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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

Review of travel and related entitlements of representatives attending United Nations meetings

Report of the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in reviewing the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the 1988-1989 biennium, noted that the resource requirements for committees and commissions of the Economic and Social Council vary considerably and, bearing in mind that the overall estimate was not inconsequential, recommended that a review of the entitlements accorded to members of these bodies be undertaken. The Advisory Committee also noted that pursuant to General Assembly's resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 reimbursement of travel costs for representatives of Member States attending sessions of the Assembly would henceforth be limited to the least developed countries and recommended that consideration be given to extending the application of that principle to subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (A/42/7, para. 4.14). The Fifth Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, and the General Assembly by its resolution 42/225 (VI) of 21 December 1987 decided to consider the question at its forty-third session and requested the Secretary-General to prepare appropriate information thereon.

2. The present report consists of two parts:

Part I. Review of the entitlements accorded to members of the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

* A/43/150.

Part II. Consideration for extending the application of recommendation 6 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations as endorsed by General Assembly resolution 41/213 to subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

I. REVIEW OF THE ENTITLEMENTS ACCORDED TO MEMBERS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

3. The provisions for payment of travel and/or subsistence expenses to members of certain bodies and subsidiary bodies by the United Nations is pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, as amended by resolutions 2245 (XXI) of 20 December 1966, and 2489 (XXIII) and 2491 (XXIII) of 21 December 1968. In compliance with the above resolutions the Secretary-General issued an administrative bulletin (ST/SGB/107, Rev.4) promulgating the rules and procedures governing the payment of travel and subsistence expenses to members of certain bodies and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations effective 1 January 1969.

4. Since the issuance of the Secretary-General's bulletin in 1969, the General Assembly has adopted several resolutions addressing the use of travel funds, the standard of accommodation for travel of United Nations staff, first-class travel entitlement and the organization and methods of travel. Notable among them was resolution 32/198 of 21 December 1977, paragraph 2 (b) of which limited entitlement of first-class travel only to those trips exceeding nine hours for representatives who had previously been entitled to first class. More recently, however, a number of resolutions have affected the rules and procedures governing reimbursement of travel cost in a more comprehensive manner: resolution 41/176 of 5 December 1986, endorsing a recommendation of ACABQ on the modalities for the payment of subsistence allowance to eligible participants; 1/ resolution 41/213 which endorsed, inter-alia, recommendation 6 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts; resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, paragraph 2 of which limited first-class travel to the Secretary-General and the heads of delegations of the least developed countries to the regular and special sessions of the General Assembly and resolution 42/225 (VI), paragraph 2, of which endorsed a recommendation of ACABQ concerning subsistence payments. 2/

5. On the basis of the above, the provisions governing the payment of travel and subsistence to members participating in bodies and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations as of 1 January 1988 are set forth in the annex to the present report.

6. In summary, travel expenses are now being paid for not more than five representatives from each of the least developed countries attending the regular sessions of the General Assembly. Travel and subsistence expenses are paid in respect of members of bodies and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations who serve in an individual personal capacity and not as representatives of Governments. Travel but not subsistence expenses are paid in respect of one representative of each Member State participating in a functional commission of the Economic and

Social Council or in a sub-commission or sub-committee of a functional commission, where such representatives are nominated by their Governments in consultation with the Secretary-General and subsequently confirmed by the Council. In the case of governmental experts appointed directly by their Governments, neither travel nor subsistence is paid unless the General Assembly expressly authorizes that such payments should be made.

7. The costs shown in table 1 below are based on the initial programme budget appropriation for the 1988-1989 biennium as approved by the General Assembly (A/42/6/Add.1).

