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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part I)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In an attempt to ease the workload of the General Assembly during the closing days of the session, and in a departure from previous practice, the report on various subjects under item 100 (Programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979) will be submitted as they become available. The present report is the first of a series of reports on item 100 and deals with:

- A. Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat;
- B. Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations;
- C. Establishment of an information services unit in the Department of International Social and Economic Affairs;
- D. Question of administrative and management control of the United Nations;
- E. Revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations;
- F. Revised estimates under sections 26B and 26C: Alteration, improvement and major maintenance of premises, United Nations Office at Geneva;
- G. International Computing Centre: 1979 budget estimates.

II. CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL SUBJECTS

A. Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat

2. The Committee considered this question at its 20th, 22nd, 25th and 28th meetings, on 20 and 25 October and on 2 and 7 November 1978; it had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/6), giving an account of developments since the thirty-second session of the General Assembly, at which the Assembly adopted resolution 32/204 of 21 December 1977 on this subject. At the 20th meeting, on 20 October, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in an oral statement presented that Committee's report.

3. At the 28th meeting, on 7 November 1978, the representative of Japan introduced the following draft decision (A/C.5/33/L.15) on behalf of Australia, Austria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, the Philippines, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago:

"The Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

"1. Take note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat 1/ and the related oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; 2/

"2. Endorse the general direction of the Secretary-General's policy and the measures indicated in his report and encourage the Secretary-General to proceed with the reforms in organizational nomenclature, taking into account the observations made by the Advisory Committee and the views expressed by the members of the Fifth Committee;

"3. Decide to consider the final report of the Secretary-General on the remaining offices at its thirty-fourth session."

In doing so, the representative of Japan announced that Turkey had joined the sponsors. At the same time, he informed the Committee that, in paragraph 3 of the draft decision, the words "the remaining offices" should be amended to read "the remaining organizational elements".

4. Comments and observations made by delegations are reflected in the summary records of the meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.20, 22, 25 and 28).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

5. At its 28th meeting, the Fifth Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/33/L.15, as orally revised (see para. 42 below, draft resolution I, sect. I).

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

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

B. Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations

6. The report of the Secretary-General on the use of experts and consultants in the United Nations (A/C.5/33/3), submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 32/203 of 21 December 1977 and 32/209 of 29 December 1977, was considered by the Committee at its 9th, 11th, 13th, 18th and 20th meetings on 5, 9, 11, 18 and 20 October 1978. Comments made by delegations in the course of the discussion and replies by representatives of the Secretary-General to questions raised, may be found in the summary records of those meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.9, 11, 13, 18 and 20).

7. At the 9th meeting, on 5 October, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in an oral statement, presented the report of that Committee. At the same meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management introduced the report of the Secretary-General.

8. At the 18th meeting, on 18 October, the representative of Poland, on behalf of Poland and Trinidad and Tobago, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.5/33/L.6).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

9. At its 20th meeting, on 20 October, the Fifth Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.6 (see para. 42 below, draft resolution II).

C. Establishment of an information services unit in the Department of International Social and Economic Affairs

10. The report of the Secretary-General on this subject (A/C.5/33/4), submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 32/212, section V, of 21 December 1977, was considered by the Committee at its 12th, 13th, 16th, 17th, 19th and 20th meetings on 10, 11, 16, 17, 19 and 20 October 1978.

11. The related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/7/Add.2) was introduced by its Chairman at the 12th meeting, on 10 October.

12. At the 17th meeting, on 17 October, the representative of Sweden introduced a draft decision (A/C.5/33/L.7) which read as follows:

"The Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

"1. Decide to authorize the Secretary-General to use computerization in carrying out in 1979 the work of the Information Services Unit (ISU) of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, in accordance with the extrabudgetary provisions for this purpose described in paragraph 12 of his note; 3/

"2. Request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the results of the two-year operation of the Information Services Unit. The report should take account of the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report, 4/ including the results of a review of the operation by the Information Systems Board and a detailed breakdown of the estimated start-up and operation costs of the Secretary-General's proposals. The Secretary-General's report should also indicate the utility of the information to potential users as well as to the actual and potential users of an Information Services Unit system, and the extent of compatibility and co-ordination achieved with the United Nations Bibliographic Information System and with the relevant information systems of other United Nations bodies, such as the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme;

"3. Request the Secretary-General to ensure that the unpublished material in the files of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development is fully utilized through appropriate arrangements with the Information Services Unit;

"4. Recall the decision in section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 32/212 that there is no commitment on the part of the Organization subsequently to transfer the costs of the operation of the Information Services Unit to the regular budget."

