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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.25

Twenty-first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement in document A/C.5/36/86, submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.25 recommended by the Special Political Committee. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General estimates that additional appropriations totalling \$912,600 would be required in the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983 - \$772,400 under section 27 and \$140,000 under section 28 D.
2. Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution would have the General Assembly approve the report of the Committee on Information 1/ and its recommendations. 2/ As noted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of his statement, the draft resolution contains, in various operative paragraphs, recommendations which address some of the same issues as may be found in the recommendations of the Committee on Information.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session,
Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21).

2/ Ibid., para. 154.

3. Operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution concerns the strengthening and enhancement of the effectiveness of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC). The Secretary-General, in paragraph 3 of his statement (A/C.5/36/86), states that this would require the establishment of two additional posts (P-5 and G-4) which would be used for research and evaluation and for the preparation of the JUNIC plan of action.

4. The Committee was informed that secretariat support for JUNIC is currently provided by the Director of the Division of Economic and Social Information (DESI) who serves as Secretary, and by assistant secretary of the Committee on Information who serves JUNIC in the same capacity. In the opinion of the Committee, no sufficient justification has been given to change the present arrangement. Accordingly the Committee recommends against the establishment of the P-5 and G-4 posts with a consequential reduction in the estimates of \$125,800 (including \$28,300 for common services costs).

5. In paragraph 4 of his statement, the Secretary-General estimates the cost of publishing four issues per year of the Monthly Chronicle in Russian at \$46,000 for 1982-1983. This action would be taken in response to operative paragraph 12 (a) of the draft resolution by which the Secretary-General would be requested to ensure that the Department of Public Information make a more strenuous effort to ensure balance in the use of official languages in the publications and programmes of the Department. The Advisory Committee has no objection to this proposal.

6. According to the Secretary-General, expansion of information services to Spanish-speaking countries, pursuant to operative paragraph 12 (b) of the draft resolution, would require the establishment of an additional information officer post at the P-3 level, as well as an additional amount of \$10,000 for cables (see A/C.5/36/86, para. 6). The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the Secretary-General's estimate of \$72,500.

7. In paragraphs 7 and 8 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the immediate financial implications of paragraph 13 of the draft resolution would involve the establishment of a separate Caribbean Unit in the Radio and Visual Services Division and the expansion of its African Unit.

8. According to the Secretary-General, the new Caribbean Unit would require four posts, one of which would be provided through redeployment. The related estimate is as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs (One P-4, one G-5, one G-4)	126,800
Engineering services	55,600
Supplies	25,100
Distribution costs	26,300
Common services costs	<u>41,800</u>
Total	<u>275,600</u>

9. The expansion of the African Unit would entail additional expenditure as follows:

	\$
Salaries and common staff costs (One P-3, one G-4)	77,600
Engineering services	42,800
Supplies	14,200
Distribution costs	30,000
Common services costs	<u>28,300</u>
Total	<u>192,900</u>

10. The Committee notes that amounts of \$55,600 and \$42,800 are included for engineering services for the Caribbean and African Units, respectively, and trusts that coverage for these services will be strictly monitored to ensure maximum productivity. The Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the Secretary-General's estimates for the separate Caribbean Unit and for the expansion of the African Unit.

11. Paragraphs 10 to 12 of the Secretary-General's statement deal with operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution which concerns the expansion of the United Nations shortwave broadcasts. Although an estimate for the cost of implementing the first stage of such an expansion is given in paragraph 11 of A/C.5/36/86, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 12, requests the advice of the General Assembly "in determining the priority of this item". The related estimate has therefore not been included in the total of financial implications summarized by the Secretary-General in paragraph 23 of his statement.

12. Paragraph 14 of A/C.5/36/86 indicates that an additional amount of \$63,400 (for a G-4 post and additional communications) would be required to strengthen

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services to the pool of non-aligned news agencies. The Advisory Committee is not convinced that strengthening in this regard means the automatic addition of resources and, accordingly, recommends that the estimate be deleted.

13. Paragraphs 15 and 16 of A/C.5/36/86 concerning operative paragraph 20 of the draft resolution which, inter alia, requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to strengthen the capacity of the information centres where needed. In response to this request the Secretary-General proposes to provide each of the 62 centres with an additional \$1,000 for local publications and an additional \$500 for travel, for a total of \$93,000. In the view of the Advisory Committee this proposal does not seem to be based on any specific programme of work, especially since the strengthening is supposed to take place where needed. Pending the development of such a plan and the results of the study referred to in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Secretary-General's statement, the Advisory Committee recommends that the amount of \$93,000 be deleted.

14. As stated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 17 of A/C.5/36/86, in addition to the recommendations contained in the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, there are recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Information which are not addressed in the draft resolution but which would give rise to administrative and financial implications. In paragraph 19 of his statement, the Secretary-General deals with recommendation 18 of the Committee on Information which, inter alia, calls for a strengthening of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. To do this, the Secretary-General proposes to establish an additional G-4 post. The Advisory Committee was informed that this section already has four Professional and two General Service posts with an additional two General Service staff provided under temporary assistance. Under the circumstances the Committee is not convinced that the requested strengthening necessitates the addition of staff. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the estimate of \$43,400 be deleted.

Recapitulation

15. Taking into account its observations and recommendations in paragraph 4 to 6, 10, and 12 to 14 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.25 recommended by the Special Political Committee, additional appropriations would be required in the amounts of \$502,100 under section 27 and \$84,900 under section 28 D of the programme budget for 1982-1983. An amount of \$58,600 would also be required under section 31 (Staff assessment), to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1.