Table 1

Subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council whose members are entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses for attendance at meetings

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Member-ship	Subsidiary body	Category <u>a/</u>	Entitlements		1988-1989 appropriation
			Travel	Subsistence	
16	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	E	Yes	Yes	688.6
18	Committee on Contributions	E	Yes	Yes	319.6
17	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board	E	Yes	Yes	134.2
34	Committee for Programme and Co-ordination	G	Yes	Yes	352.9
23	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (a treaty body)	E	Yes	Yes	221.7
3	Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting Human Rights in the Occupied Territories	G	Yes	Yes	94.8
34	International Law Commission	E	Yes	Yes	1 063.8
15	International Civil Service Commission	E	Yes	Yes	481.6
21	Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation	E	Yes	Yes	218.7
7	Administrative Tribunal	E	Yes	Yes	163.6
32	Commission on the Status of Women	G	Yes	No	118.7
27	Committee for Crime Prevention and Control	E	Yes	Yes	75.8
24	Committee for Development Planning	E	Yes	Yes	440.9
27	Population Commission	G	Yes	No	43.8
32	Commission for Social Development	G	Yes	No	47.0
24	Statistical Commission	G	Yes	No	39.1
28	Advisory Committee on Science and Technology	E	Yes	Yes	322.4
40	Commission on Narcotic Drugs	G	Yes	No	283.6
13	International Narcotics Control Board	E	Yes	Yes	433.5
36	Commission on Human Rights	G	Yes	No	207.2
26	Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities	E	Yes	Yes	432.4
18	Human Rights Committee (a treaty body)	E	Yes	Yes	790.3
18	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	E	Yes	Yes	212.7
				TOTAL	<u>7 186.9</u>

a/ E = meetings in which participants serve as experts.
 G = meetings in which participants serve as Government representatives.

II. CONSIDERATION FOR EXTENDING THE APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATION 6 OF THE GROUP OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS AS ENDORSED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 41/213 TO THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

8. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213, which, *inter alia*, limited the reimbursement of travel expenses for members attending sessions of the General Assembly to those from least developed countries for the 1988-1989 biennium, the Assembly by its resolution 42/226 of 21 December 1987 approved an appropriation of \$942,000 (or a negative growth of \$2,748,400 over the previous biennium) for the reimbursement of travel costs to five representatives from each of the 40 least developed countries to attend the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the Assembly, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his proposed programme budget (A/42/6 (Section 1), para. 1.5).

9. The Secretary-General understands that the principle of limiting reimbursement of travel cost to members of least developed countries would be confined to members attending meetings as Government representatives and would exclude meetings in which the membership serves as experts in their individual capacity. Furthermore, it is understood that travel of representatives on mission in the context of the implementation of the work programme of the subsidiary bodies to which they belong would continue to be subject to existing rules.

10. Of the 23 subsidiary organs listed in table 1, 15 have a membership of experts serving in their individual capacity while the remaining 8 are considered intergovernmental bodies whose members are representatives of their respective Governments. For the purpose of the present review, the former group includes the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), although the Board of Auditors in 1986 commented that the members of UNSCEAR were not members serving in their individual capacity but were in fact participating as representatives of their Governments. The General Assembly may wish to give further consideration to this point.

11. While it was possible to estimate the level of savings that would result from the application of resolution 41/213 to members attending sessions of the General Assembly, it is difficult to do so when considering extending this principle to the subsidiary bodies. Representation of least developed countries in the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies varies periodically along with their membership. However, statistics are available on the representation of the least developed countries in the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the years 1986, 1987 and 1988. They can be seen as indicative of a general trend and are shown in table 2.

Table 2

Participation of members of the least developed countries in the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council whose members are entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses for attendance at meetings

<u>Subsidiary bodies</u>	<u>Category a/</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Members of least developed countries</u>		
			<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	E	16	1	1	1
Committee on Contributions	E	18	0	0	0
United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board	E	17	0	0	0
Committee for Programme and Co-ordination b/	G	34	2	3	5
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	E	23	2	2	2
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices	G	3	0	0	0
International Law Commission	E	34	4	1	1
International Civil Service Commission	E	15	1	1	1
Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation	E	21	1	1	1
Administrative Tribunal	E	7	0	0	0
Commission on the Status of Women	G	32	3	3	4
Committee for Crime Prevention and Control	E	27	4	5	5
Committee for Development Planning	E	24	1	0	0
Population Commission	G	27	3	3	4
Commission for Social Development	G	32	4	4	4

