

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**



THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

*Official Records*\*

FIFTH COMMITTEE  
74th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 17 December 1982  
at 12.35 p.m.  
NEW YORK

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 74th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Poland)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and  
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

First performance report: Section 14, Economic Commission for Western Asia

---

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 166 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.5/37/SR.74  
21 December 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1982-1983 (continued)

First performance report: section 14, Economic Commission for Western Asia (A/37/7/Add.22; A/C.5/37/65/Add.1)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/37/65/Add.1) was not really a performance report but rather a statement of revised estimates under section 14. Paragraph 3 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/37/7/Add.22) provided information on the total additional requirements which the Secretary-General was requesting for 1983: \$2,948,100, to cover additional established posts in the Professional and General Service categories and for locally recruited staff, general operating expenses, furniture and equipment. In paragraph 4, the Advisory Committee provided information on expenditures and obligations incurred to date in connection with the relocation of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), which had amounted to about \$2.2 million.

2. In reviewing the Secretary-General's request for additional appropriations in 1983, the Advisory Committee had noted that in many areas the estimates had not been based on previous experience in operating ECWA's new headquarters in Baghdad. It had therefore decided to follow a procedure that it had used in similar situations, for example, with respect to the International Centre in Vienna: to recommend approval of a provisional amount pending further examination of the situation to determine additional requirements. In paragraph 6 of his report, the Secretary-General had requested an increase of four Professional posts (one P-5, one P-4, one P-3 and one P-2/1) and 72 General Service/local level posts. The Advisory Committee's analysis of that request was contained in paragraph 7 of its report. The Committee was recommending that 60 posts should be approved: four 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.

3. Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Advisory Committee's report covered the estimates for general operating expenses, which included \$160,000 for the rental of a dedicated voice grade channel between New York and Baghdad. When the estimates for 1982-1983 had been under consideration, the Secretary-General had requested an additional line between New York and Geneva. The Advisory Committee had not been convinced that he had provided explanations sufficient to justify such an action and had therefore requested that the measure should be postponed and resubmitted in the context of the 1984-1985 programme budget. In its oral report to the Fifth Committee in connection with the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on communications in the United Nations system (A/37/372), the Advisory Committee had suggested that the General Assembly might wish to consider the question of enhancing the communications capacity of the United Nations in the light of separate reports on the subject. It had therefore decided that it might be premature to approve an additional line between New York and Baghdad and that the General Assembly could

/...

(Mr. Mselle)

best consider the subject in connection with proposals on communications which the Secretary-General was to submit to the Assembly in the context of either the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1984-1985 or those of future biennia. It was therefore recommending that the Secretary-General's request should be reduced by \$160,000.

4. Taking into account other minor reductions, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the Secretary-General's request for \$2,948,100 should be reduced by \$673,600, to \$2,274,500. The staff assessment under section 31 would be \$95,100, to be offset by an equal amount under income section 1.

5. Mr. YOUNIS (Iraq) queried some of the figures contained in the report of the Advisory Committee. The importance of the economic and social activities undertaken by ECWA was well known to all members of the Fifth Committee. It had been established as an economic and social centre which would take into consideration all the needs of the region in carrying out activities and programmes to contribute to the development of all Western Asian States. His Government had provided the temporary premises to which ECWA had been transferred and had charged only a nominal rent. It had furnished all the necessary equipment for the Commission's operations in 1982 and was making final arrangements to hand over the new building complex to the United Nations; ECWA would move to its permanent premises in early 1983. Paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's report described the modern and sophisticated facilities available in the new building complex, whose cost of construction had been \$14 million, which the Government of Iraq had borne as a contribution to the United Nations. No other country had made so generous a grant. Despite his country's present difficult circumstances, it had agreed to contribute an additional \$3 million in 1983, and he regretted that that contribution had not been reflected in the report.

6. In addition to providing the premises for ECWA headquarters, his Government was making extensive efforts to make housing available for the staff and had established an international school where instruction was given in French and English. It was according high priority to providing the equipment and materials required for the difficult and ambitious work undertaken by ECWA. The Government and people of Iraq were of the view that Arab economic integration was part and parcel of national economic development; thus, Iraq provided assistance in order that ECWA might carry out wide-ranging activities and programmes in all its member States and thereby contribute to the eradication of underdevelopment in the region. Iraq regretted however, that the Commission's performance in the past had not been satisfactory. Document A/37/154 detailed the areas in which its activities had not achieved the desired results, and his delegation therefore wondered whether its present objectives would be achieved or whether the results would again be disappointing.

7. His delegation endorsed the proposals made by the Advisory Committee despite the reduction in the estimates, which showed that the Advisory Committee also had doubts about the Commission's ability to use all its resources fully and effectively. He urged the Secretary-General to take effective steps for the realization of the purposes for which ECWA had been established.

/...

8. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that his delegation fully agreed with the statement made by the representative of Iraq and endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

9. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that his delegation was grateful to the Government of Iraq for its generosity in making the ECWA building complex available and for supplying furniture and equipment. When the move to its permanent headquarters was completed, ECWA should be able to function more effectively.

10. His delegation was concerned about the many new posts that had been requested and agreed with the Advisory Committee that their level was not warranted. It was also concerned about the cleaning and maintenance charges, which would prove a heavy burden to ECWA in future. Because the ECWA complex was so far from the centre of Baghdad the United Nations had to provide a transportation network, which was a further great drain on the budget. His delegation could not, therefore, fully support the recommended appropriations and requested that a vote should be taken on them.

11. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should approve an additional appropriation of \$2,274,500 under section 14 of the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983, as well as a further appropriation of \$95,100 under section 31 (Staff assessment), which would be offset by an increase of the same amount in the estimates of income under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). The representative of the United States had requested that the proposal should be put to the vote.

12. The proposal was adopted by 69 votes to none, with 14 abstentions.

13. Mr. SAGRERA (Spain) speaking in explanation of vote, said that his Government's policy was one of friendship with the Arab countries but that it had abstained for administrative and budgetary reasons.

14. Mr. RUEDAS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management), paid a tribute to Iraq for its generosity in donating the building and facilities for ECWA's new permanent headquarters.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.