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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE TRIENNium 1988-1989

QUESTION OF NAMIBIA

Programme budget implications of the recommendations of
the United Nations Council for Namibia in its report to
the General Assembly (A/43/24 (Part II))

Addendum

Observations submitted by the Committee on Conferences
pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution
35/10 A of 3 November 1980

1. In accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 A of 3 November 1980, by which the Assembly decided that all proposals relating to the schedule of conferences and meetings made at sessions of the Assembly should be reviewed by the Committee on Conferences when administrative implications were being considered under the requirements of rule 153 of the rules of procedure, the Committee on Conferences met on 16 November 1988 to discuss certain aspects of the proposed programme of work of the United Nations Council for Namibia.
2. In particular, the Committee discussed the proposals contained in paragraphs 3 and 12 (m) of draft resolution C submitted by the Council in its report (A/43/24 (part II)), by which the Assembly would decide that the Council should

"hold extraordinary plenary meetings in Latin America or southern Africa and that such meetings shall be provided with verbatim records", and

"Organize international and regional activities, as required, in order to obtain relevant information on all aspects of the situation in and relating to Namibia, in particular the exploitation of the people and resources of Namibia

by South African and other foreign economic interests, and to expose such activities, with a view to intensifying active support for the Namibian cause".

3. In accordance with these provisions, the Council would organize during 1989 both a series of extraordinary plenary meetings in either Zambia or Brazil, and a number of international and regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Asia. The details of those proposed activities can be found in sections F and G of Chapter II of the Council's report, and information on the related programme budget implications and estimated costs is contained in document A/C.5/43/34, in particular paragraphs 14 to 17 and 25 to 28, and annexes II and III.

4. Those proposals were brought to the attention of the Committee on Conferences because in the absence of an invitation from a Government to hold those activities on its territory, and an agreement by that Government to defray the actual additional costs involved, the holding of the activities away from New York would entail a departure from paragraphs 4 and 5 of section I of resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985.

5. Furthermore, the provision of verbatim records and transcripts, as requested by the Council in its report, would constitute a departure from paragraph 1 of resolution 41/177 D of 5 December 1986, which states that the Council is entitled to receive summary, not verbatim records, and paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 37/14 C of 16 November 1982, by which the Assembly decided:

"that those subsidiary organs that are entitled to receive written meeting records for all or some of their meetings shall receive them when meeting away from recognized United Nations conference centres only if there is a specific decision by the General Assembly for each case".

6. A number of delegations believed that the Committee on Conferences should not recommend that the General Assembly agree to a departure from resolutions 37/14 C and 41/177 D on the provision of written meeting records to subsidiary organs, and asked why the provision of verbatim records to the proposed extraordinary plenary meetings of the Council was necessary.

7. Questions were also asked concerning the impact of a possible agreement on the independence of Namibia on the proposed programme of work of the United Nations Council for Namibia, how the proposed locations of the extraordinary plenary meetings had been chosen, and exactly when and where the meetings would take place. A delegation also asked if any Government had offered to assist the Council in implementing its programme of work.

8. Other delegations, however, expressed the view that the question of the independence of Namibia had not yet been settled, and the work of the Council should therefore continue. The request for verbatim records and transcripts should be granted in view of the importance of the proceedings to that work. The Chairman pointed out that verbatim records would, among other things, be useful to the future leaders of an independent Namibia.

9. In reply to questions, the Secretariat stated that the United Nations Council for Namibia had been created by the General Assembly to administer the Territory

until its independence, and would continue to do so until the Assembly decided otherwise. No final agreement on the independence of Namibia had yet been reached, and the Council had decided to continue its programme of work. Invitations from Governments had been sought, continued the Secretariat, but none had been extended. However, experience showed that in the past Governments had offered assistance.

10. The Secretariat added that the location of the Council's proposed meetings had been chosen on political and other grounds. In the past, the Council had carried out activities in a number of regions, and it was decided that in 1989 its extraordinary plenary meetings should be held in Latin America or southern Africa. The details would be decided after approval of the Council's programme of work by the General Assembly.

11. The Committee noted that the requests by the United Nations Council for Namibia would constitute a departure from the established headquarters principle reaffirmed in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 40/243, section I, and that the request for verbatim records of the proposed extraordinary plenary meetings and verbatim transcripts of the international and regional activities would also require explicit exemption from the provisions of resolutions 37/14 C and 41/177 D. While the Committee, noting the important mandate of the Council, especially at this juncture, and having regard to current developments in and around Namibia, had no objection to recommending to the General Assembly that it should explicitly authorize the Council to have verbatim records of its extraordinary plenary meetings and verbatim transcripts of its international and regional activities in 1989, the Committee would at the same time recommend to the General Assembly that the Council be invited to evaluate its requirements for written meeting records for such future activities.
