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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

United Nations International Research and Training Institute
for the Advancement of Women

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its first session (1978) the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1978/25 whereby the Council inter alia took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on progress achieved towards the establishment of an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and decided that the Institute should start functioning, as an autonomous body under the auspices of the United Nations and financed by voluntary contributions, upon the appointment of the Director and the Board of Trustees.
2. By the same resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session on the implementation of resolution 1978/25. In accordance with the allocation of agenda items for the current session of the General Assembly 1/ that report has been submitted to the Third Committee under item 88 "United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace: reports of the Secretary-General". 2/ Consideration of this subject by the Fifth Committee was also envisaged in the allocation of chapter V, section C of the report of the Economic and Social Council to the Fifth Committee. 3/
3. During the debates which preceded the adoption of resolution 1978/25, both in the Commission on the Status of Women and at the first session of the Economic

1/ A/33/252.

2/ A/33/316.

3/ A/C.5/33/8, para. 16.

and Social Council, representatives of the Secretary-General indicated that a definition of the status of the Institute was an administrative matter which had to be referred to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). In that connexion, they stressed that in the text of the Council resolution, the use of the terms "an autonomous body under the auspices of the United Nations" could result in difficulties of interpretation as it did not indicate clearly the extent of the authority of the Secretary-General over the Institute. It was pointed out that the term "autonomy" used in respect of a United Nations body was ambiguous in the absence of a direct reference to the specific areas where such autonomy would be enjoyed.

4. Accordingly, chapter III of the report referred to in paragraph 2 above, entitled "Structure, composition, responsibilities and programme of the Institute", is placed before ACABQ and the Fifth Committee for review and subsequent approval of the General Assembly. That chapter reflects the view of the Secretary-General, following consultation with his Legal Counsel, that the words "as an autonomous body" confer no particular status to the Institute which it would not have in the absence of these words, and that by virtue of its establishment by a principal organ of the United Nations under the terms of Article 7.1 of the Charter, the Institute can only be construed as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations under the terms of Article 7.2 of the Charter.

5. Also of interest to ACABQ and to the Fifth Committee, in the view of the Secretary-General, is the information contained in the Third Committee report referred to in paragraph 2 above, under the heading "Financial considerations", which reads:

"As of 30 June 1978, a total of \$US 1,665,382 had been contributed or pledged for the Institute. A note verbale has been sent by the Secretary-General to all Member States convening the 1978 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities at United Nations Headquarters on Tuesday, 7 November 1978. This note verbale contains information regarding the Institute. It is hoped that further significant contributions for the Institute will be made on that occasion."

6. The voluntary contributions thus received are currently held in a suspense account. It is the intention of the Secretary-General, in the light of the outcome of the Pledging Conference, to take a decision regarding the establishment of a United Nations trust fund against which all expenditures to be incurred by the Institute would be charged.
