

AGENDA ITEM 39¹

Budget estimates for the financial year 1950: (a) Budget estimates prepared by the Secretary-General; (b) Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

39(a) Budget estimates prepared by the Secretary-General^{2 3}

Document A/C.5/298

Section 7a, Library: Library policy and organization

[Original text: English]
[21 September 1949]

1. The Fifth Committee at its 136th meeting requested the Secretary-General to submit a special report on library policy and the organization of library services for consideration by the General Assembly, fourth session.⁴

2. The following statement is in two parts: Part I is concerned with the policy of the Library, part II with organization.

PART I. LIBRARY POLICY

3. The Library is responsible for all library services at Headquarters and for the acquisition of all library materials.⁵

4. The Library's primary function is to enable the delegations, Secretariat and other official groups of the Organization to obtain, with the greatest possible speed, convenience and economy, the library materials and information needed in the execution of their duties. The materials to be assembled and the services to be maintained will be determined by the needs of these groups.

5. The services of the Library will also be made available, as far as feasible, to the specialized agencies, accredited representatives of mass media of information, international governmental organizations, affiliated non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, scholars and writers. No one needing to use full sets of the documents and publications of the League of Nations, the United Nations or the specialized agencies will be denied access to the Library. Service to the public, however, must necessarily be subordinated to the service needed by the United Nations.

Library collections

6. These services will be based on a collection of library materials, systematically selected from all countries, organized and administered for

¹ See also in connexion with this item, the documentation included in this volume on agenda items 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28(b), 35, 53 and 63 which were referred to the Fifth Committee, under rule 142 of the rules of procedure, for consideration of the financial implications upon the 1950 budget estimates of resolutions proposed by other Committees of the General Assembly.

² Documentation of the budget estimates relating to the specialized agencies (A/1005 and A/C.5/L. 22, 25, 26 and 28) will be found in *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly, Annex to the Joint Second and Third Committee*, and *Supplement No. 5a*.

easy use. They will be provided through reference and information facilities, reading rooms, book and periodical circulation, departmental branches, bibliographical, indexing and abstracting services, and through direct access by readers to the library collection.⁶

7. The Library's collections will comprise: complete sets of the documents and publications of the League of Nations, the United Nations and the specialized agencies; and selected materials in other categories. Some of these categories are: books about the League of Nations, the United Nations and the specialized agencies, Member countries, Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing Territories and other areas of special interest to the United Nations; current and recent books and pamphlets on subjects being studied by the United Nations; magazines and newspapers; maps; microfilm and photostat copies of needed materials not otherwise available.

8. In the formation of these collections the emphasis will be on service and on immediate usefulness, not on accumulation and preservation. In most fields no attempt will be made to assemble comprehensive collections or to build up collections for purposes of general historical research and the Library must continuously discard material which is no longer useful to it.⁷

9. Apart from documents and publications of the League of Nations, the United Nations and the specialized agencies, in which field the Library will undertake to achieve completeness, the selection of material to be acquired will be guided (a) by its usefulness to the United Nations and (b) by the extent to which needed materials are satisfactorily available elsewhere.

10. These criteria of selection will be applied to all acquisitions whether by purchase, gift or exchange.

Service and staff

11. The library service required by the United Nations makes necessary a staff capable of assessing the requirements of the various organs of the United Nations, of surveying the literature on all subjects of interest to the Organization, of selecting appropriate publications for acquisition, of organizing these materials and of assisting in their use.

³ The Rapporteur's report on this item will be found in the *Annex to the Plenary Meetings* under symbol A/1232.

⁴ *Official Records of the third session of the General Assembly, Part I, Fifth Committee*, 136th meeting.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Annexes, document A/C.5/222 and Corr. 1.

⁶ *Official Records of the third session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 7A (A/598) paragraph 133.*

12. The services and collections of the Library must be easily accessible. Reading rooms will be designed and arranged for quick reference to the books most in demand, and to indexes and catalogues.

13. The arrangement of the central Library and departmental branches will be such as to make rapid lending possible for any office at Headquarters from any part of the library system.

