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MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1980-1983

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part I)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th and 5th plenary meetings, on 22 September 1978, the General Assembly decided to include in the agenda of its thirty-third session the item entitled: "Medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered this item at its 30th, 35th to 37th, 39th, 44th, 47th, 48th, 51st and 52nd meetings from 9 November to 6 December 1978.

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983; 1/

(b) Report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of its eighteenth session; 2/

(c) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the Medium-Term Plan (A/33/345);

(d) Note by the Secretariat (in pursuance of a request made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its eighteenth session concerning the programme on commodities included in the UNCTAD medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983) (A/C.5/33/51);

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 6, A/33/6, Parts 1-30 and corrigenda.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38).

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (A/C.5/33/60 and Corr.1).

4. At the 30th meeting, on 9 November, the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination introduced that Committee's report 3/ in an oral statement (A/C.5/33/SR.30, paras. 27-36).

5. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions introduced that Committee's report (A/33/345), also in an oral statement (A/C.5/33/SR.30, paras. 39-42).

6. The Assistant Secretary-General (Controller) addressed the Committee on the medium-term plan at its 36th and 48th meetings on 17 November and 1 December (A/C.5/33/SR.36, paras. 1-5, and A/C.5/33/SR.48, paras. 4-10).

7. At the 48th meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination also addressed the Committee (A/C.5/33/SR.48, paras. 16 and 17).

3/ Ibid.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

8. At the 44th meeting, on 28 November, the representative of Tunisia introduced the following draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19) on behalf of the Member States who are members of the Group of 77:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 31/93 on the medium-term plan and 32/206 on the report of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination,

"Recalling its resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system,

"Having received the proposed medium-term plan of the United Nations for the period 1980-1983 and the related reports of the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as the reports on evaluation submitted by the JIU,

"Deploing the unacceptable delay in the submission of the documents which hindered full consideration of the medium-term plan,

"Mindful of the decision 1978/84 of the ECOSOC on the medium-term plan and the report of the CPC,

"1. Takes note of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 and requests the Secretary-General to use it in the light of CPC's comments on individual plan sections as the framework for the preparation of the programme budget for biennium 1980-1981;

"2. Decides to consider at its next session, concurrently with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, the recommendations which the ECOSOC may make in 1979 concerning the orientation to be given to the programmes of the organization in the light of paragraph (e) of the Council's decision;

"3. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the CPC contained in A/33/38;

"4. Welcomes the intention of the CPC to conduct an in-depth study of the programme planning process during its nineteenth session;

"5. Approves the recommendations of the JIU on programming and evaluation in the light of the conclusions of the CPC as well as the recommendations of the CPC on evaluation of the individual programmes, especially those relating to the study by the Secretary-General on the feasibility of establishing time limited objectives for subprogrammes as well as the biennial evaluation of outputs of programmes;

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"6. Endorses the guidelines suggested by the ACABQ, on financial information to be included in future medium-term plans;

"7. Takes note of the progress report submitted by the CPC on the implementation of resolution 32/197;

"8. Endorses the recommendation of the CPC that the introductory survey to the medium-term plan should constitute an analysis of the activities of the organization and the strategy for their implementation and be prepared by the Director-General for International Economic Co-operation and Development under the authority of the Secretary-General;

"9. Approves the recommendations of the CPC on further harmonization of programming in the United Nations system including the request to the ACC to submit detailed proposals for securing an overview of the objectives and plans of the organizations of the system;

"10. Endorses the recommendation of the CPC that the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation be associated with preparation of cross organizational programme analyses on the lines suggested by CPC."

9. At its 51st meeting, on 5 December, the representative of Tunisia, on behalf of the Member States which are members of the Group of 77, introduced a revised draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1) which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 31/93 on the medium-term plan, 3534 (XXX) on the presentation of the United Nations programme budget and 32/206 on the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

"Recalling its resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system,

"Having received the proposed medium-term plan of the United Nations for the period 1980-1983 and the related reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as the reports on evaluation submitted by the Joint Inspection Unit,

"Mindful of Economic and Social Council decision 1978/84 on the medium-term plan and the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

"Deploing the unacceptable delay in the submission of the documents, which hindered full consideration of the medium-term plan,

"1. Takes note of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 and requests the Secretary-General to use it in the light of the comments of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on individual plan

sections as the framework for the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981;

