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REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Revised estimates, including plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211

Programme budget implications arising from the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the first part of its twenty-eighth session

Reform and renewal in the United Nations: second progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Committee has considered the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates for the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, including plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations 1/ on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987 (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1). The Committee has also considered the second progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Assembly resolution 41/213 (A/43/286) and the statement submitted by the

Secretary-General on the programme budget implications arising from the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the first part of its twenty-eighth session (A/43/16 (Part I)/Add.1). During its consideration of these items the Advisory Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/43/2 and Add.1) on measures relating to priority assigned by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (resolution S-13/2, annex).

II. REVISED ESTIMATES FOR THE PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

2. Paragraphs 1 to 6 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1) present the background to its preparation. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraphs 13 and 14 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, 2/ the Committee stated that:

"Clarity and coherence require that the revised budget estimates presented by the Secretary-General should be based on fully completed studies and reviews, should be supported by clear and justifiable data and should be comprehensive enough to permit meaningful comparison with past and future estimates. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, this would avoid the submission of partially revised estimates that will have to be further revised and would ensure greater reliability of the estimates that will be finally submitted.

"Bearing in mind these requirements, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should complete the reviews and studies now under way in time to prepare his proposals for revised estimates by 1 April 1988 for submission to CPC, ACABQ and the General Assembly at its forty-third session. The revised estimates should be accompanied by information on staffing (in tabular form) that would show the intended result of the application of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts in comparison with the information included in the proposed programme budget. To the extent that these staffing tables would reflect redeployments among the sections of the budget (since some programmes will have lost more than 15 per cent of their posts, while others less), the estimates for each section should be adjusted accordingly. The results of the study on the structure and functioning of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social fields, entrusted to the Economic and Social Council, will also be available to the General Assembly at its forty-third session and such budgetary implications as the results of this study may have in 1988-1989 can be dealt with by the Assembly in the context of its consideration of the revised estimates."

3. In paragraph 7 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that it is comprised of the following chapters:

(a) Chapter I: plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1 and Corr.1);

(b) Chapter II: measures to improve the situation in the regional commission, and in those units of the Secretariat which have the highest vacancy rates (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.1 and Corr.1);

(c) Chapter III: organizational changes in the Secretariat since the adoption of the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.2 and Corr.1);

(d) Chapter IV: implementation of recommendations 19, 29 and 37 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts concerning, respectively, activities relating to Namibia (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.5), the Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.3), and the Department of Public Information (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.6), including further information presented in response to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at the first part of its twenty-eighth session (see A/43/16 (Part I), para. 53) on the implementation of recommendation 37 (not previously issued);

(e) Chapter V: additional requirements under section 1, subsection A.1 (General Assembly); subsection A.4 (United Nations Board of Auditors (including its secretariat)); and subsection B.12 (Office for Research and the Collection of Information) (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.4);

(f) Chapter VI: temporary posts authorized on a recurrent basis for the biennium 1986-1987 and approved for the biennium 1988-1989 under the regular budget (previously issued as A/C.5/43/1/Add.7).

A. Plans of the Secretary-General for the implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts on the reduction of personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211

4. Background on recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts is provided in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1). In paragraph 14, the Secretary-General summarizes the factors that he took into account in elaborating his plans.

5. Information on targets for post reductions by 31 December 1989 is given in paragraphs 15 to 22 of the report. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the process by which these targets were determined.

6. As indicated in paragraph 15 of the report, the Secretary-General proposes a target of 1,465 regular budget posts for possible abolition, of which 486 would be in the Professional category and above and 979 in the General Service and other levels category. The Advisory Committee was informed that this overall reduction of regular budget posts represented a firm offer by the Secretary-General based upon a thorough internal post-by-post review towards the implementation of recommendation 15.

7. The Advisory Committee notes that of the 11,422 posts approved under the regular programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, a total of 167 posts were not considered during the post reduction exercise conducted by the Secretariat. These comprise 96 posts in the Security Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna, 52 posts in the secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and 19 in the secretariat of the Joint Inspection Unit. As far as the Security Services posts at the United Nations Office at Vienna are concerned, the Committee was informed that, as a common service, 82 per cent of the cost is reimbursed to the United Nations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Given this fact and the security requirements at Vienna, the Committee was informed that it was not considered feasible at this point (especially without detailed consultations with the agencies concerned) to recommend post reductions in this area.

8. As for the jointly financed activities now appearing under section 28I of the programme budget, i.e., ICSC and the Joint Inspection Unit, the Committee was informed that the question of reductions for these two units would be addressed through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), as they involve inter-agency consultations. Any resulting reductions would be reported to the General Assembly in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

9. According to the Secretary-General, the target of 1,465 posts proposed for abolition represents 13.02 per cent of the adjusted base of 11,255 posts.

