

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.2/196
14 October 1957

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Twelfth session
SECOND COMMITTEE
Agenda item 29 (a)

PROGRAMMES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

The Outposting of Certain Programme Officers of the
Technical Assistance Administration

Report by the Secretary-General

1. At the tenth session of the General Assembly (1955) the Secretary-General was authorized to implement, on a trial basis and in a single region, a proposal to effect a partial reorganization of the Programme Division of the Technical Assistance Administration. This reorganization was designed to supplement and strengthen still further the integration already existing between the Technical Assistance Administration and the substantive departments of the Secretariat, both at Headquarters and in the field.
2. The essential features of the proposal were that certain functions and responsibilities of the Area Office for Latin America of the Programme Division of the Technical Assistance Administration should be taken over by the Office of the Director of that Division,^{1/} and that certain area officers should be outposted to the cities of Santiago and Mexico City in which the offices of the Economic Commission for Latin America are located. Thus, while the Technical Assistance Administration at Headquarters would continue to be responsible, in addition to the over-all direction of the programme, for financial and budgetary control, for recruitment and the administrative servicing of experts and fellows, and for the publication and distribution of reports, substantive support for the programme would be drawn directly from the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America as well as from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York.

^{1/} A/C.5/667, 25 October 1956.

3. The experiment began when four area officers, including the Head of the Office, were posted to Santiago in June 1956. Two other members of the staff assumed their duties in Mexico City in August of that year. Thus the new arrangements have been in full operation for just over one year.

4. At its eleventh session (1956), the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation "that the experiment be continued at the discretion of the Secretary-General during 1957, and that a final decision be postponed until the Secretary-General is in a position to make more positive reports to the summer session of the Economic and Social Council and to the twelfth session of the General Assembly".^{2/}

5. The Economic and Social Council at its twenty-fourth session (July 1957) took note of the Annual Report of the Economic Commission for Latin America^{3/} which contained a resolution adopted at its seventh session, held at La Paz in May of this year, in which the Commission:

.... "Expresses its gratitude to the General Assembly for having authorized the decentralization of the Technical Assistance Administration services on an experimental basis;

"Considers that, according to the experience of a large number of countries, during the brief period in which the Technical Assistance Administration has enjoyed the collaboration of the secretariat of the Commission, the efficiency of the Technical Assistance Programme in Latin America has considerably increased;

"Expresses its interest in the continuation of the experiment in the decentralization of technical assistance in Latin America."

6. At its twenty-fourth session, the Secretary-General reported to the Economic and Social Council on the progress of the experimental outposting and indicated his intention to request the General Assembly to permit its continuation on the same basis.^{4/} The budget estimates presented for 1958 include the funds necessary for the continued operation of this scheme.

^{2/} A/C.5/667.

^{3/} E/2998.

^{4/} E/SR.980, 10 July 1957.

7. The working procedures established since this experiment started, have permitted closer collaboration between the Technical Assistance Administration and the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America - collaboration which has been reflected in a marked increase in the interest of the Latin American Governments in technical assistance, particularly in the fields of natural resources and power development, transport and communications, and industrial development and productivity. Closer contact has also been established between the Technical Assistance Administration and governmental agencies concerned with economic development, resulting in more effective advance study and better formulation of projects and, thereby, in a more rapid implementation and greater usefulness of the programme. Guidance supplied to experts by the substantive departments, and especially by the Economic Commission's staff, who have a detailed knowledge of the environment, has also resulted in better service by the experts to the Governments.

8. The outposting of TAA personnel in Latin America has produced useful results in the development of the technical assistance programmes in that region, and the working arrangements instituted are being kept under constant review in order to ensure the maximum efficiency of service and economy in operation. The Secretary-General feels, however, that before a definitive view can be reached regarding this form of organization and its possibilities for use in other areas, a further trial period would be desirable. It is, therefore, proposed that he be authorized to continue the experiment in Latin America at his discretion.