Departmental branches

14. The maintenance by the Library of branches within departments of the Secretariat is a necessity, but these branches will be kept small and will contain only the most needed reference materials. The departmental liaison librarians are responsible for reference service to the departments, for circulation of serials within the departments, and for relations between the departments and the central Library in such matters as book selection, bibliographical compilations and inter-library loans. The collections are integral parts of the Library; the personnel are members of the Library's staff.

Contractual services

15. If the Library is to be restricted to a compact collection of largely current materials it will have to avail itself to the fullest possible extent of the bibliographical resources of other libraries of Greater New York and elsewhere. This can be done through contractual agreements. Such agreements may be made with either individuals or other libraries. Payment to libraries will be made only for services that are beyond those normally available.

Co-ordination of library facilities

16. It is the policy of the United Nations Library to promote the co-ordination of library work in the United Nations and the specialized agencies so far as feasible, through the exchange of information, publications and staff; through co-operative selection, indexing and cataloguing; and through establishment of a union catalogue and register of research and bibliographical activities.

Document indexing

17. The Headquarters Library is responsible for indexing United Nations documents and publications. Its programme of work should include prompt card indexing, primarily to meet the needs of the Secretariat; publication of a periodic indexed list of all important documents and publications of the United Nations and specialized agencies; publication of definitive indexed check lists of United Nations documents by organ and session; page indexing of official records and important publications; occasional preparation of special lists and indexes to meet special needs. The Library should provide a complete reference service on documents and publications of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and should encourage and assist the Organization and the specialized agencies to im-

prove and to standardize indexing and check listing.

Depository libraries

18. The Library, under regulations established by the Publications Board, arranges for the distribution of United Nations publications to depository libraries throughout the world and for exchanges of publications.

The Geneva Library¹

19. The following principles, proposed in a report of the Secretary-General under resolution 205 (VIII) of the Economic and Social Council, were approved at the Council's ninth session by resolution 260 (IX):

(a) The Geneva Library should be continued for the service primarily of the United Nations and the specialized agencies; and also for other international organizations, research institutions and students;

(b) The acquisition programme of the Library should not, under present circumstances, be reduced, as the Library, which is now operated on a somewhat smaller scale than in the time of the League of Nations, has undiminished obligations to fulfil;²

(c) The Geneva Library "Monthly List of Selected Articles" and "Monthly List of Books Catalogued" should be continued until such time as they can be developed into more comprehensive lists;

(d) No transfers of title to any portion of the Geneva Library should be made;

(e) The Library will, on the other hand, pursue a liberal lending policy with other libraries, including the Headquarters Library and those of the specialized agencies, and whenever possible on a reciprocal basis. As an alternative to loans, whenever these prove impossible, material should be supplied in photo-copy, this service being provided on a cost basis;

(f) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (g) and (h) below, the Geneva Library will be financed by the United Nations;

(g) Income from the Library Endowment Fund³ will be used for any expenditure requirements for research work and for students² additional to that necessary to meet the needs of the United Nations and related organizations; and for other purposes not inconsistent with the terms of the grant as summarized in footnote 3;

² Namely: the obligation to meet the needs, not only of the United Nations, but also of the specialized agencies and other international organizations which depend to a considerable extent on this Library, in view of the lack of other facilities in Geneva comparable to those within easy reach of the Headquarters Library; an understanding with the International Labour Organisation; obligations incurred under the Rockefeller gift "to provide full and adequate facilities for research work for students"; and lastly, it must be remembered that the Geneva Library now has an increased value to the countries of Europe, the libraries of which were devastated by the war.

³ The Library at Geneva was established by the League of Nations with the aid of a large grant from Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The balance left after the erection of the library building has been set up as the Library Endowment Fund. It is a condition of the grant that income from this fund is to be used for the Geneva Library and is to be regarded as an addition to, and not in substitution for, moneys otherwise provided for the Library.