10. Regarding posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels, as discussed in paragraph 19 of the report, the Advisory Committee notes that detailed information on this question will be provided in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, and that the budget outline for the biennium 1990-1991, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, will make provision for the reductions.

11. In paragraph 20 of his report the Secretary-General makes reference to the situation with regard to Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General posts funded from extrabudgetary sources. For its part, the Advisory Committee has continued and will continue to follow up on this matter in the context of its consideration of the budgets of the relevant funds and programmes and its reports to the legislative bodies concerned.

12. Tables showing the distribution of the posts targeted for abolition among the parts of the 1988-1989 programme budget and proposed changes in the number of posts by section of the budget are provided in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the report. In paragraphs 23 to 29, the possible impact of the proposed reductions is discussed. In paragraphs 28 and 29 the Secretary-General indicates:

"Specific posts to be reduced are being identified and implementation procedures indicated to staff members. The plan is based upon the premise that retrenchment can be largely achieved for Professional staff through attrition. This will require carefully controlled recruitment to maintain

vacancies close to the 15 per cent level which has been budgeted. It may however be necessary to recommend to the General Assembly the extension of the implementation period into the 1990-1991 biennium for the General Service category. Another main requirement of the plan is a stronger commitment to staff redeployment and staff mobility. However, effective implementation of these aspects would be greatly facilitated by a more innovative incentive programme which would require additional funding.

"Programme managers have been asked to realize the new lower levels of staffing by the end of 1989 through a combination of attrition, redeployment and controlled recruitment. Programme managers, bearing in mind programmatic considerations, will be in a position to propose adjustments without altering the staffing profile recommended in this document by the Secretary-General, which, if approved by the General Assembly, will constitute a basic input to the forthcoming budget outline."

During the course of its consideration of this report, the Advisory Committee sought specific information from the Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of Human Resources Management on plans for carrying out the retrenchment programme.

13. In paragraph 28 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, 2/ the Advisory Committee recognized that the target reductions arrived at after the staffing reviews conducted by the Secretariat would and should not reflect the "straight-line" across-the-board reduction upon which the initial budget estimates for 1988-1989 were based. Since, as the result of the post reduction exercise carried out by the Secretariat, some programmes have lost a greater percentage of posts than others, it has been necessary to adjust the estimates for each section accordingly within the existing overall totals for salaries, common staff costs and staff assessment.

14. During its consideration of the revised estimates (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1), the Advisory Committee paid special attention to the target reduction of 14.1 per cent proposed by the Secretary-General for section 29 of the programme budget (Conference and library services) in view of his statement that:

"to effect staff cuts of that magnitude without causing a grave disruption in the provision of conference services to Member States would require a substantial reduction in the number of conferences and meetings. Such a reduction would have to be reflected in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1990-1991 and onwards" (*ibid.*, para. 25).

15. For the reasons given in paragraph 26 of his report the Secretary-General indicates that "an overall 10 per cent post reduction in the staffing of Conference Services in New York and at Geneva could be achieved without an excessive reduction in the conference-servicing capacity of the Organization". On the basis of information received by the Committee on the question of the most realistic target for reductions in the Department of Conference Services, and bearing in mind what has been stated in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the target for reductions in conference service posts under budget section 29 should be adjusted downward, with the "restoration" of 100 posts of the

total of 357 posts originally proposed for elimination under section 29 (see A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1), table following para. 22). This recommendation is subject to the results of the study of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields and the decision by the General Assembly thereon. The restoration of 100 posts would bring the target for reductions under budget section 29 from 14.1 per cent to approximately 10.1 per cent. On the basis of information received, the Advisory Committee has concluded that the 100 posts should conform with the following profile:

Category	Headquarters	Geneva	Total
<u>Professional and above</u>			
USG			
ASG			
D-2			
D-1			
P-5	11	6	17
P-4	25	18	43
P-3	-13	-6	-19
P-2/1	-4	0	-4
Subtotal	19	18	37
<u>General Service</u>			
Principal	0	0	0
Other	41	22	63
Subtotal	41	22	63
Total	60	40	100

The 100 posts to be restored should be in the areas of translation, interpretation and meetings, publishing, editorial control and official records, with due regard being paid to the need for proportionate treatment of language services.

16. The Advisory Committee was informed that the full biennial costs of the 100 additional posts involved would amount, net of staff assessment, to \$12,893,900 for the biennium 1988-1989. The restoration of 100 posts for conference services should make economies possible in other areas under section 29. Under the circumstances, the Committee recommends that at least \$3 million of the amount required for additional posts be met from within existing resources under section 29.