<u>Subsidiary bodies</u>	<u>Category a/</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Members of least developed countries</u>		
			1986	1987	1988
Statistical Commission	G	24	1	1	1
Advisory Committee on Science and Technology	E	28	1	3	1
Commission on Narcotic Drugs	G	40	1	1	1
International Narcotics Control Board	E	13	0	1	1
Commission on Human Rights	G	36	5	7	8
Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities	E	26	2	2	2
Human Rights Committee	E	18	0	0	0
Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights c/	E	18	-	2	2

- a/ E = meetings in which participants serve as experts.
 G = meetings in which participants serve as Government representatives.
- b/ Increased from 21 to 34 members effective 1 January 1988.
- c/ Committee was established as of 1 January 1987.

12. As can be seen in table 2, over the three-year period considered in the eight subsidiary bodies of an intergovernmental nature the participation of representatives from countries other than the least developed who under the new régime would no longer be entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses has ranged from 77 per cent (Commission on Human Rights in 1988) to 100 per cent (Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices over the whole period). While the present review indicates that the application of recommendation 6 of the Group of High-level Experts as endorsed by resolution 41/213 to the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council would possibly affect only eight subsidiary bodies, it may nevertheless be inferred that the savings that would result would not be insignificant.

Notes

1/ A/41/632, para. 27.

2/ A/42/7, para. 79.

Annex

**PROVISIONS GOVERNING THE PAYMENT OF TRAVEL AND/OR SUBSISTENCE
EXPENSES TO MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS OF BODIES AND SUBSIDIARY
BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

A. Travel but not subsistence

1. Travel but not subsistence expenses shall be paid in the following cases:

(a) For not more than five representatives, including alternate representatives, of each Member State designated as a least developed country, attending a regular session of the General Assembly;

(b) For one representative or alternate representative referred to in (a) above attending a special or special emergency session of the General Assembly;

(c) For the travel of a member of a permanent mission in New York who is designated as a representative or alternate representative to a session of the General Assembly, provided that such travel is within the limits noted in (a) and (b) above, that it is certified by a permanent representative to be in connection with the work of the particular session and that it takes place either during or within three months before or after such a session. The entitlement in respect of a session shall not be increased by reason of the recessing and resuming of that session;

(d) For one representative of each Member State participating in a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council or in a sub-commission or sub-committee of a functional commission where such representatives are nominated by their Governments in consultation with the Secretary-General and subsequently confirmed by the Council or where, in the case of representatives nominated directly by their Governments, the Council recommends and the General Assembly decides that such payments should be made;

(e) For one representative of each Member State participating in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

B. Travel and subsistence

2. Travel and subsistence expenses shall be paid in the following cases:

(a) In respect of members of organs or subsidiary organs who serve as such in their individual personal capacity and not as representatives of Governments;

(b) In respect of individuals appointed by organs or subsidiary organs to undertake in their personal capacity the performance of special studies or other ad hoc tasks on behalf of the bodies involved;

(c) In respect of the following persons regardless of whether they serve in their individual personal capacity or as representatives of Governments:

- (i) The Chairman or the rapporteur of a subsidiary organ who is called upon to present the report of such subsidiary organ to a parent organ;
- (ii) One member of an organ or subsidiary organ serving as its designated representative at meetings of a second organ or subsidiary organ;
- (iii) One representative of a Member State or one alternate participating in a subsidiary organ instituted by the General Assembly or by the Security Council that is required by a decision of the parent organ to work away from United Nations Headquarters in the performance of a special task;
- (iv) Members of the Board of Auditors.

3. Except as provided in paragraph 2 above, neither travel nor subsistence expenses shall be paid in respect of members of organs or subsidiary organs who serve as representatives of Governments unless the resolution establishing the organ or subsidiary organ provides otherwise.

