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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1974-1975  
AND MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1974-1977

United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution  
contained in document A/C.2/L.1312/Rev.1

Twenty-fourth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions to the General Assembly at its twenty-  
eighth session on the proposed programme budget for the biennium  
1974-1975

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1569) in which he sets out the financial implications of the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1312/Rev.1) recommended by the Second Committee, at its 1571st meeting on 27 November 1973, after its consideration of the note by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements (A/9238).

2. The Secretary-General estimates that, for the period from 1974 to 1976, the costs of the Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements, scheduled to convene in Vancouver, Canada from 31 May to 11 June 1976, will be \$6,137,200 (\$2,424,600 for Conference costs, \$3,072,300 for Exposition costs and \$640,300 for information activities). The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had, at its first session, recommended that the basic costs of the Conference-Exposition be met by the regular budget of the United Nations and that a portion of the costs, especially as regards the "Exposition and Preparatory Process", be met by the Environment Fund (decision 4 (I)). 1/ In operative

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session,  
Supplement No. 25 (A/9025), annex I.

paragraph 2 of the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1312/Rev.1), recommended by the Second Committee, the General Assembly would endorse this method of financing. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General therefore estimates that the following additional appropriations would be required under section 16 (United Nations Environment Programme) of the programme budgets for the biennium 1974-1975 and the biennium 1976-1977:

	<u>1974-1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Basic cost of the Conference	1,599,600	825,000	2,424,600
Cost of information activities	417,200	223,100	640,300
Total . . .	<u>2,016,800</u>	<u>1,048,100</u>	<u>3,064,900</u>

3. The Advisory Committee notes that the Government of the host country for the Conference, Canada, "in addition to assuming the normal responsibilities required by General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969, 2/ has offered to co-operate in such other activities as are deemed likely to make the occasion meaningful to the maximum possible range of interests" (A/9238, para. 13).

4. In its consideration of the Secretary-General's statement on the financial implications of the Conference-Exposition, the Committee bore in mind operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee, in which the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to set up immediately a small conference secretariat, drawing upon the resources of the United Nations system, and to appoint, at an early date, a Secretary-General for the Conference-Exposition (A/C.2/L.1312/Rev.1). The Advisory Committee is concerned over the fact that the Secretary-General has so far given no indication of what staff contribution will be provided from existing organizational units, and that he apparently assumes that the entire staff needs of the Conference-Exposition will have to be met through temporary assistance at a cost of \$1,525,700 (\$1,026,900 in 1974-1975 and \$498,820 in 1976) for substantive staff, 3/ and \$307,700

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2/ "... to defray, after consultation with the Secretary-General as to their nature and possible extent, the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved" in holding sessions away from their established headquarters.

3/ These are currently estimated as follows: 1974-1975 - 16 Professional and higher staff; 27 and 29 General Service staff; 1976 - 16 Professional and higher staff; 26 General Service staff.

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(\$197,500 in 1974-1975 and \$110,200 in 1976) for staff engaged in information activities. 4/

5. The Advisory Committee notes the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his note on the Conference-Exposition that "it may be possible to reduce the ... estimates of the basic cost of the Conference as a result of contributions which can be made to the Conference-Exposition by organizational units within the United Nations" (A/9238, para. 47), and that, while the Secretary-General was reviewing the possibility of such contributions, "it would seem desirable that the final determination in this regard should be made with the participation of the Secretary-General of the Conference-Exposition, who is still to be selected, and after the Preparatory Committee has had an opportunity, at its first meeting, to clarify and define further the objectives of the Conference-Exposition". In the circumstances, the Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will continue to be guided by the sentiments thus expressed and that a further review will be made after the Secretary-General of the Conference has been appointed, with special emphasis placed upon a reduction of temporary staff through fuller utilization of resources in existing organizational units.

5. In addition to its concern over the staffing of the Conference, the Committee questions whether the estimates for consultants, as described in the Secretary-General's note (A/9238, para. 20) were formulated with specific requirements in mind. Inasmuch as the Preparatory Committee has not as yet met "to clarify and define further the objectives of the Conference-Exposition" (A/9238, para. 47), it would seem that the man-month levels of senior consultants' services must have been assigned rather arbitrarily. The Advisory Committee trusts that a further review of the need for consultant services will take place after the selection of a Secretary-General and the initial meetings of the Preparatory Committee, and that refinement of objectives and requirements will provide a more realistic basis for estimates of consultants' services.

6. The Advisory Committee also has misgivings about projected expenditure on information activities currently estimated at \$417,200 for 1974-1975 and \$223,100 for 1976. The Committee is of the opinion that significant savings could be achieved in this area if possibilities of assistance from the Office of Public Information and other relevant organizational units were fully explored and realized and if co-ordination with the information activities which will doubtless be emanating from the Government of the host country could be achieved. Further, the Committee questions the assignment of all expenses under information activities to the regular budget, inasmuch as a significant portion of these activities would seem to relate to the Exposition itself.

7. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee considers that further review and refinement of the Conference-Exposition's objectives and requirements can

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4/ Currently estimated as follows: Professional and higher staff - 3 in 1974, 4 in 1975 and 4 in 1976; General Service staff - 5 in 1974, 6 in 1975 and 6 in 1976.

result in significant cost reductions, particularly in the areas of temporary assistance, consultant services, and information activities. In expectation of those savings, the Advisory Committee recommends an over-all reduction of \$450,000 in the estimates for the Conference-Exposition, of which \$300,000 would relate to the biennium 1974-1975.

8. In light of the foregoing, the Fifth Committee may wish to inform the General Assembly that should it adopt the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee (A/C.2/L.1312/Rev.1), an additional appropriation in an amount of \$1,716,800 would be required under section 16 of the budget for the biennium 1974-1975, together with an additional \$172,000 under section 34 (staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

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