¹ See *Official Records of the third session of the General Assembly, Part I: Supplement No. 7a*, paragraphs 135 and 179; *Fifth Committee*, page 404; *Annexes to the Plenary Meetings*, document A/798; *Plenary Meetings*, page 1003, paragraph 127.

(h) In so far as any special material and services are needed by the specialized agencies using the Library, the necessary expenditure should be met by the agencies themselves;

(i) The relationship of the Geneva Library to that at Headquarters should be governed by the following considerations:

(i) The cost of the Geneva Library (see paragraph (g) above) will be met from the budget of the European Office.

(ii) The Library will be controlled by the Secretary-General administratively through the Director of the European Office, and from a policy point of view, through the Director of the Headquarters Library.

(iii) In conformity with the principles set out above, material will be freely lent to the Headquarters Library, but no transfer will take place, except in case of material not needed in the Geneva Library.

20. In conformity with the relevant principles set out in the preceding paragraphs, an arrangement between the Geneva Library and the World Health Organization for the long-term loan to the latter of certain materials has been approved by the Economic and Social Council, on the understanding that the works in the Library shall continue to be housed in the European headquarters of the United Nations.

PART II. LIBRARY ORGANIZATION

The organization of the Library and location of the library services within the structure of the Secretariat were discussed in the first report of 1948 to the General Assembly of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.¹ In this report the Committee noted that the Secretary-General requested authority to transfer appropriations between certain sections of the 1948 budget, the particular item involved being the transfer of \$184,957 from sections 8, 14 and 15 to section 15 in order to establish a centralized library service within the Department of Public Information.

The Advisory Committee noted that pending the establishment of the permanent headquarters the reorganization was not necessarily a permanent one, nor did it feel that in normal circumstances the Department of Public Information would be the appropriate location for the Library. The Advisory Committee gave notice that it would give further consideration to this matter when receiving a report on the economy and efficiency of the reorganization represented by the above transfer, and awaited also the advice of the Committee of Library Experts which was to meet at Headquarters in July 1948.

In its second report of 1948 the Advisory Committee made further comments.² In particular it was of the opinion that the 1949 budget estimates gave rise to more serious questions concerning the policy to be followed in the development of the United Nations Library. The Advisory Committee felt that the Library was

becoming too closely identified with the Department of Public Information not only in its administrative control but in certain aspects of its substantive work. It deprecated any step which would tend to make the Library an organ of the Department of Public Information, and felt that the whole question of the location of the Library was an important matter of policy to be determined by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee further felt that, although the forthcoming meeting of the Committee of Library Experts might discuss the matter, the question was not essentially one for library experts since it concerned the extent to which non-library services should be attached to the Library.

The International Advisory Committee of Library Experts considered the position of the Library within the administrative structure of the Secretariat in the light of its current location in the Department of Public Information and of the reference to this matter in the first report of 1948 of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.³ The Committee recommended that the function of the Library be recognized as that of an organization-wide service of a non-administrative character and that it be given the status and independence appropriate to this function. For this reason the library experts considered that the Library might appropriately be attached to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, although it felt that the location of the Library in the Department of Public Information should not be disturbed immediately but that the question be reviewed from time to time with special reference to the public information services which the Library was being called on to perform.

At the third session of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee, at its 136th meeting, approved the view of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that any step tending to make the Library an organ of the Department of Public Information should be deprecated.

In the light of this opinion, the budget estimates for 1950 show the Library, as attached to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, as an independent service obtaining general policy directives as necessary from that office. Information as to the detailed organization and definition of the functions of the Library will be found in section 7a of the budget estimates for the financial year 1950.³

Document A/C.5/303

Section 27, International Court of Justice: application of the Staff Assessment Plan

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As indicated in his foreword to the budget estimates for the financial year 1950 (A/903, page vii), the Secretary-General calls the attention of the General Assembly to the following circumstances relating to the application of the

¹ See *Official Records of the third session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 7*, paragraphs 18 and 19.

² *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 7A, paragraphs 130-137.

³ See *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 5*. This document will be referred to hereafter by the symbol A/903.