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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

The establishment of a network for the exchange
of technological information

Statement of administrative and financial implications of the revised
draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/31/L.43/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with
rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. At its 65th meeting, on 10 December 1976, the Second Committee adopted the draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/31/L.43/Rev.1, as orally revised. It had before it a statement of financial implications (A/C.2/31/L.85).
2. In respect of operative paragraph 5 of the revised draft resolution and more particularly concerning the request that the Secretary-General and the Interagency Task Force continue their work in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 3507 (XXX) and submit further conclusions and recommendations on the establishment of a network for the exchange of technological information to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, the Task Force would envisage convening three sessions during 1977. At the first session, which would take place at United Nations Headquarters immediately following the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the Task Force would review progress on the pilot directory and the study of information systems networks referred to in paragraphs 3 and 5 below. Its second session during 1977 would be in May and would be devoted to a review of progress on its work programme and preparation of a progress report to the Economic and Social Council. The Task Force at its third session, envisaged as taking place in September or October 1977, would prepare a report containing further conclusions and recommendations concerning the network for submission to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session. It would also review the

results of the high-level missions referred to in paragraph 7 below and finalize arrangements for the regional meetings referred to in the first report of the Task Force (E/5839, para. 75 (e)) and the way in which those regional meetings might be linked with the regional meetings to be convened as part of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development.

3. As has been the case up to now, the Task Force will continue to be composed of representatives from the concerned organizations of the United Nations system including the regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Intellectual Property Organization. Since many of the members of the Task Force will, in the course of their normal duties, be attending the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the costs associated with convening the first session of the Task Force in 1977 would be limited to \$2,400 for subsistence. The second and third sessions which will take place at Geneva would involve expenditures for travel and subsistence of approximately \$7,600 each. Thus, gross costs for the convening of the Task Force during 1977 are estimated to be \$17,600.

4. For the purpose of implementing that part of operative paragraph 5 of the revised draft resolution concerning the preparation and publication of the pilot directory of United Nations information services, 1/ the Secretary-General envisages undertaking the work associated with the directory within existing resources.

5. In considering the request referred to in paragraph 6 of the revised draft resolution concerning the provision, within the existing capability of the United Nations, of the necessary administrative services for carrying out as far as is at present possible the recommendations included in the report of the Secretary-General, 2/ the Secretary-General would propose to provide the necessary administrative services through the Office for Science and Technology of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs - the Office at present co-ordinating the work of the Task Force. For this purpose the resource allocation of six work-months of professional staff and three work-months of general services staff provided for in 1977 for project 3.1, "International technological information exchange" of the 1976-1977 programme budget for the Science and Technology programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would also be devoted to this function. Thus, to implement operative paragraph 6 of the revised draft resolution, the Secretary-General would not envisage any financial implication.

6. In respect of operative paragraph 7 of the revised draft resolution concerning the request that the Secretary-General and the Interagency Task Force ascertain

1/ See also E/5839, para. 76 (a).

2/ See E/5839.

the availability of current inventories of information capabilities at the national, regional and international levels in terms of information sources, means of access to information and information-related services; it would be proposed to undertake an in-depth study of the existing information systems networks and hold high-level consultations with officials in organizations and institutions in Member States.

7. With respect to the in-depth study, it is envisaged that this would require approximately 4-1/2 work-months of consultant effort which is estimated to cost approximately \$23,000. This also takes into account that some support services would be provided by the envisaged Information Services Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. ^{3/} In assessing ways in which consulting resources might be redeployed in order to cover the projected expenses of the study referred to above, the Secretary-General has taken into account the deferred projects in the Science and Technology programme. ^{4/} As a result, it is intended to redeploy \$7,000 in consultant funds from project 4.2 and \$16,000 from project 4.1 for a total of \$23,000. Thus, in order to undertake the in-depth study, no additional financial resources are required.

8. Concerning the consultations with officials in organizations and institutions in Member States and in particular with respect to assessing the information sources, means of access to information and information services, it would be proposed to arrange for a series of high-level missions to be undertaken in the four developing regions in the world. The purpose of the missions would be to arrange for discussion with government officials at the highest possible level the technological information needs of Members States and the role the network can play in improving development planning and to solicit guidance from Governments concerning the characteristics of and operating modalities for the network, more particularly with respect to the linking of national and regional information services activities with the proposed network. Following the missions, the experts would report on their missions and participate in the Task Force at its meeting in September or October - the meeting which will be preparing the report containing further conclusions and recommendations for submission to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly requested in paragraph 5 of the resolution. The experts envisaged by the Task Force to undertake the missions would be very senior persons conversant with problems of developing countries who, it is expected, will be seconded by their organization or Government. Thus, the only expenses involved would be for travel and subsistence which are estimated to amount to approximately \$19,765.

9. In respect of operative paragraph 8 of the revised draft resolution concerning the identification by means of the inventories of any deficiencies that might inhibit the setting up of the network, it is envisaged that this would

^{3/} See document A/C.5/31/69.

^{4/} See document E/C.5/31/37 of 22 November 1976, paras. 5A.42 and 5A.43 concerning budget and programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1976/77.

involve some 3-1/2 work-months of effort which is estimated would cost approximately \$17,000.

10. Although at the present time the Secretary-General is not in a position to identify the way in which the additional amounts referred to in paragraphs 7 and 8 above of \$19,765 associated with the consultations-high-level missions and work associated with the implementation of paragraph 8 of the draft resolution in the amount of \$17,000 can be covered, it is expected that these can be met from existing appropriations in the 1976/77 biennial Programme Budget for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

11. Concerning the request contained in operative paragraph 8 of the revised draft resolution that measures to remedy the deficiencies be recommended to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, although every effort will be made to comply with this request, it is proposed that information on the progress made in the study be included in the progress report that the Task Force will be submitting to the Council at its sixty-third session. The final recommendations on the measures will be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session in compliance with operative paragraph 5 of the revised draft resolution.

12. In respect of operative paragraph 9 of the revised draft resolution requesting the Executive Director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to take the necessary measures towards making the information bank operational, provisions to carry out a pilot operation have been included in the revised programme and budget proposals under section 12, UNIDO. ^{5/} It should be noted, however, that following the observations of the Industrial Development Board ^{6/} and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ^{7/} the Secretary-General was requested not to commence the pilot operation before the Industrial Development Board has had an opportunity to examine the results of the feasibility study conducted in 1976. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that the UNIDO project should be subject to the review procedures recommended by the Committee in its report on electronic data processing and information services in the United Nations.

13. In summary, an additional appropriation in the amount of \$17,600 (for the convening of meetings of the Task Force during 1977) would be required under Section 5A of the programme budget for 1976-1977 for implementing the draft resolution.

^{5/} A/C.5/31/11, para. 103 (d).

^{6/} ID/B/171/Add.1, para. 47.

^{7/} A/31/8/Add.7, para. 18.