"2. Decides to consider at its next session, concurrently with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, the recommendations which the Economic and Social Council may make in 1979 concerning the orientation to be given to the programmes of the Organization in the light of paragraph (e) of the Council's decision;

"3. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination contained in document A/33/38;

"4. Welcomes the intention of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to conduct an in-depth study of the programme planning process during its nineteenth session;

"5. Approves the recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on programming and evaluation (A/33/226) in the light of the conclusions of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning the study by the Secretary-General on the feasibility of establishing time-limited objectives for subprogrammes;

"6. Approves the recommendations of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on evaluation in the United Nations system (A/33/225) as commented on by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and on evaluation of the programme of public administration and finance (A/33/227) as commented on by the Secretary-General and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;

"7. Endorses the guidelines proposed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on financial information to be included in future medium-term plans;

"8. Takes note of the progress report submitted by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the implementation of resolution 32/197;

"9. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that the introductory survey to the medium-term plan should constitute an analysis of the activities of the organizations and the strategy for their implementation and be prepared by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation under the authority of the Secretary-General;

"10. Approves the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on further harmonization of programming in the United Nations system, including the request to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to submit detailed proposals for securing an overview of the objectives and plans of the organizations of the system;

/...

"11. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation be associated with preparation of cross-organizational programme analyses on the lines suggested by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

"12. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination with the necessary technical and substantive services in order that it may be able to fulfil its increased responsibilities and, in particular, carry out the programme of work it has set itself for 1979."

10. The representative of Tunisia then introduced an oral amendment to the above text, in which operative paragraph 4 was expanded to read as follows:

"4. Welcomes the intention of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to conduct an in-depth study of the programme planning process during its nineteenth session and expresses the wish that this study will lead to a solution to the problems stemming from the late distribution of documents and supports the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination whereby the required documents should be made available at least six weeks prior to the beginning of each session."

11. At the same meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics introduced amendments (A/C.5/33/L.26) to the revised draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1). He stated that there were errors in the English translation of these amendments and he then made oral corrections. The proposed amendments, as orally corrected, were as follows:

1. Reword the third preambular paragraph as follows:

"Taking note of the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed draft medium-term plan of the United Nations for the period 1980-1983, as well as the reports on evaluation submitted by the Joint Inspection Unit,".

2. Replace the words "on the medium-term plan" in the fourth preambular paragraph by "on the draft medium-term plan".

3. Replace the text of the fifth preambular paragraph by the following:

"Deploing the unacceptable delay in the submission of the documents on the draft medium-term plan, which hindered its meaningful consideration by the competent intergovernmental organs in accordance with the procedure laid down in General Assembly resolution 31/93,".

4. Add the following new preambular paragraph:

"Considering that section 27 of the proposed medium-term plan is being revised by the United Nations Secretariat and is now before the Economic and Social Council,".

5. Amend paragraph 1 to read as follows:

"Takes note of the proposed draft medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 and requests the Secretary-General to use it in the light of the comments of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and of the discussions of the Economic and Social Council at its resumed second regular session on individual plan sections and bearing in mind the sixth preambular paragraph of this resolution as a framework for the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 in strict compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 31/93 and 32/201;".

6. Amend paragraph 2 to read as follows:

"2. Decides to consider the relevant sections of the draft medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 at its next session in the light of the recommendations which the Economic and Social Council may make in 1979 concerning the orientation to be given to the programmes of the Organization in the light of paragraph (e) of the Council's decision;".

12. The representative of the United States of America considered that the word "study" in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1) might be misleading, since it could be interpreted to mean that further review was needed when, in fact, a test of feasibility of time-limited objectives was to be carried out. He orally proposed the substitution of the word "testing" for the word "study" in operative paragraph 5.

13. The representative of Australia orally proposed two amendments to operative paragraph 1:

(a) The addition of the phrase "and recommendations" after the word "comments";

(b) The deletion of the phrase "on individual plan sections".

14. The representative of Tunisia, speaking on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1), as amended, stated that the draft was not a narrow partisan proposal by the Group of 77, but incorporated the results of extensive consultations. He had no difficulty with the amendment proposed by the Soviet Union in paragraph 3 of A/C.5/33/L.26, but, apart from this, he opposed any other amendments.