17. In keeping with its belief that targets for reduction should not be formulated on a "straight-line" approach and that sections where the target reductions were below 15 per cent should be roughly compensated by greater reductions in other areas, the Advisory Committee recommends that the "restoration" of 100 conference service posts under section 29 should be partially offset by a reduction of 50 posts in areas of the Secretariat other than conference services. On this basis the total reduction for the Secretariat as a whole would become 12.57 per cent instead of 13.02 per cent (see para. 9 above).

18. The Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to present a report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session in which he indicates the post reductions by budget section and by grade level; this report should be submitted before 1 November 1988 (see also para. 21 below).

19. Taking into account the current overall vacancy situation as at 31 July 1988 of 16.6 per cent for Professional and higher categories and 10.7 per cent for General Service posts, the Advisory Committee believes that the remaining amount required to finance the net addition of 50 posts to the budget can be absorbed from the budget as a whole. The Committee therefore recommends that this amount be reduced "across the board", with the exception, in view of the special prevailing circumstances, of the regional commissions (other than the Economic Commission for Europe). The actual distribution of this reduction, on the basis of experience, will, of course, be shown in the second programme performance report for the biennium 1988-1989. The Committee does not expect, however, that there will be need at that time for any additional appropriation in this regard.

20. Since deciding to make that recommendation, the Advisory Committee has also considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications arising from the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the first part of its twenty-eighth session (A/43/16 (Part I)/Add.1). The related observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee are contained in paragraphs 82 to 86 below. The recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 15 to 19 above are predicated on the assumption that, if the General Assembly wishes to maintain the overall level of the budget at that adopted at its forty-second session, it must offset increases in section 29 with corresponding reductions elsewhere.

21. The revised estimates by section are shown in the table following paragraph 30 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1). Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take no action on the revised estimates shown in that table pending submission by the Secretary-General of the report requested in paragraph 18 above; in that report the Secretary-General

should also indicate the effect on each budget section of the further reduction of 50 posts in sections other than section 29, the restoration of 100 posts in section 29, the recommendation in paragraph 16 above on economies under section 29, and the "across-the-board" recommendation in paragraph 19 above. It is only in this manner that a firm basis will be established for the approval and administration of the appropriations for the biennium 1988-1989 and the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

B. Measures to improve the situation in the regional commissions and in those units of the Secretariat which have the highest vacancy rates

22. This information has been submitted pursuant to section V of General Assembly resolution 42/225 of 21 December 1987, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to take the necessary measures to improve the situation in the regional commissions and in those units of the Secretariat which have the highest vacancy rates and to report thereon, in the context of the revised 1988-1989 budget estimates, in the light of paragraphs 27 and 28 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions".

23. As indicated in paragraph 3 of chapter II of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1), the vacancy rate for Professional staff was 16 per cent as at 29 February 1988. Table 1 of that chapter shows the vacancy rate for posts in the Professional category and above by duty station, and the most seriously affected units are referred to in paragraph 4. The Advisory Committee was informed that the total number of regular budget established posts shown in table 1 should be corrected to read 4,206 instead of 4,208. Within the same table, totals for Headquarters and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) should be corrected to read 2,056 and 202, respectively.

24. In paragraph 5 of chapter II it is stated that "the current overall high rate of vacancies throughout the Secretariat can therefore be mainly attributed to the suspension of recruitment introduced by the Secretary-General on 21 March 1986 in response to the financial crisis of the Organization. The differences between the different duty stations, however, have existed for a number of years and result from a combination of factors". Those factors are described in paragraph 6.

25. Measures to redress the situation are outlined in paragraphs 7 to 10 of chapter II. These include internal redeployment and increases in the level of assignment allowance and the granting of exceptions to the suspension of external recruitment to those units with high vacancy rates, particularly the regional commissions, when no internal candidates could be identified.

26. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 10 that currently there are 127 vacancies in Secretariat units with high vacancy rates which are at different stages of being filled. The disposition of vacancies in Secretariat units with high vacancy rates as at 31 March 1988 is given in table 2. The Committee trusts that an update of this information will be made available to the General Assembly during the course of its forty-third session. This information should include specific data on recruitment/redeployment at the P-1/2 levels.

C. Organisational changes in the Secretariat since the adoption of the programme budget for 1988-1989

27. The purpose of chapter III of the report is to outline changes resulting from a number of internal reviews in the political area, the Department of Administration and Management and the Department of Public Information.