13. At the 19th meeting, on 19 October, the Committee had before it the following revised draft decision (A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.1), which had been prepared by the sponsor following consultation with other delegations:

"The Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

"1. Recall the decision in section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 32/212 of 21 December 1977 that there is no commitment on the part of the Organization subsequently to transfer the costs of the operation of the Information Services Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs to the regular budget;

"2. Decide to authorize the Secretary-General to use computerization in carrying out the work of the Information Services Unit in 1979, in accordance with the extrabudgetary provisions for this purpose described in paragraph 12 of the note by the Secretary-General, 3/ and to ensure that the unpublished material in the files of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development is fully utilized through appropriate arrangements with the Unit;

4/ A/33/7/Add.2.

"3. Request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the results of the two-year operation of the Unit, taking into account the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report, 4/ and including the results of a review of the operation by the Information Systems Board and a detailed breakdown of the estimated start-up and operation costs of the Secretary-General's proposals as well as the utility of the information to actual and potential users of an information services unit system, and the extent of compatibility and co-ordination achieved with the United Nations Bibliographic Information System, and with the relevant information systems of other United Nations bodies, such as the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme."

14. At the 20th meeting, on 20 October, the representative of Sweden introduced a second revision (A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.2) to the draft decision, which took into account the suggestions made by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic at the previous meeting (A/C.5/33/SR.19, para. 32). In paragraph 3, the words "recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report" were replaced by the words "conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Joint Inspection Unit in addition to those made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report".

15. The comments made by delegations, by representatives of the Secretary-General and by representatives of specialized agencies are reflected in the summary records of the meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.12, 13, 16, 17, 19 and 20).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

16. At its 20th meeting, the Fifth Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/33/L.7/Rev.2 (see para. 42 below, draft resolution I, sect. II).

D. Question of administrative and management control of the United Nations

17. The Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the question of administrative and management control (A/C.5/33/19) at its 43rd and 45th meetings, on 28 and 29 November 1978.

18. At the 43rd meeting, on 28 November, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions introduced the report of that Committee (A/33/7/Add.15).

19. The comments and observations made by the delegations during the discussion of this subject, as well as the replies made by the representatives of the Secretary-General to questions raised, are reflected in the summary records of the meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.43 and 45).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

20. At its 45th meeting, on 29 November, the Fifth Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend that the General Assembly should:

"(a) Take note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of administrative and management control of the United Nations; 5/

"(b) Endorse the observations and recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report 6/ (see para. 42 below, draft resolution I, sect. III).

E. Revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations

21. The question of the revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations was considered by the Fifth Committee at its 34th, 38th, 43rd and 44th meetings on 15, 21 and 28 November 1978.

22. For its consideration of this subject, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/32/34 and Corr.1), as well as the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/7/Add.11).

23. At the 34th meeting, on 15 November the Chairman of the Advisory Committee introduced the report of that Committee (A/33/7/Add.11). He pointed out that the subject had been under consideration since 1976, when the Secretary-General had submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session proposals on the revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, in accordance with decisions of the General Assembly (A/C.5/31/58). Consideration of those proposals had been postponed to the thirty-second session. The report of the Advisory Committee now before the Committee (A/33/7/Add.11), was concerned chiefly with the approval of a financial regulation dealing with forward commitments, which would come immediately after regulation 3.9 and would be numbered 3.10.

24. At the 34th meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed an oral amendment to regulation 3.10, proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 4 of its report (A/33/7/Add.11), which would delete the words "are expected to continue" and replace them by the words "it is the General

5/ A/C.5/33/19.

