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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Revised estimates under section 22 L.1 (International Civil
Service Commission) and income section 2 (General income)

Twelfth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions to the General Assembly at its
thirty-second session

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates under section 22 L.1 (International Civil Service Commission) and income section 2 (General income) (A/C.5/32/28).
2. As indicated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of his report, provisional estimates for the Commission amounting to \$3,168,200 were included by him in the 1978-1979 proposed programme budget. These estimates reflected the maintenance of the level of resources approved for 1976-1977 pending consultation with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) on the Commission's budgetary proposals for 1978-1979. These consultations have now been completed and the revised estimates, endorsed by ACC, are set out in annexes I and II to the Secretary-General's report.
3. The revised estimates amount to \$3,202,500, which is \$552,900 (20.9 per cent) higher than the 1976-1977 appropriations of \$2,649,600. A total of 39 posts (17 Professional and above, 22 General Service) are requested for the Commission for 1978-1979, an increase of one Professional post (P-2/1) over the 1976-1977 level of 38 posts.
4. The new post is requested for an additional Associate Statistician in the Cost-of-Living Section (A/C.5/32/28, para. 8); the Advisory Committee has no objection to this request. The Advisory Committee also concurs in the proposal to reclassify the post of the personal assistant to the Chairman of the Commission from G-4 to G-5, contained in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report.
5. The Committee has been informed that three Professional posts are currently vacant. Of these, two are not expected to be filled until at least mid-1978 and

a third may be filled at a lower level than is currently provided for owing to a reformulation of the responsibilities attached to it. In the light of this information, the Committee expects that savings will arise under staff costs in 1978-1979.

6. In paragraph 7 of his report, the Secretary-General proposes that the honoraria of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Commission be increased by \$9,000 to \$54,000 per annum as from 1 January 1978; the additional requirements under the programme budget for 1978-1979 would amount to \$36,000. At present the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman receive honoraria of \$45,000 each per annum, with a further \$5,000 per annum being paid to the Chairman as a special allowance. Under the Secretary-General's proposal, the Chairman of the Commission would thus receive a total of \$59,000 per annum.

7. In paragraph 39 of its report to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session on the draft statute of ICSC (A/9891), the Advisory Committee expressed the opinion that the remuneration to be paid to the two full-time Commissioners should take the form of an honorarium "appropriate to the complexity and importance of the tasks they will have to perform under the Commission's statute". As stated in paragraph 37 of the same report, the Committee believed that the remuneration of the full-time Commissioners should be set outside the common system, so that they would not be personally affected by the recommendations they would be called upon to make in the exercise of their functions. In recognition of the fact that the remuneration of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman would be outside the common system and that the post adjustment system would thus not apply, the Committee recommended that the honoraria should be reviewed by the General Assembly at regular intervals (A/9891, para. 39).

8. The Committee notes that the request of the Secretary-General in paragraph 7 of his report corresponds to an increase of 5 per cent per year from 1974 (the year the present amount of the honoraria was set) to 1978 (the year the proposed increase is to take effect). The Committee believes that, given the developments, including inflation, in the intervening years, the proposed increase is reasonable and recommends that it be approved. The Committee cautions, however, that this should not create a precedent or establish a formula for automatic 5 per cent annual cost-of-living increases.

9. The Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 12 of his report that no resource growth is proposed for either consultants or travel of staff. The \$234,900 requested for consultants and the \$50,200 requested for travel of staff for 1978-1979 represent maintenance of the 1976-1977 level of appropriations with provision for inflation.

10. In connexion with the request for consultants, the Committee understands that the items listed in paragraph 12 (a) (i)-(v) relate to activities to be undertaken in 1978. Requirements for 1979 are less precise and will depend on the work programme to be established by the Commission for that year. Requirements for 1979, as they are now foreseen, are listed in paragraph 12 (a) (vi) of the Secretary-General's report; with regard to item (vi) (c), the Committee has been

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informed that the purpose of the proposed study is to determine whether the Federal Civil Service of the United States remains the "best-paying national civil service".

11. With regard to the study of equivalencies of grades between the United Nations and the United States Civil Service (A/C.5/32/28, para. 12 (a) (i)), the Committee recalls that, in its resolution 31/141 B, the General Assembly noted the intention of the Commission to pursue studies with a view to arriving at a methodology permitting comparison of "total compensation" between the comparator civil service and the United Nations salary system. The Assembly requested the Commission to carry out this comparison at all levels and to report its findings no later than at its thirty-third session. The Committee notes that the report of ICSC to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session indicated that the studies would be carried out "with the participation of external experts". 1/

12. With regard to the supplementary study on total compensation, the Committee was informed that the proposed engagement of a corporate consultant was motivated by the need for the Commission to have access to actuarial expertise.

13. In response to inquiries concerning travel of staff, the Committee was informed that, wherever possible, missions would be combined so as to minimize the number of separate journeys.

14. The Committee notes from paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report that requirements for external printing have been reduced by \$28,200 (at revised 1977 rates), since experience has proved that most of the Commission's documents can be produced internally.

15. The Advisory Committee accepts the revised estimates of \$3,202,500 for ICSC for the biennium 1978-1979 as contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/32/28 and annexes I and II). Since the Secretary-General's provisional estimate of \$3,168,200 for ICSC has already been included in the initial estimate for section 22 recommended by the Advisory Committee in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979, 2/ approval of the revised estimates for ICSC will call for the appropriation of an additional amount of \$34,300.

16. The Advisory Committee notes that, for the reasons given in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report, reimbursement to the United Nations by the specialized agencies of their share of the costs of the Commission is now estimated at \$2,024,900, a decrease of \$41,100 from the earlier estimate 3/ included under Income section 2 (General Income).

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/31/30), paras. 52 and 147.

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/32/8), para. 22.99.

3/ Ibid., Supplement No. 6 (A/32/6), vol. II, Income section 2, para. 2.10.