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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1984-1985

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Programme budget implications of the draft proposals contained in documents A/39/L.17 and A/39/L.18

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Addendum

Observations submitted by the Committee on Conferences in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/10

1. In accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 35/10 A, by which the General Assembly decided that all proposals affecting the schedule of conferences and meetings made at sessions of the General Assembly should be reviewed by the Committee on Conferences when administrative implications are being considered under the requirements of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Committee on Conferences met to review the implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/39/L.17.
2. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the Programme of Activities in Observance of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples annexed to paragraph 9 of chapter II of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/39/23, Part I), the Special Committee would organize an extraordinary session in Africa in 1985.

3. In the statement of budgetary implications issued in respect of this proposal (A/C.5/39/80, para. 10), it was noted that the Special Committee was authorized under the relevant provisions of the General Assembly resolutions 1654 (XVI) and 2621 (XXV) to meet elsewhere than at United Nations Headquarters whenever and wherever such meetings might be required for the effective discharge of its functions.

4. The statement added, however, that the preparation of verbatim transcripts of the proceedings, as requested by the Committee in paragraph 10 (d) of its report, would constitute an exception to resolutions 3415 (XXX) and 37/14 C, which govern the provision of written meeting records to United Nations organs.

5. It was stated in the Committee on Conferences that resolutions 1654 (XVI) and 2621 (XXV) had been superseded by resolution 31/140, paragraph 4 of which reaffirms the principle that United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters, and paragraph 5 of which stipulates that organs can meet away from their established headquarters when a Government issuing an invitation for a session to be held within its territory has agreed to defray the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved.

6. It was further stated that one of the meetings proposed to be held in Africa in 1985 by the Special Committee was a commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration, and therefore did not contribute to the normal work of the Special Committee.

7. Other delegations registered strong objections to the growing number of exceptions requested to resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly governing conference-servicing practices. Any such exceptions should be fully justified before the Assembly permitted them, it was said, and the exceptions requested in the present case had not been so justified.

8. Two delegations, stressing that their remarks were based on the technical aspects of the matter, wished to express their objections to the Special Committee's decision to hold these meetings away from its established headquarters, as there was no convincing justification that these meetings would contribute to the effective discharge of the Special Committee's functions. The two delegations further expressed the view that the expenditure of United Nations resources for unnecessary travel reflected negatively on the character of the Organization. The proposal was made that the meetings should either not take place, or that their expense should be borne by the members of the Special Committee.

9. Other delegations, however, argued that the proposed series of meetings in Africa was necessary for the proper implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee and was much more than simply a commemorative exercise. Verbatim records were necessary to inform the members of the United Nations and others, including the Administering Authorities, of the nature of the Special Committee's activities. Precedents for the proposed series of meetings existed, and the question should be approached with a measure of flexibility; and it was stated further that resolution 31/140, section I, did not and was not intended to supersede the earlier resolutions permitting the Special Committee to meet away from its established headquarters.

10. Another delegation, supporting that position, said that the Special Committee had made great progress in the last 25 years and that the world should be made aware of its achievements. Furthermore, the Special Committee had made efforts to reduce its documentation requirements.

11. A majority of members of the Committee on Conferences considered that no objection should be made to allowing the Special Committee to carry out its proposed programme of activities, and supported the request for exceptions to be made to resolutions 3415 (XXX) and 37/14 C, in view of the achievements of the Special Committee and the importance of its role. The Committee, while bearing in mind the objections and reservations of some members, felt that the exceptions should be permitted. Four delegations dissociated themselves from this decision.
