



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/37/7/Add.22
14 December 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-seventh session
Agenda item 103

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983

First performance report

Addendum to the report of the Secretary-General

Section 14. Economic Commission for Western Asia

Additional requirements arising from the Commission's relocation to its permanent headquarters in Baghdad

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

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on additional requirements arising from the relocation of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) from Beirut, Lebanon, to its permanent headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq (A/C.5/37/65/Add.1). The Committee was provided with additional information and clarifications by the representatives of the Secretary-General during its consideration of this item.

2. In the light of the developments described in paragraphs 1 and 2 of his report (*ibid.*) the Secretary-General concludes in paragraph 3 that

"In order to enable ECWA to move to its new headquarters in January 1983 as planned and operate satisfactorily immediately thereafter, additional costs will have to be incurred in 1983 for the following purposes:

(a) Strengthening the General Services Section of the ECWA Division of Administration, which will be responsible for the management of a large, sophisticated building complex;

(b) Providing for building maintenance and transportation equipment and spare parts in order to ensure maximum efficiency in the specific context in which ECWA will operate;

(c) Providing for a level of general operating expenses commensurate with the new headquarters requirements."

3. In paragraph 15 the Secretary-General summarizes the additional requirements in 1983 as follows:

	\$	\$
Established posts		
(1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 25 internationally recruited General Service and 47 local-level posts)	-	639 800
<u>Common staff costs</u>	-	615 000
<u>General operating expenses</u>		
Cleaning services	446 000	
Electricity	327 000	
Communications	160 000	
Other	<u>202 000</u>	1 135 000
<u>Furniture and equipment</u>		
Building-maintenance equipment	412 300	
Transportation equipment	146 000	<u>558 300</u>
Total		<u>2 948 100</u>

4. The Advisory Committee understands that expenditures and obligations incurred to date in connection with the relocation of ECWA from Beirut to Baghdad have amounted to \$2,237,000, as follows:

/...

- (a) Common staff costs (essentially travel on transfer, household removal, unaccompanied baggage, transportation of privately-owned vehicles, installation grant for staff relocating to Baghdad; and termination indemnities for some local level staff recruited in Beirut)

1980-1981 programme budget	\$ 542 000
1982-1983 programme budget	<u>1 458 000</u>
Subtotal	\$2 000 000

- (b) Lease of residential building from the Government of Iraq to provide temporary accommodation in Baghdad for internationally recruited General Service staff (on the assumption that the permanent residential buildings to be made available by the host Government would be ready for occupancy in July 1983)

1982-1983 programme budget	\$ <u>237 000</u>
Total	<u>\$2 237 000</u>

5. The relocation of ECWA from Beirut to Baghdad was originally scheduled to begin in January 1980 and to be completed by the summer of that year (A/C.5/34/11, para. 3 (a)). The move actually took place "over a period of six months starting in January 1982" (A/C.5/37/65/Add.1, para. 1). Since then, the secretariat of the Commission has been operating from provisional headquarters in Baghdad pending the handing-over of the Commission's permanent headquarters complex to the United Nations by the Government of Iraq; this is now expected to take place some time during January-February 1983 (*ibid.*). In paragraph 2 of his report (*ibid.*), the Secretary-General states that in addition to the new buildings, the host Government is also providing extensive and sophisticated furnishings and equipment at no cost to the Organization.

6. The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General's estimates of requirements in 1983 (\$2,948,100) have been prepared without benefit of any actual experience of operating ECWA's new headquarters buildings. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that a provisional amount be approved at this stage to meet requirements in 1983.

