

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/34/32
10 November 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-fourth session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda item 98

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981

Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly, in resolution 33/116 A, section I, of 19 December 1978, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat 1/ and the related oral report of the Advisory Committee; 2/ endorsed the general direction of the Secretary-General's policy and the measures indicated in his report, and encouraged him to proceed with the reforms in organizational nomenclature; and decided to consider the final report of the Secretary-General on the remaining organizational elements at its thirty-fourth session.

2. It will be recalled that to assist him in the reforms in organizational nomenclature, the Secretary-General established an interdepartmental working group, with instructions to proceed as expeditiously as possible with the task of converting existing organizational elements below the hierarchical level of department, secretariat or office (level 1) to the new nomenclature on an office-by-office basis. 3/ In his report to the General Assembly last year, the Secretary-General stated that, based on a report of the working group on the results of its work up to July 1978 and the recommendations thereon of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, he had approved, with certain exceptions, the application of the new organizational nomenclature to 16 departments, secretariats and offices. These were:

1/ A/C.5/33/6.

2/ A/C.5/33/SR.20, para. 65.

3/ A/C.5/32/17, para. 19.

- (a) Executive Office of the Secretary-General
- (b) Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Questions
- (c) Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs
- (d) Office of Legal Affairs
- (e) Department of Political and Security Council Affairs
- (f) Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization
- (g) Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- (h) Office of Personnel Services
- (i) Office of General Services
- (j) Internal Audit Division
- (k) Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Division
- (l) Department of Conference Services
- (m) Department of Public Information
- (n) United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations
- (o) Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia
- (p) Secretariat of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

The detailed organizational nomenclature approved by the Secretary-General for these 16 departments, secretariats and offices was announced in document ST/SGB/170 dated 29 December 1978.

3. Since the last report of the Secretary-General, the working group has continued its office-by-office review. In the course of that review, the working group found that a wide variety of descriptive terms are used throughout the Secretariat for activities which are essentially comparable. The working group concluded that the effort to adopt a standardized and uniform organizational nomenclature would be incomplete if that effort focused only on organizational designations (e.g., "division", "unit") but did not deal with the descriptive or substantive portions of the titles of the various organizational elements. Consequently, the recommendations being made by the working group will ensure that a greater degree of uniformity is established throughout the Secretariat in the descriptive or substantive portions of the titles of organizational elements with similar functions. In making these recommendations, the working group has also taken account of the translation of titles into the various official languages.

4. In a report covering its work through August 1979, the working group conveyed its further recommendations for the application of the new organizational

nomenclature. These recommendations are addressed to certain modifications in the definitions and criteria established by the Secretary-General in documents A/C.5/32/17 and A/C.5/33/6, as well as the application of the new organizational nomenclature to an additional 15 departments, offices and secretariats, namely:

- (a) Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation
- (b) Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs
- (c) Department of International Economic and Social Affairs
- (d) Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters
- (e) Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe
- (f) Secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- (g) Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America
- (h) Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa
- (i) Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Western Asia
- (j) Secretariat of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- (k) Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator
- (l) Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme
- (m) United Nations Office at Geneva
- (n) Secretariat of the World Food Council
- (o) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

5. At the present time, the Secretary-General is in the process of obtaining the views of his senior colleagues in the Secretariat on these recommendations. The Secretary-General intends to consider these views fully before taking his decisions on the organizational nomenclature for the departments, offices and secretariats listed in paragraph 4.

6. It should be noted that there were certain subsidiary elements of the departments, secretariats and offices listed in paragraph 4 in respect of which the working group did not make recommendations during its 1979 session, for the reasons stated below. Such subsidiary elements include the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs within the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. As the Centre was being relocated from New York to Vienna and its organizational structure was under review by the Administrative Management Service (AMS) during 1979, the working group decided to postpone its examination of the Centre until its next session. Consideration of the Division

of Social Affairs in the United Nations Office at Geneva was similarly postponed, since that Division was also being transferred to Vienna to be integrated with the rest of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

7. There are only three major organizational elements which have not yet been considered by the working group: the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, the Office of Financial Services and the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Application of the new organizational nomenclature to these elements could not be undertaken during 1979, since their respective organizational structures were still under review. The Secretary-General expects, however, that the organization of these elements will be finalized shortly.

8. Reference was made in paragraph 2 above to the fact that in approving the recommended organizational nomenclature for 16 departments, offices and secretariats in 1978, the Secretary-General made certain exceptions. These exceptions related to 11 organizational elements presently designated as divisions. As indicated in paragraphs 12 to 16 of document A/C.5/33/6, the Secretary-General decided to defer a final decision on the working group's recommendations concerning these elements until the review of all major organizational elements had been completed.

9. Given the position outlined in paragraphs 3 to 8 above, the Secretary-General expects to be able to present a final report on all outstanding matters regarding organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. In the interim, the Secretary-General trusts that, in line with the decision of the General Assembly reflected in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 32/204 of 21 December 1977, intergovernmental bodies will "avoid recommendations giving particular designations to organizational units or their heads which may not be in conformity with the nomenclature proposed by the Secretary-General".