28. As indicated in paragraph 2, chapter III covers four subsections of section 1 of the programme budget (Overall policy-making, direction and co-ordination); section 2A.D on special missions; subsections 3B, 3C and 3E of section 3 (Political affairs, trusteeship and decolonization); section 6B (Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs); section 20 (International drug control); section 23 (Human rights); and sections 28A, 28B, 28C, 28D, 28J and 28K. Reference is also made to section 2B (Disarmament affairs activities) and to section 27 (Public information). The Advisory Committee notes that, as in the other parts of the revised estimates, extrabudgetary resources are not considered.

29. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, it is difficult to fully evaluate the changes proposed in the absence of complete information on functional allocation and programmes, which is usually contained in the initial programme budget submissions. Recognizing the transitional nature of the programme budget process for 1988-1989, the Committee looks forward to the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991, where all of the changes reported in the various progress reports and revised estimates (both issued and still to come) will be fully integrated.

30. With regard to section 27, the Committee notes from paragraph 27.1 of chapter III that "on the basis of a management review, the Secretary-General has approved a new organizational structure of the Department [of Public Information] effective 2 November 1987" and that "detailed revised estimates and description of the organizational and programmatic elements of the new structure appear under section 27, Public information, in chapter IV of the present document" (see paras. 40-60 below).

31. The Committee has received additional information with regard to section 28B (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance). This information, which concerns the establishment of an Evaluation and Management Advisory Services Division within that Office, in fact amends the information on section 28B in chapter III. According to the information received the new Division would consist of the three units primarily concerned with the planning and programme management capacity in the Secretariat. The Division would be a central service that would work closely with the other divisions within the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance and would provide inputs to their ongoing tasks. The Committee was further informed that creation of the Division would accomplish the following:

(a) For the first time in the Secretariat, the issue of planning and management capacity and improvement would be addressed centrally by bringing together the units concerned;

(b) Although the units would retain their separate identity, they would be part of an integrated management structure. Resources of these units, particularly

personnel resources, would be used flexibly and interchangeably given the interdisciplinary nature of the work;

(c) The grouping together of the units into one entity within the Department of Administration and Management would further contribute to the streamlining of the Department, which the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations had called for.

32. In view of the foregoing, the Advisory Committee recommends acceptance of the proposal to create an Evaluation and Management Advisory Services Division within the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance. This would also involve restoring one of the two D-2 posts previously proposed for reduction, to be offset by the consequential increase from 3 to 4 in the number of D-1 posts to be eliminated.

33. In paragraph 28K.1 the Secretary-General refers to an administrative review of the organization, functions and staffing of all administrative and common service units at Nairobi. The Advisory Committee received detailed information in this review. While the Committee, in principle, encourages the operation of joint and/or common services wherever feasible, it has, in this case, reserved its position pending a precise indication of the manner in which the agreed results of that review will be implemented. The Committee intends to revert to the matter in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, which should include specific information on the size and function of the new unit, the functions to be retained by the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the possibilities for savings.

D. Implementation of recommendations 19, 29 and 37 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts

1. Implementation of recommendation 19 concerning activities relating to Namibia

34. In paragraphs 1 and 2 of chapter IV of the report, the Secretary-General states that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/211, paragraph 10 (c), and following consultations with the President and bureau of the United Nations Council for Namibia, he has taken a number of measures in addition to those described in his update of the progress report (A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1, para. 25) in order to enhance the effectiveness of the units established in conjunction with the implementation of the annual resolutions of the Assembly entitled "Question of Namibia".

35. Revised management arrangements and reporting procedures for the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia vis-à-vis the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship and with the Secretary-General are detailed in paragraphs 2 (a) to (c) of chapter IV. The Advisory Committee notes that only time and experience will tell whether these revised arrangements are the best possible.

36. The Advisory Committee takes note of "the consolidation of the two administrative offices previously established within the Department and the Office of the Commissioner into one executive office in the Department of Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship" (para. 2 (d)).

37. Activities of the Information and Media Relations Unit in the Office of the Commissioner are described in chapter IV, paragraph 10. In response to the Advisory Committee's inquiries, representatives of the Secretary-General provided information on differences between the kind of information work carried out by this Unit and that carried out by the Department of Public Information. None the less, the Committee trusts that every effort will be made to co-ordinate information activities on Namibia carried by this Unit and the Department so as to ensure that there is no overlap and duplication.

2. Implementation of recommendation 29 concerning the functions of the Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters

38. This section of the report was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/211, paragraph 10 (e), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to review his decisions regarding recommendation 29 in the light of the debate in the Fifth Committee at the forty-second session of the Assembly and to reflect the results of such review in his revised estimates.