6/ A/33/7/Add.15.

Assembly's decision that those activities will be continued". Subsequently, further amendments were orally proposed by the representative of the USSR; the revised text before the Committee at the 44th meeting, on 28 November, read as follows:

"... (a) are for activities which have been approved by the General Assembly, and in accordance with its decisions, will continue beyond the end of the current financial period."

25. At the same meeting, the Soviet amendment was put to the vote and was rejected by 32 votes to 29 with 7 abstentions.

26. A separate vote was taken on regulation 3.10, which was adopted by 49 votes to 9, with 17 abstentions.

27. The remaining recommendations of the Advisory Committee were adopted by the Committee without objection.

28. Comments and observations made during the course of the discussion of this subject are reflected in the summary records of the meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.34, 38, 43 and 44).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

29. For the text of the decision adopted by the Fifth Committee at its 44th meeting, see paragraph 42 below, draft resolution I, section IV.

F. Revised estimates under sections 26B and 26C: Alteration, improvement and major maintenance of premises, United Nations Office at Geneva

30. When the Fifth Committee discussed this question at its 39th, 41st and 42nd meetings on 21, 24 and 27 November 1978, it had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/33) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/7/Add.12).

31. At the 39th meeting, on 21 November, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee presented the report of that Committee.

32. At the 41st meeting on 24 November, the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany introduced the following draft decision (A/C.5/33/L.17):

"The Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

"(a) Concur with the plan proposed by the Secretary-General in his report 7/ to use the villa "La Fenêtre" as the residence of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva without prejudice to the principle of whether officials of the United Nations, other than the Secretary-General, should be provided with accommodation.

"(b) Request the Secretary-General to study further possibilities of the use of the villa "Les Feuillantines" and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session."

33. At the 42nd meeting, on 27 November, the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany agreed to orally revise the first paragraph of the draft decision by adding the words "question of the" after the words "without prejudice to the".

34. Comments and observations made during the course of the discussion are reflected in the summary records of the meetings (A/C.5/33/SR.39, 41 and 42).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

35. At its 42nd meeting, the Fifth Committee decided, without objection, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/33/L.17, as orally revised (see para. 42 below, draft resolution I, sect. V).

G. International Computing Centre: 1979 budget estimates

36. The question of the 1979 budget estimates for the International Computing Centre was considered by the Fifth Committee at its 27th meeting on 6 November 1978.

37. For its consideration of this subject, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/22 and Corr.1) containing a summary of the 1979 budget estimates of the Centre for review and approval by the General Assembly, in accordance with the procedure decided upon by the Assembly in its resolution 31/208, section III, of 22 December 1976 as well as the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/7/Add.6).

38. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee introduced that Committee's report (A/33/7/Add.6).

39. In its report, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's revised estimates of \$5,068,900 for the 1979 budget of the International Computing Centre.

40. Comments made by delegations in the course of the discussion of this question are reflected in the summary record of the meeting (A/C.5/33/SR.27).

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

41. At its 27th meeting, the Fifth Committee, by 71 votes to 10, with 2 abstentions, approved the 1979 budget estimates for the International Computing Centre in the amount of \$5,068,900 (see para. 42 below, draft resolution I, sect. VI).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

42. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979

The General Assembly,

I

Organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the organizational nomenclature in the Secretariat 8/ and the related oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; 9/
2. Endorses the general direction of the Secretary-General's policy and the measures indicated in his report and encourages the Secretary-General to proceed with the reforms in organizational nomenclature, taking into account the observations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the views expressed by the members of the Fifth Committee;
3. Decides to consider the final report of the Secretary-General on the remaining organizational elements at its thirty-fourth session;

II

Establishment of an information services unit in the Department of International Social and Economic Affairs

1. Recalls the decision in section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 32/212 of 21 December 1977 that there is no commitment on the part of the Organization subsequently to transfer the costs of the operation of the Information Services Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to the regular budget;
2. Decides to authorize the Secretary-General to use computerization in carrying out the work of the Information Services Unit in 1979, in accordance with the extrabudgetary provisions for this purpose described in paragraph 12 of the note by the Secretary-General, 10/ and to ensure that the unpublished material in the files of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development is fully utilized through appropriate arrangements with the Unit;

8/ A/C.5/33/6.