Established posts and common staff costs

7. In paragraph 7 of his report (A/C.5/37/65/Add.1) the Secretary-General estimates at \$639,800 the additional requirements for established posts and at \$615,000 the related common staff costs. In paragraphs 4 to 6 he proposes that the staffing of the General Services Section be increased from its present authorized level of 34 established posts (one P-3 and 33 local level) to 110 established

posts. The increase of 76 posts covers one P-5, one P-4, one P-3, one P-2, 25 internationally-recruited General Service and 47 local-level posts. The representatives of the Secretary-General informed the Committee that, while 47 new local-level posts were being requested, the Commission was losing 31 posts which had been funded from the annual contribution of the Government of Lebanon. The net increase is thus 16 posts. The proposed structure of the General Services Section is set out in the organizational charts in the annex to the Secretary-General's report (*ibid.*). In response to its inquiries the Advisory Committee was informed by the representatives of the Secretary-General that the structure and the level of staffing proposed for the Section was comparable to those in the other regional commissions, in particular ECLA and ESCAP. The Committee was also told that most of the 25 internationally-recruited General Service posts and some of the local-level posts would be assigned to the Building Management Unit because of the shortage of trained technicians in the local labour market there; technical General Service staff for the Building Management Unit would have to be recruited internationally.

8. While the Advisory Committee agrees that the General Services Section will have to be enlarged when the Commission moves into its permanent headquarters, it is not convinced that the level of staffing proposed by the Secretary-General for 1983 is warranted, given the lack of operational experience. In the circumstances the Advisory Committee recommends that of the 76 posts being requested by the Secretary-General, 60 be approved, namely 4 Professional posts (one P-5, one P-4, one P-3 and one P-2), 25 internationally-recruited General Service posts, and 31 local-level posts. The consequential reduction in the Secretary-General's estimates for established posts and related common staff costs would be \$164,800 (i.e. from \$1,254,800 to \$1,090,000).

General operating expenses

9. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 3 above, the Secretary-General's request for \$1,135,000 under this heading includes an estimate of \$160,000 for communications. The estimate relates to the rental of "a dedicated voice grade channel between New York and Baghdad. In addition to voice, this channel could carry facsimile, teletype and data and word-processing transmission" (A/C.5/37/65/Add.1, para. 13). In this connection the Advisory Committee recalls that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its report on communications in the United Nations system (A/37/372), has, *inter alia*, recommended that thorough studies of overall communications needs and requirements, especially those of the field duty stations, should precede any consideration of increased use of satellite and radio communications channels. The Advisory Committee was informed by the representatives of the Secretary-General that a report on improving the United Nations telecommunications network would be submitted in the context of the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1984-1985. In the circumstances the Committee recommends that consideration of the request to rent a dedicated voice grade channel for use by ECWA be deferred, with a consequential reduction of the 1983 estimate by \$160,000.

10. According to the representatives of the Secretary-General, the estimates for cleaning services (\$446,000), electricity (\$327,000) and other miscellaneous

operating expenses (\$202,000) have been calculated on the basis of 12 months' occupancy of the new buildings. Since the new buildings are not now expected to be handed over to the United Nations on 1 January 1983, the estimates in question appear to have been over-stated. Furthermore, the extent to which some of the costs can be absorbed from within already approved resources has not been indicated. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General's estimates for cleaning services, electricity and other miscellaneous operating expenses be reduced by \$240,000, i.e. from a total of \$975,000 to \$735,000.

Furniture and equipment

11. The Secretary-General's estimate of \$558,300 under this heading comprises \$412,300 for building maintenance equipment and spare parts and \$146,000 for transportation equipment (see table in para. 3 above); a breakdown is provided in paragraphs 8 to 10 of document A/C.5/37/65/Add.1. Bearing in mind that the Commission will be moving into new buildings, the Committee questions the need to stockpile \$308,800 worth of spare parts for electrical and air-conditioning equipment. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General's estimate of \$412,300 for building maintenance equipment and spare parts be reduced by \$108,800 to \$303,500. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's estimate of \$146,000 for the acquisition of transportation equipment.

Recapitulation

12. In paragraphs 8 to 11 above the Advisory Committee has recommended that the Secretary-General's estimate of \$2,948,100 under section 14 be reduced by a total of \$673,600 to \$2,274,500. Additional requirements in an amount of \$95,100 (instead of \$115,900) would also arise under section 31 (Staff assessment) to be offset by a corresponding increase under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).
