructive step in the direction of an integrated programme and budget approach which would enable the Council to correlate the programme and available resources;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council, including the regional economic commissions, as appropriate, the various sections of the work programme,

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, agenda item 31, documents E/4179/Rev.1 and Add.1-18.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, agenda item 3, document E/4215.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, *Forty-first Session*, 1431st meeting.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Forty-first Session, Annexes*, agenda item 31, documents E/4179/Rev.1 and Add.1-18.

and requests those organs to include such comments as they may have on those sections in their annual reports to the Council ;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit annually to the Council at its spring session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, further reports on the work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields and the budgetary implications of that programme, indicating changes in the programme arising from decisions of the Council and of other United Nations organs concerned and their budgetary implications ;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Council, as early as possible during its spring session, with a preliminary indication of the related budgetary estimates for the succeeding financial year ;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare the work programme for the period 1967-1968 in the light of the improvements suggested by the Special Committee on Co-ordination, annexed to this resolution, and to include therein a list of projects which were required to be postponed or dropped, as well as a list of new projects taken up in 1966 as a result of decisions of the Council and of other United Nations organs concerned ;

6. *Recommends* that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, continue his review of the procedures governing the programming, budgeting and management of the United Nations activities in the economic, social and human rights fields and that he report thereon as appropriate ;

7. *Recommends* that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should continue to be invited to take part in the consideration of the work programme by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, and that the Committee's report should again be available to the Advisory Committee when it reviews the 1968 budget estimates ;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in addition, to submit annually to the Council at its spring session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, a summary of the financial implications of the recommendations of its subsidiary commissions and committees.

*1445th plenary meeting,
5 August 1966.*

ANNEX

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION ON ITS FOURTH SESSION 129

63. The Committee feels that it would be better equipped to review the work programme if the financial data were based on programme budgeting (see paragraph 61 above). Until such new procedures are introduced, the general survey will be based on statistical estimates which however should be improved. Among such improvements (subject to review in the light of the decisions of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and of the

Specialized Agencies) the Committee wishes to suggest the following :

(a) A brief introductory chapter might be included in future reports setting forth the general policy which the Secretary-General has followed in drawing up the programme.

(b) The costs of economic and social activities might include their share of common services at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

(c) Figures should be adjusted for changes in prices, including salaries. For example, it might be possible to present the data in terms of the salary scales of one year, thus giving a better idea of the extent to which the various programmes have grown or contracted in real terms.

(d) If possible, figures might also be provided on the total expenditures in each field of activity.

(e) An effort should be made to indicate — or, when precise data are unobtainable, to estimate — costs of meetings of policy-making organs (including relevant meetings of the General Assembly). These expenditures should take into account not only direct conference costs, but also other costs such as those of documentation and the substantive services required to prepare it.

(f) An effort might also be made to estimate carefully the cost of substantive services which are devoted to supporting operational activities. The cost of the substantive services would be composed of three components : (i) support for policy-making organs ; (ii) support for operational activities, and (iii) research and other activities.

64. The Committee has the following additional recommendations regarding the presentation of the sectoral work programme :

(1) An effort should be made to associate more closely the programme and financial data. The Committee considers that individual project descriptions should include an indication for every project of the total resources required to carry them out, e.g. in man-months or as a percentage of total resources of the unit concerned. The project descriptions should also include a rough approximation of their completion dates ; these descriptions should be as uniform as possible.

(2) At present, sectoral work programmes are not accompanied by any descriptions of activities in the field (which now comprise more than half of all economic and social activities). It is important that a concise summary of these projects in each sector should be added to clarify the relationship between policy-making and research activities at Headquarters and in the regional commissions on the one hand and field activities on the other.

(3) For a number of programmes the description of activities is limited to a definition of functions. This general statement would be much more useful if it gave a clear idea of the work being done in preparing for and servicing meetings, in carrying out research, and in supporting field projects as well as the relative amount of time spent in each of these areas. It should throw light on the ways in which research is serving in a practical way the needs of policy-making organs and work in the field, or otherwise serving the priority needs of Member States. In addition, the description might indicate the areas where the level of activity may be reduced or increased. It was also suggested that as regards activities in the social field, information about related work of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme should be presented so as to provide a more comprehensive picture of these activities.

(4) A list of all the projects should be maintained with the data reflecting the resources required for them and their probable duration. Only major projects should be described in

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, document E/4179/Rev.1.

detail, together with projects which are being completed and new projects. For each project summarized, an effort should be made, whenever possible, to assess its effectiveness in carrying out the policy aims of the General Assembly, the Council and/or the subsidiary body concerned. In particular, the way in which it is serving the priority needs of the developing countries may be explained.

(5) It was noted that difficulties in presentation of the work programme had arisen owing to the different organizational patterns at Headquarters and in the regional commissions. A system of cross-references should be introduced to deal with instances where projects in the same sector come under different organizational units at Headquarters and in the regional commissions.