39. The Secretary-General has conducted a review of the matter and, for reasons advanced in paragraphs 21 to 29 of chapter IV, maintains his decision first made known in his progress report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 and the update of that report (A/42/234 and A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1, respectively) that the functions of the Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters relating to the technical secretariat servicing of intergovernmental and related meetings and special conferences be assigned to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services. Thus, the Secretary-General's position remains at variance with recommendation 29 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (referred to in chap. IV, para. 19).

3. Implementation of recommendation 37 concerning public information activities

40. As stated in paragraph 31 of chapter IV of the report (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1, "pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/213 and other pertinent decisions, the Secretary-General has formulated proposed revisions to the medium-term plan (A/43/6), including, in particular, to the programme on public information". On the basis of the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan (A/43/6 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General has proposed revised programme budget estimates for 1988-1989 for public information activities (sect. 27).

41. The proposals incorporate a revised organisational structure for the Department of Public Information (see below). According to the Secretary-General, the revised programme budget estimates and the revised organizational structure of the Department "seek to meet an urgent need of the Organization to project information on its activities to the peoples of the world better and more effectively"; however, the revised proposals "must of necessity be considered as transitional" (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1, chap. IV, para. 40).

42. The Advisory Committee notes that, pursuant to recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts, the Secretary-General proposes "to reduce the number of posts under section 27 of the regular budget by 108 from the currently authorized total of 770, a reduction of 14 per cent" (*ibid.*, para. 41). This is consistent with what is shown in table 27 of chapter I of the report; table 27.2 of chapter IV also provides a breakdown of posts and the proposed reductions.

43. As shown in table 27.2, five D-1 posts had been marked for abolition by December 1989. However, on the basis of the discussion in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at the first part of its twenty-eighth session on the level of directors of information centres and services (see A/43/16 (Part I), para. 51), the Secretary-General, in paragraph 57, states that "application of the criteria recommended by CPC would require retention of D-1 posts ... and, consequently, reinstatement of the five D-1 posts proposed for abolition under section 27 of the programme budget". The Secretary-General also states that this would "involve a downward adjustment of the target post reduction ... and additional financial requirements of \$835,800".

44. In response to inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, at its resumed twenty-eighth session, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination made further recommendations concerning the five D-1 posts (see A/43/16 (Part II), para. 85).

45. Representatives of the Secretary-General informed the Advisory Committee that, if accepted, the recommendation of CPC would be implemented without affecting the overall target for post reductions under section 27. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee will not interpose any objection to the restoration of the five D-1 posts on the understanding that there will be no additional appropriation under section 27 for the biennium 1988-1989 and that the details of the compensating measures taken within section 27 will be fully reported in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

46. The proposed revised appropriation for 1988-1989 for section 27 totals \$77,084,000, which has been reallocated under the new structure. The revised appropriation as proposed, a breakdown of which is provided in table 27.1, represents a net increase of \$82,300 over the initial appropriation for section 27 (see also the table that follows para. 30 of chap. I of the report).

47. The Advisory Committee notes from table 27.1 that an increase of \$389,300 is shown under furniture and equipment, thus increasing the total under this object of expenditure to \$1,414,300. In this connection, the Advisory Committee was informed

that as part of the efforts to strengthen the Department an amount of \$550,000 has been earmarked to purchase data-processing and telecommunications equipment, an amount that represented only one third of actual requirements. The Advisory Committee expects that the acquisition would be carried out in consultation with the Office of General Services, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund and other relevant organizations. The Advisory Committee trusts that information on the acquisition of this equipment and the resulting increase in productivity will be included in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

48. As stated above, the revised estimates for section 27 incorporate a new organizational structure for the Department of Public Information, the main units of which are described in summary form in paragraphs 35 to 39 of chapter IV of the Secretary-General's report and discussed in greater detail following the staffing and financial resource tables of these units. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the Bureau of Programme Operations (headed by a D-2 (see table 27.10)) "oversees and co-ordinates the work of the three organizational units [the Communications and Project Management Service, the Information Products Division and the Dissemination Division] responsible for the planning, production and distribution of public information products and services" (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1, chap. IV, para. 62). A more detailed description of the Bureau's functions follows in the same paragraph, pursuant to a request of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

49. Notwithstanding this description and the oral information provided to the Advisory Committee by representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee questions the rationale for the existence of such a Bureau in the manner it is now proposed, as it appears to create an additional line of command and communication between the head of the Department and the directors of the three organizational units. Therefore the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General re-examine the question.

50. The proposed new structure for the Department also includes a Division for Committee Liaison and Administrative Services, the functions of which are described in the paragraph following table 27.6. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee there exists the potential for duplication between some of the activities of this unit and other substantive units.