/...

15. At the 52nd meeting, on 6 December, the representative of Tunisia, speaking on behalf of the co-sponsors, stated that he could accept the proposed amendments in paragraphs 2 and 3 of A/C.5/33/L.26 and that he agreed with the understanding of the representative of the United States that the use of the word "study" in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1, as amended) did not imply any further review of the need to test out the feasibility of time-limited objectives. The representative of the United States then stated that he would not insist on his proposed amendment.

16. The representative of Australia proposed the replacement of the phrase "in the light" by "taking account as appropriate" in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1, as amended).

17. After a number of interventions against them, the representative of Australia withdrew his proposed amendments.

18. After an exchange of views with the representative of Tunisia, the representative of the USSR withdrew the amendments to the draft resolution proposed in paragraphs 1, 4, 5, and 6 of A/C.5/33/L.26, as orally corrected.

19. The Chairman suggested that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus. The representative of the USSR requested that a vote be taken. At its 52nd meeting, on 6 December, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.19/Rev.1, as amended, by 86 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.

20. The comments and observations of delegations during the discussion of this item, as well as explanations of vote, are reflected in the summary records of the Committee (A/C.5/33/SR.30, 35-37, 39, 44, 47, 48, 51 and 52).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

21. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 31/93 of 14 December 1976 on the medium-term plan, 3534 (XXX) of 17 December 1975 on the presentation of the United Nations programme budget and 32/206 of 21 December 1977 on the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

Recalling its resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system,

Having received the proposed medium-term plan of the United Nations for the period 1980-1983, 4/ the relevant chapter of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination 5/ and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 6/ as well as the reports on evaluations submitted by the Joint Inspection Unit, 7/

Mindful of Economic and Social Council decision 1978/84 of 8 November 1978 on the draft medium-term plan and the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

Deploring the unacceptable delay in the submission of the documents on the draft medium-term plan, which hindered its meaningful consideration by the competent intergovernmental organs in accordance with the procedure laid down in General Assembly resolution 31/93,

1. Takes note of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 and requests the Secretary-General to use it in the light of the comments of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on individual plan sections as the framework for the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981;

2. Decides to consider at its next session, concurrently with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, the recommendations which the Economic and Social Council may make in 1979 concerning the orientation to be given to the programmes of the Organization in the light of paragraph (e) of Council decision 1978/84 of 8 November 1978;

4/ A/33/6, Parts 1-30.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), chap. I, sect. D, and chap. VIII.

6/ A/33/345.

7/ A/33/225, A/33/225 and E/1978/41 and Corr.2.

/...

3. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination; 8/

4. Welcomes the intention of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to conduct an in-depth study of the programme planning process during its nineteenth session and expresses the wish that this study will lead to a solution to the problems stemming from the late distribution of documents and supports the recommendation of the Committee whereby the required documents should be made available at least six weeks prior to the beginning of each session.

5. Approves the recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on programming and evaluation 9/ in the light of the conclusions of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 10/ as well as the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning the study by the Secretary-General on the feasibility of establishing time-limited objectives for subprogrammes

6. Approves the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on evaluation in the United Nations system 11/ as commented on by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination 12/ and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and on evaluation of the programme of public administration and finance 13/ as commented on by the Secretary-General 14/ and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;

7. Endorses the guidelines proposed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on financial information to be included in future medium-term plans;

8. Takes note of the progress report submitted by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the implementation of resolution 32/197; 15/

9. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that the introductory survey to the medium-term plan should constitute

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38).

9/ A/33/226.

10/ A/33/226/Add.2 and Corr.1.

11/ A/33/225.

12/ A/33/225/Add.1.

13/ A/33/227.

14/ A/33/227/Add.1.

15/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), chap. I, sect. F.

/...

an analysis of the activities of the organizations and the strategy for their implementation and be prepared by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation under the authority of the Secretary-General;

10. Approves the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on further harmonization of programming in the United Nations system, including the request to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to submit detailed proposals for securing an overview of the objectives and plans of the organizations of the system;

11. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation be associated with preparation of cross-organizational programme analyses on the lines suggested by the Committee;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination with the necessary technical and substantive services in order that it may be able to fulfil its increased responsibilities and, in particular, carry out the programme of work it has set itself for 1979.
