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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Revised estimates for section 22G. Administrative
and Financial Services, Geneva

Note by the Secretary-General

Background

1. In a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session (A/C.5/32/67), the Secretary-General addressed himself to the need for strengthening the Administrative Systems Section of the Administrative and Financial Services, Geneva, which would be transformed into a Management Improvement Section as advocated by the Administrative Management Service (AMS). The objectives of this change were to provide the necessary staff for the establishment of criteria for the determination of resource requirements in relation to workload, to develop a co-ordinated management improvement programme and to prepare a management reporting system. Specifically, in line with the recommendation of the AMS, the Secretary-General requested the establishment of a new post for a systems analyst with management skills at the P-4 level, and the conversion of three existing programmer posts at the P-2/1 level from temporary assistance to established posts.
2. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its related report (A/32/8/Add.26) observed, first, that a parallel organization providing management analysis and computer programming services did not exist at Headquarters; and second, that the late issuance of the report by the Secretary-General had prevented the Advisory Committee from considering the various AMS recommendations in the context of other related studies. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended that consideration of these staffing proposals be deferred to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly. Additional information on this matter was provided to the Advisory Committee during its meetings in Geneva in May 1978.
3. With respect to the question of the Geneva organizational structure as compared to that in New York, it should be noted that at Headquarters three management branches - EDPIS, AMS and Internal Audit - report separately to the

Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. In Geneva, on the other hand, Management and EDP report to the Director, Administrative and Financial Services, while Internal Audit is outposted from New York and reports to the Director of Internal Audit Services. In other words, at Geneva, the work programmes for management and EDP are established and controlled locally since they are directly related to the current work programme and operational requirements of the Geneva office. On the contrary, the work programme of the Geneva Internal Audit Service is established and controlled by Headquarters because it is neither directly nor exclusively related to the Geneva work programme, nor is it confined to the Geneva accounts inasmuch as IAS in Geneva is responsible for the audit of the Vienna and Nairobi accounts.

4. In response to the Advisory Committee's suggestion that the Secretary-General's proposals for the Management Improvement Section be considered again at the thirty-third session (A/32/8/Add.26, para. 7), the proposals as detailed in paragraph 1 above are accordingly being resubmitted.

General management considerations

5. The over-all framework in which this request is presented is one in which the Director-General and his immediate subordinates are expected to provide the focus for administrative planning to individuals and organizations well beyond their immediate authority. This is often a difficult task since managers are occupied with the pressures of daily business within their own jurisdiction. Such resources as are available are devoted essentially to providing basic services. As a result, there is neither time nor manpower for forward planning or policy development. There is need for staff assistance sufficiently detached from day-to-day operations so that it can perform the necessary analyses and develop alternatives for management's consideration.

6. In requesting the P-4 post it is not being suggested that this will solve the problems facing management, but rather that the establishment of this post for a systems analyst would contribute as a first and most urgent step essential to the accomplishment of AFS's management plans and objectives.

Specific needs

7. Apart from these general considerations there is a need to bolster AFS's own management system. Deficiencies in planning, development of budget criteria and reporting systems were identified by AMS when it reviewed the Geneva Office (AMS report No. 2-77). As a result, a concerted management improvement effort is being undertaken. It will be a long-term and, in fact, continuing effort. The plan calls for a detailed review of each AFS function, including:

(a) the determination of over-all objectives, the development of programmes to carry out these objectives and the identification of problem areas to be addressed;

(b) the assessment of the workload of each activity and the determination of resource requirements for each unit and, where appropriate, the presentation of more effective alternatives to management;

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(c) the development of a reporting system for evaluating the progress towards targets of accomplishment.

8. Some work has already begun in this area, but much needs yet to be done. The proposed P-4 systems analyst would assist in this management improvement effort and significantly hasten its completion.

Conversion of temporary assistance posts to established posts

9. The second part of the request for staffing changes concerned the conversion of the three P-2 Programmer posts from temporary assistance to established posts on the following grounds: first, these positions cannot be considered as temporary in any sense. They contribute directly to the essential continuing functions of AFS. They make possible the operation, inter alia, of the Geneva Office's payroll, accounts and personnel automated systems without which AFS could not discharge its basic responsibilities. The positions should therefore be considered as indispensable and permanent. Second, the situation of relying on temporary assistance for permanent functions, as has been the case since January 1976, is in contradiction with sound management and personnel practice. Recruitment and retention of competent staff against temporary posts which offer uncertain security and questionable career possibilities is, in any event, extremely difficult. Furthermore, the conversion of these posts to a permanent status contributes towards the objectives of strengthening the Management Improvement Section as recommended in AMS report No. 2-77. Therefore, the conversion of these three posts to established posts is requested, for which no additional funds are required.

Revised estimates

10. For the purposes described in the preceding paragraphs the following additional appropriations are requested for 1979:

	For a new P-4 post	For the conversion of 3 P-2 posts	Total
Established posts	\$27,600	\$106,200	\$133,800
General temporary assistance	-	(\$133,800)	(\$133,800)
Common staff costs	\$ 7,200	\$27,600	\$ 34,800
Common services costs	\$ 5,000	-	\$ 5,000
Total	\$39,800	-	\$ 39,800

In addition a provision of \$5,500 is requested under section 25F Staff Assessment, with a corresponding increase in the estimates of income from staff assessment under income section 1.