51. The activities of the proposed revised programme of work that follows paragraph 43 under the heading "Programme narrative" are described under three subprogrammes: Promotional services, Information services and Public services. The Advisory Committee notes that under subprogramme 3 (Public services), programme element 3.5 (Co-ordination and training), intermediate activities include, inter alia, staff briefing and orientation, including the organization at Headquarters of orientation programmes for newly appointed information and reference assistants of the United Nations information centres. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, such training is essential if the Department is to fulfil its responsibilities. Furthermore, in view of the organizational and staff changes taking place in the Department, training of staff in all areas assumes even greater importance. As discussed below, other areas of the United Nations are also

involved in public information activities. Consequently, training in public information in those areas should also be undertaken.

52. As mentioned above, chapter IV of the Secretary-General's report includes a revised programme of work for the Department of Public Information. The annex to chapter IV provides a list of items proposed for deletion and revisions. In paragraph 61 the Secretary-General states that "in general, items have been proposed for deletion in order to redirect resources to new, more productive activities related to the same or similar themes". Notwithstanding this statement, the Advisory Committee would have welcomed an indication of the magnitude of the resources released by the deletions and recommends that this be done in any future submissions of this nature.

53. During its examination of the revised estimates for the Department, the Advisory Committee was also provided with a report on public information activities of the Secretariat external to the Department of Public Information. The main objective of the report, which presented the results of a survey conducted in relation to the organizational review of the Department as reported in the second progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 (A/43/286), was to assess the feasibility of implementing recommendation 37 (2) of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts that information activities currently conducted by several departments and offices in the Secretariat should, to the extent possible, be consolidated in the Department of Public Information.

54. The Advisory Committee notes that, for the purposes of the review, public information activities were defined broadly to include activities specifically geared toward promoting activities of the United Nations among external audiences.

55. On the basis of that definition, the results of the survey indicated that the regional commissions and departments and offices of the United Nations systems other than the Department of Public Information together devote 36 work years annually to activities considered as strictly public information work (23 work years of Professional staff time and 13 work years of General Service staff time).

56. Of the public information activities external to the Department, 42 per cent are undertaken at Headquarters, 33 per cent at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the remainder distributed among Nairobi (6 per cent), the United Nations Office at Vienna (4 per cent), four of the regional commissions (altogether 7 per cent) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the World Food Council (8 per cent).

57. In the opinion of the Secretary-General, the wide geographic separation between the overseas offices and the Department of Public Information does not facilitate the close collaboration necessary to achieving timely and effective public information about the work of those offices. Furthermore, with a few notable exceptions, public information work in most offices is divided among a number of staff members, and forms a small part of the workload of each.

58. The Advisory Committee notes from the report that the consolidation of public information activities external to the Department is also complicated by the fact that political information activities, such as support for the Centre against Apartheid, Palestinian rights and Namibia, are located in their respective offices by long-standing legislative mandates; hence little or no possibility of structured consolidation is foreseen by the Secretary-General for these activities.

59. For the above-mentioned reasons, the review concludes that public information activities are too highly dispersed to be consolidated or centralized in the Department. Furthermore, the Department has indicated that until it has properly established its own organisation it would not be able to take on additional responsibilities. The Secretary-General therefore proposes that a further review of the question be undertaken "not earlier than 1992".

60. The Advisory Committee recognizes the constraints involved in consolidating public information activities as enumerated by the Secretary-General. At the same time it believes that efforts to do so must continue and it therefore urges that the further review referred to by the Secretary-General be undertaken no later than 1992. It also expects that the Department of Public Information and the other offices involved in public information activities will strive for better co-operation among themselves so that resources appropriated can be applied for optimum results, bearing in mind, inter alia, the importance of training all the staff involved in public information, as stated in paragraph 51 above.

E. Additional requirements under section 1, subsection A.1, General Assembly; subsection A.4, United Nations Board of Auditors (including its secretariat); and subsection B.12, Office for Research and the Collection of Information

61. As stated in chapter V, paragraph 11, the Secretary-General is requesting an additional \$476,500 under section 1 of the programme budget because he does not anticipate that the additional requirements can be accommodated within existing appropriations.

62. The additional amount being requested relates to the following subsections:

		\$
1A.1	General Assembly	192 000
1A.4	United Nations Board of Auditors (including its secretariat)	234 800
1B.12	Office for Research and the Collection of Information	<u>49 700</u>
	Total	476 500

63. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/213, payment of travel costs of representatives of Member States attending the General Assembly is now limited to representatives of least developed countries; however, provision for such travel to the fifteenth special session of the Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament, estimated at \$192,000, was not included in the programme budget for 1988-1989.