C. Other provisions

4. In all cases, payment by the United Nations of travel expenses, within the limits authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 1798 (XVII) as amended by paragraph 2 of resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, will be limited to the cost of journeys actually undertaken, subject to the following maximum entitlements:

(a) Payment of travel expenses by the United Nations shall be limited to the cost of economy-class accommodation by air or its equivalent by recognized public transport via a direct route, including the cost of excess baggage, if required, to the extent of the difference between the free baggage allowances by first class and by economy class, except that the limit on payment of travel expenses shall be the cost of first-class accommodation by air or its equivalent by recognized public transport via a direct route in respect of the heads of delegations referred to in paragraph 1 (a) and (b) above;

(b) Payment of travel expenses shall be limited to the actual cost of round trip travel between the place of residence or duty station and the place of meeting;

(c) Where an alternate mode of transport is used, payment of travel expenses shall be limited to the actual cost incurred, provided that payment does not exceed the cost of air travel by a direct route.

5. Accommodation equivalent to the class immediately below first class shall be applied in respect of:

(a) All persons who serve in their individual capacities, as distinct from those serving as representatives of a Government, on such organs or subsidiary organs where applicable;

(b) Individuals referred to in paragraph 2 (b) above;

(c) In the case of representatives or alternates mentioned in paragraph 2 (c) (iii) above, payment shall be limited to the cost of travel between United Nations Headquarters and points visited in the field and return, or, in the event that no meetings at Headquarters are involved, to travel from the duty station to points visited in the field and return, or to travel actually undertaken, whichever represents the lesser amount;

(d) In all other cases, the travel costs shall be limited to the cost of a round trip between the capital city of a Member State and the place of meeting, or to the actual cost of travel undertaken if that should be the lesser amount;

(e) For members serving in an individual capacity, reasonable terminal expenses and other related expenses may be reimbursed. However, the costs of excess baggage, except as provided for in paragraph 4 above, or insurance will not be reimbursed.

6. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 249. (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, a daily subsistence allowance shall be payable to eligible members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, as well as to individuals referred to in paragraph 2 (b) above, as follows:

(a) While attending meetings away from their normal place of residence or duty station, at rates equivalent to the standard travel subsistence allowance rates for officials of the Secretariat, plus 40 per cent, rounded to the nearest United States dollar and normally payable in local currency, provided that the Secretary-General may establish minimum and maximum rates if he deems it appropriate and may reduce the rates in the event of the provision of board and/or lodging by the United Nations, by a host Government or by a related institution;

(b) While travelling by a direct route, by ship, aeroplane or train, the amount of \$US 8.

7. Payment of the subsistence allowance at the above rates shall be governed also by the following conditions:

(a) When the meeting is held away from the member's place of residence or duty station, subsistence shall be paid on the days when no meetings are scheduled (such as the week-end) if the member had attended the last meeting preceeding and the first meeting immediately following such period;

(b) Where travel is arranged by the United Nations, the allowance may be paid for the period between the nearest obtainable arrival and departure dates before and after the meeting;

(c) Where travel is not arranged by the United Nations, the allowance may be paid for one day prior to the opening and for one day after the close of the relevant meeting;

(d) The allowance shall not be paid during stop-overs en route not authorized by the United Nations; stop-overs for rest purposes may be authorized on long journeys, with subsistence allowance, under conditions equivalent to those applicable to officials of the Secretariat;

(e) The allowance shall not be paid for the day on which travel is concluded;

(f) In the case of representatives or alternates mentioned in paragraph 2 (c) (iii) above, the allowance shall be payable only during the authorized period of service away from United Nations Headquarters.

8. Exceptions to the requirements specified under paragraphs 6 and 7 (a) above can be made for certifiable absence due to illness or disability.

9. The allowance shall be payable at the conclusion of the meeting or every two weeks if the meeting is of longer duration, upon certification of attendance by the Secretary of the organ concerned.
