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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983

Section 28J - Staff Training Activities, Headquarters Contractual
Status of Language Teachers

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In the report of the Secretary-General on the review and evaluation of the United Nations Language Training Programme, 1/ paragraphs 40 and 47 indicated that the need to regularize the contractual status of the language teachers was under discussion and that should recommendations with financial implications on their status be in order, a separate submission would be presented to the General Assembly.
2. The present document contains the proposal of the Secretary-General related to the contractual status of language teachers at Headquarters and the financial implications of their having the status of staff members.

Background information

3. The Language Training Programme constitutes a permanent feature of the training offered to the staff. The evolution of the language programme and its present scope are described in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General.
4. Before 1969, the language programme had relied primarily on the services of staff members or spouses of staff members, each of whom taught only one or two classes and was paid on an hourly basis. With the increased demands of the General Assembly and the consequent need for fully qualified teachers, seven P-2 language teacher/co-ordinator posts were established. The incumbents of these posts, in addition to teaching a few hours each week, were given the primary responsibility for co-ordinating language training and developing pedagogical material. At the same time, it was decided to assign the bulk of the teaching hours to a group of professionally trained teachers, rather than to continue to rely on staff members.

1/ A/C.5/36/2.

The number of classes taught gradually increased until, by 1972, in the case of many teachers, there was a clear disparity between their status as occasional employees receiving no benefits beyond their hourly pay, and the virtually full-time workloads they were carrying.

5. Between 1973 and 1976, a series of improvements in their conditions of service were introduced, while their status remained that of non-staff members. These improvements included provisions for contracts covering three 13-week trimesters, with one week of paid vacation following each trimester, paid holidays, health insurance and sick leave (accrual of sick leave at a rate of two working days for each month of continuous service, up to a maximum of 24 working days). Since 1976, the hourly rate has also been reviewed and adjusted on several occasions in the light of significant increases in the cost of living. However, the present contract, called Language Teacher Employment Agreement, provides for no pension or other benefits beyond those described above.

6. As of July 1981, 20 teachers held such employment agreements and taught an average of 14.5 hours a week while 21 other teachers were engaged part-time on an individual contractor basis and taught an average of 6.6 hours per week. The average age of the 20 teachers holding Teacher Employment Agreements is 40.8 years and the average total length of service with the United Nations is 8.9 years. Twelve of them have Master's Degrees or equivalent and three have Ph.D's or equivalent.

Desirability of granting some teachers staff member status

7. The inadequacy of the present conditions of service of teachers has affected the over-all efficiency of the Language Training Programme. As indicated in paragraphs 25, 26 and 27 of the report of the Secretary-General ^{2/} pedagogical material needs to be refined, updated and completed to ensure consistency and efficiency of teaching programmes at Headquarters and in field duty stations. This requires continuous feedback from the teachers and their greater participation and contribution to the programme as a whole. Under present arrangements, teacher responsibilities are confined to the class-room, but if they were to become full-time staff members their responsibilities would increase and in addition to participating in the revision of pedagogical material and methods they would be able to update their teaching skills in an organized and systematic manner. Furthermore, they would be responsible for guiding and counselling students particularly those who miss classes for reasons beyond their control or encounter special learning problems.

8. In view of the above, it is proposed to give a selected number of teachers the status of staff members in the context of the improvement of the Language Training Programme and as part of the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. At present, for all languages, some 400 hours of teaching are given weekly at Headquarters. Due to fluctuations in enrolment, from one term to another, and from one language to another, it is appropriate that some 100 hours continue to

^{2/} A/C.5/36/2.

be taught on an individual contractor basis. The other 300 hours should be taught by teachers who are staff members, and accordingly 20 full-time teachers in all languages would be required at Headquarters. It is therefore proposed that 20 language teachers be given staff member status at Headquarters, with fixed-term appointments for the duration of one year at a time. Thus, they would participate in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and receive other benefits usually given to locally recruited personnel. Their conditions of service would be governed by the 100 series of the Staff Rules.

9. Part-time teachers would continue to be paid on an hourly basis as is the practice in outside institutions for part-time faculty members who have lesser administrative and academic responsibilities.

Emoluments

10. In view of the desirability of resolving the long-standing issue of the contractual status of language teachers, and of facilitating the implementation of the recommendations to improve the over-all conduct of the language programme as approved by the Fifth Committee, interim arrangements are hereby proposed for the purpose of establishing net salary and pensionable remuneration levels for language teachers, pending a review of the classification and remuneration structure for the language teachers by the International Civil Service Commission. These arrangements would consist of using existing salary scales for locally recruited personnel and equating the emoluments of teachers to a salary rate equivalent to that of the principal level of the General Service category.

Financial implications

11. In order to implement the above proposals, taking into account common staff costs, an additional appropriation of \$154,400 under general temporary assistance funds (Section 28J - Table 28J.10) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983, would be required. In order to calculate this increase, the present costs for 20 teachers were estimated for the biennium and were compared with the estimated costs of placing the 20 teachers at a salary level equivalent to that of the principal level of the General Service category. Of the additional amount requested (\$154,400), \$143,900 relates to the pension benefits to which the 20 teachers would be entitled as staff members of the Organization. The remaining \$10,500 relates to their entitlement to the dependency allowance. In addition, an amount of \$220,200 for staff assessment would be required under section 31, offset by a credit in like amount under income section 2. For reasons of flexibility due to the fluctuations in enrolment and in view of the ongoing review and evaluation of the language programme, it is not proposed that individual posts be established for language teachers, but rather that the language teachers become staff members and their salaries be financed under general temporary assistance.

12. The proposal to grant language teachers at Headquarters the status of staff members may raise similar expectations at other duty stations which have language programmes. It is contemplated, however, that staff member status for language teachers at other duty stations may be introduced gradually and only when the efficiency of the language programmes so require. It should be noted, in this connexion, that the updating and improvement of pedagogical material would be done at Headquarters and would benefit teachers and students at all duty stations. Therefore, the responsibilities and duties of teachers at other duty stations may not be always comparable to those of teachers at Headquarters.