64. In response to inquiries, the Advisory Committee was informed that the amount of \$192,000 would cover the first-class return travel for one representative from each of the 39 least developed countries. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that by its decision 42/428 of 11 December 1987, the General Assembly included another country in the list of least developed countries, thereby bringing the total to 39 countries.

65. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's request under subsection 1A.1 (General Assembly).

66. With regard to the request of \$234,800 under subsection 1A.4 (United Nations Board of Auditors (including its secretariat)), the Secretary-General in chapter V, paragraph 3, states that the current provision in the 1988-1989 budget for "the costs of the salaries, travel and subsistence of staff provided by members of the Board of Auditors and the costs associated with the attendance by members of the Board at the regular meetings of the Board and the Panel of External Auditors" is \$2,330,000, which "was estimated at the resource base level". The Advisory Committee notes that this provision relates to the heading "External audit" (see the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989 (A/42/6 (Sect. I), para. 1.23)).

67. Resources under this heading proved insufficient in the biennium 1986-1987 (see chap. V, para. 4). Consequently, subsequent to the approval of the 1988-1989 appropriation of \$2,330,000 for external audit, the Board of Auditors undertook a review of estimated audit costs for 1988-1989. As stated in chapter V, paragraph 5, "estimated costs for 1989 under the regular budget amount to \$1,539,300", which "exceeds the 1989 component of the current appropriation for external audit in 1989 by \$234,800".

68. At its request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of the revised 1988-1989 estimated external audit costs under the regular budget and extrabudgetary activities as compared with the original estimates. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that costs under the regular budget are estimated at \$2,564,800; costs financed by extrabudgetary sources are estimated at \$2,261,509.

69. In response to inquiries, the Committee was further informed that a review regarding the distribution of the external audit costs between the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources had not taken place since 1978. However, as shown below, the Committee was provided with information concerning the growth in the level of expenditures of the three major contributors to the budget of the Board:

United Nations:	1986-1987	\$1 598 699 580	
	1978-1979	<u>1 077 492 872</u>	
	Net increase	521 206 708	48.4 per cent
UNDP:*	1987	\$ 936 196 247	
	1979	<u>699 095 064</u>	
	Net increase	237 101 183	33.9 per cent
UNICEF:*	1987	\$ 487 516 827	
	1979	<u>259 396 529</u>	
	Net increase	228 120 298	87.9 per cent

* These organisations are on an annual basis.

70. Although the growth in operations of a given organization may not be directly proportional to the growth of audit coverage for that organization, the Advisory Committee, while not objecting to the proposed increase of \$234,800, is of the view that an analysis of the distribution of external audit costs between the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources should be undertaken as soon as possible.

71. The amount of \$49,700 requested under subsection 1B.12 (Office for Research and the Collection of Information) comprises \$14,700 for overtime, \$30,000 for travel of staff and \$5,000 for supplies and materials, as discussed in chapter V, paragraphs 8 to 10. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes the statement in paragraph 7 of chapter V that, although staff and other resources of the Office were provided through redeployments from other Secretariat units, "now that the Office has been functioning for some time, it is apparent that to make it fully operational some additional resources will be required".

72. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the additional resources for this Office; however, it is also of the view that the need for overtime should diminish in future once the Office is fully staffed.

F. Temporary posts authorized on a recurrent basis for the biennium 1986-1987 and approved for the biennium 1988-1989 under the regular budget

73. As stated in chapter VI, paragraph 5, the Secretary-General is proposing that the 253 temporary recurrent posts approved for 1988-1989 under the regular budget be converted to established posts. In this connection the Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 3 that "in most cases, those posts that were identified as temporary recurrent had been reviewed annually, some for as many as five to seven years" and that "most original mandates that had called for temporary posts had thus become permanent mandates and part of the regular work programmes".

74. In response to inquiries, representatives of the Secretary-General informed the Committee that a total of 24 temporary recurrent posts had been proposed for abolition in the context of the post review exercise; consequently, the actual

number of temporary recurrent posts being proposed for conversion totalled 229. This updated figure is included in table 1 of the annex to chapter I of the report (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1).

75. The Advisory Committee has been concerned with the question of temporary posts, both non-recurrent and recurrent, and it has often pointed out those instances where "temporary" posts have been requested again and again. The Committee therefore understands the reasoning behind the Secretary-General's proposal to convert the 229 temporary recurrent posts. At the same time, the Committee does not believe that it can recommend a "blanket" conversion. Rather, it recommends that the proposal be resubmitted in the context of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 1990-1991. At that time, the Advisory Committee would review each proposal for conversion in conjunction with its examination of the budget sections and the functions related to the post, thereby enabling it to decide if the functions are of a permanent enough basis to warrant the establishment of a permanent post.