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

10/ A/C.5/32/47.

3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the results of the two-year operation of the Information Services Unit, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Joint Inspection Unit in addition to those made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report 11/ and including the results of a review of the operation by the Information Systems Board and a detailed breakdown of the estimated start-up and operation costs of the Secretary-General's proposals as well as the utility of the information to actual and potential users of an Information Services Unit system, and the extent of compatibility and co-ordination achieved with the United Nations Bibliographic Information System and with the relevant information systems of other United Nations bodies, such as the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme;

III

Question of administrative and management control of the United Nations

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of administrative and management control of the United Nations; 12/
2. Endorses the observations and recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report. 13/

IV

Revision of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations

1. Approves the addition of the following regulation to article III of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations:

"Regulation 3.10: The Secretary-General may enter into commitments for future financial periods provided that such commitments: (a) are for activities which have been approved by the General Assembly and are expected to continue beyond the end of the current financial period or (b) are authorized by specific decisions of the Assembly."

11/ A/33/7/Add.2.

12/ A/C.5/33/19.

13/ A/33/7/Add.15.

2. Amends regulation 10.2 to read as follows:

"Regulation 10.2: Obligations for the current financial period or commitments for current and future financial periods shall be incurred only after allotments or other appropriate authorizations have been made in writing under the authority of the Secretary-General."

3. Amends paragraph 6 (e) of the annex to the Financial Regulations of the United Nations entitled "Additional terms of reference governing the audit of the United Nations" to read as follows:

"(e) If appropriate, transactions accounted for in a previous period concerning which further information has been obtained or transactions in a later period concerning which it seems desirable that the General Assembly should have early knowledge."

V

Revised estimates under section 26B and 26C: Alteration,
improvement and major maintenance of premises, United
Nations Office at Geneva

1. Concurs with the plan proposed by the Secretary-General in his report 14/ to use the villa "La Fenêtre" as the residence of the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, without prejudice to the question of the principle of whether officials of the United Nations, other than the Secretary-General, should be provided with accommodation.

2. Requests the Secretary-General to study further possibilities of the use of the villa "Les Feuillantines" and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session."

VI

International Computing Centre: 1979 budget estimates

Approves the 1979 budget estimates for the International Computing Centre in the amount of \$5,068,900.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision of 18 December 1974, taken at its twenty-ninth session, by which it outlined principles and guidelines for the use of experts and consultants in the United Nations, 15/

Recalling further its decision of 17 December 1975, taken at its thirtieth session, 16/ as well as its resolutions 31/205 of 22 December 1976 and 32/203 of 21 December 1977, in which it reaffirmed the aforesaid principles and guidelines and called for their full and effective implementation,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 17/ and the oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 18/

Expressing the view that the comparative data contained in the report of the Secretary-General's report does not permit the General Assembly to determine whether the existing deficiencies have been corrected or to ascertain fully the status of implementation of the principles and guidelines set by the Assembly,

Taking note of the assurances of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 22 of his report and those of his representative at the 9th meeting of the Fifth Committee on 5 October 1978, 19/

1. Calls upon the Secretary-General to eliminate the present deficiencies in the implementation of the principles and guidelines on the use of experts and consultants and to improve upon the existing procedures, so that a proper evaluation of the existing practice in this regard can be carried out;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session a full and comprehensive report on the implementation of the principles and guidelines set by the Assembly;
3. Further requests the Secretary-General to take into account the views expressed by Member States during the consideration of this item when implementing the principles and guidelines on the use of experts and consultants.

15/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 31 (A/9631 and Corr.2), item 73, pp. 136 and 137.

16/ Ibid., Thirtieth Session, Supplement, No. 34 (A/10034), p. 145, item 96, subpara. (t).

17/ A/C.5/33/3.

18/ A/AC.5/33/SR.9, paras. 34-36.

19/ Ibid., paras. 38-45.