III. SECOND PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 41/213

76. This report (A/43/286) has been submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee pursuant to the request in paragraph 11 of Assembly resolution 42/211. As stated in paragraph 4, the report provides detailed information on action taken with respect to each recommendation of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts up to the first quarter of 1988 and plans for the remaining period (April 1988-December 1989). The Committee points out that this report should be read in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on revised estimates (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1), which contains the financial implications of a number of the developments described in the progress report.

77. The Committee notes that the report is general in nature, and it trusts that further progress in the months ahead will ensure that the final report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 will be a comprehensive statement and will contain a complete description and justification for all that has taken place during the reform process.

78. As indicated in paragraph 39 of the report, detailed information concerning the restructured Department of Public Information is included in the revised programme budget estimates (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1). The related comments of the Advisory Committee are to be found in paragraphs 40 to 60 above.

79. The Committee notes from paragraph 47 of the report that "pursuant to a recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and as part of its efforts to rationalize the publications programme, the Publications Board, in consultation with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, has recently developed a methodology for estimating the cost of producing recurrent publications. This methodology will be used in the preparation of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and

in the planning and review of the consolidated publications programme for the period". The Advisory Committee had discussed the publications programme of the United Nations in paragraphs 70 to 78 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989. 3/

80. In paragraph 56 of the report the Secretary-General discusses measures taken to streamline the Department of Administration and Management and indicates that "the consolidation of programme planning and budget under one structure has also been completed as previously announced (A/42/234, annex, para. 3, and A/C.5/42/2/Rev.1, paras. 42-45)". In paragraph 92 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for 1988-1989, 3/ the Advisory Committee had indicated that it would return to the matter of the structure of the Department of Administration and Management in the context of further developments. The Committee has received additional information on this matter and has no objection to the proposals of the Secretary-General in this regard as incorporated in his report on the revised estimates for 1988-1989 (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1) (see paras. 31 and 32 above).

81. Information on steps taken to reform and streamline the system for the administration of justice in the secretariat is provided in paragraphs 88 to 91 of the report. The Advisory Committee understands that a separate report on this subject will be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

IV. PROGRAMME BUDGET IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION ON THE WORK OF THE FIRST PART OF ITS TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

82. The Advisory Committee has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications arising from the report of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the first part of its twenty-eighth session (A/43/16 (Part I)/Add.1).

83. In paragraphs 2 to 6 the Secretary-General refers to plans for the resumed twenty-eighth session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination which was proposed to be held in New York from 6 to 19 September 1988. That recommendation of the Committee was approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1988/62. The Advisory Committee will, accordingly, consider the Secretary-General's request for an additional appropriation in the context of his report on revised estimates arising out of the decisions and recommendations of the Council to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

84. Paragraphs 7 to 9 of the statement deal with the recommendation of Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning the target for reduction in the staffing of conference services in New York and Geneva (see A/43/16 (Part I), para. 36). In paragraph 9 it is stated that, should the recommendation of the Committee be adopted, "a redistribution of salaries and common staff cost appropriations now contained in document A/C.5/43/1 would be necessary and would entail additional resources totalling \$8,143,500 under section 29". It is also stated that, however, there would be no change in the overall level of appropriations for 1988-1989.

85. In connection with the cost of the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee notes that no indication is given of the number of posts that would have to be "restored" to implement the recommendation or of the precise cost of these posts. As indicated in paragraphs 15 and 20 above, prior to the decision of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee had reached a similar conclusion with regard to the level of staffing for conference services. The Advisory Committee's related recommendation involves the restoration of 100 posts at an estimated cost of \$12,893,900 (see para. 16 above). Reference to table 2 of the statement reveals a similar cost in the case of the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Starting under section 29 with a negative figure of \$4,365,000 (footnote "b" to table 2), the result of the recommended change in the target for staff reductions would be to move to a positive \$8,143,500, for a total addition to section 29 of \$12,508,500. Thus, the statement in paragraph 9 that additional resources totalling \$8,143,500 would be required under section 29 is misleading, since it neglects to mention that the additional \$8.1 million is instead of what otherwise would have been a saving of \$4.4 million under section 29.

86. In paragraphs 16 to 19 above, the Advisory Committee has recommended a series of compensatory measures and has also indicated that in view of these measures there should be no need to request an additional appropriation in the second programme budget performance report for the biennium 1988-1989.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49).

2/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/42/7).

3/ Ibid.
