

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/3049  
28 November 1955

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Tenth session  
Agenda items 47 and 38

ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1956

Section 18 - European Office of the United Nations

Twenty-fourth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and  
Budgetary Questions to the tenth session of the General Assembly

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report of the Secretary-General (A/3041) submitting his comments on the views or recommendations of the Survey Group, which undertook in the course of 1955 an on-the-spot review of the major overseas establishments of the United Nations. The nature and scope of that review are defined in paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's report.
2. The present report of the Advisory Committee is limited to the European Office of the United Nations, excluding the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe, on which the Committee has reported separately in document A/3050. Apart from the Secretary-General's submission (A/3041), the principal documents before the Committee were the report of the Survey Group and the original budget estimates for 1956 (A/2904, pages 60 to 67<sup>1/</sup>).
3. The Secretary-General indicates (A/3041, paragraph 6) the matters to which, in reviewing the work of the European Office, the Survey Group gave special attention. These were (a) the responsibilities and authority of the Director

---

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 5.

of the Office; (b) the administrative relationships between the Office and Headquarters; (c) the organization and functioning of Geneva services; and (d) the representation and liaison functions. The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General, while agreeing generally with the comments and conclusions of the Survey Group on these matters, wishes to have more time for a study of the detailed suggestions before acting on all of them. He has accordingly, in some cases, submitted specific proposals, including proposals for a revision of the original 1956 estimates, and, in other cases, reserved his position on the suggested adjustments or changes. The Advisory Committee considers this to be a sound course.

4. Special attention may be drawn to the comments in paragraphs 6 to 8 of the survey report concerning the status of the European Office. The case for adhering to the present basic policy relationship between Headquarters and that Office - a conclusion in which the Secretary-General concurs - is well reasoned, and the Advisory Committee agrees:

- (a) that it is not desirable to accord to the European Office a special regional status such as would empower that Office to exercise directive responsibility for all United Nations activities on the European continent. Emphasis should be laid on the pertinent comment of the Survey Group that "... with the notable exception of ECE, the substantive activities of the Office (i.e. Narcotics, PCOB, Refugees, etc.) are in every sense headquarters activities of world-wide scope, the responsible secretariat being located, however, for historical or practical reasons, at Geneva instead of at New York"; and
- (b) that (with the exception stated) it is not consistent with the concept of a central direction of policies or with the formulation of programmes on a global basis to regard the activities of the European Office as regional in scope or character.

5. Where the top-level direction of the European Office is concerned, the Survey Group has tentatively suggested, in paragraphs 43 to 46 of its report, alternative arrangements, of which the first (paragraphs 43, 44), while conforming

organically to the existing pattern, and accordingly comprising separate posts of Director of the Office and Executive Secretary of ECE, would accord to the Director a large measure of authority in respect of the substantive activities of the Office, and possibly provide also, in the field of administration, for a post of Deputy Under-Secretary.

6. The second of these alternative arrangements would provide for the merging in a single post of the functions of Executive Secretary of ECE and Director of the European Office, the holder of the post being assisted by two deputies charged respectively with ECE matters and with administration. Subject therefore to direction from Headquarters, the head of the Office would exercise both substantive and administrative authority over the entire Secretariat at Geneva, with the exception of those units (for example, Secretariat of the Permanent Central Opium Board, Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the Representative of the Technical Assistance Board) whose constitutional position would preclude, in varying degree, the full exercise of such authority.

7. The Survey Group expresses the view that this latter arrangement would make for simpler and more clear-cut lines of authority both within the European Office itself and between that Office and Headquarters, and that it would facilitate a more rational planning of, and control over, the use made of Geneva services and facilities. With this view the Advisory Committee is in agreement. In this connexion, the Committee fully shares the doubts of the Group whether the total Geneva establishment (excluding the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees) could justify, as a normal and continuing arrangement, the three posts at the general level of Under-Secretary for which provision is now being made. The Committee assumes, of course, that should the arrangement in question be adopted, an indispensable condition of appointment to the post of Director of the Office would be the possession, in addition to the necessary administrative experience, of the highest substantive qualifications, and notably in the fields covered by the Economic Commission for Europe.

8. For his part, the Secretary-General, while taking note of the Survey Group's observations and agreeing generally with certain of the related conclusions, does not at present find himself in a position to express a firm opinion on the matter (A/3041, paragraph 9). The Advisory Committee recognizes that, from a practical standpoint, existing contractual commitments effectively preclude the

early introduction of such an arrangement, and it accordingly confines itself to the suggestion that if, in the preparation of the 1957 estimates, the Secretary General desires to give effect to the second alternative outlined by the Survey Group, he should consider the possibility of including in those estimates a lump-sum provision to meet outstanding commitments.

9. The Advisory Committee also agrees that, independently of the above-mentioned radical change in the administrative structure, there is justification for an arrangement whereby the basic and full responsibility which the Director now exercises in the planning and management of the conference and administrative services of the European Office would be extended to certain non-administrative areas. The Secretary-General states, in paragraph 7 of his report, his intention "progressively to implement the specific recommendations made [in paragraphs 9 to 14 of the survey report] for enlarging and strengthening the authority of the Director in his capacity as a "department" head, and for more clearly defining his responsibilities and relationships to Headquarters." It may therefore be useful to outline the enlarged responsibilities which, under those recommendations, would devolve upon the Director:

- |    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
| A. | Administrative and Financial Services  | } | The Director to continue, as at present, to exercise full authority over these services and to be administratively and technically responsible for them. |
|    | Conference and General Services  |   |  |
|    | Library  |   |  |
| B. | Information Centre (to be reconstituted as an Information Service of the Office) | } | The Director to exercise full authority as in the case of the activities listed in group A above.  |
|    | European Office of TAA   |   |  |
|    | Bureau of Missing Persons and Declaration of Death                               |   |  |
|    | Division of Narcotic Drugs   |   |  |
|    | Liaison activities   | } |  |

The term "full authority" is here used in the sense defined in the Survey Group's report (paragraph 13): "policy decisions and necessary instructions would be transmitted /from Headquarters/ to the Director, who would be responsible to the Secretary-General for their execution," but this arrangement would not in any way exclude frequent contact between the heads of services at Geneva and the corresponding substantive or administrative officers at Headquarters.

10. The Survey Group has drawn attention, in paragraphs 111 to 115 of its report, to the problem of modernizing and improving the physical facilities of the Palais des Nations, and the Advisory Committee has, in addition, taken note of the relevant comment offered by the Secretary-General (A/3041, paragraph 11), together with the specific proposal that \$50,000 should be included in the 1956 budget so that an early start may be made on the programme of improvements.

11. The provision of \$50,000 proposed for 1956 represents no more than one of several instalments which are likely to amount, over a period of three to five years, to a total of several hundred thousand dollars, although an exact estimate can clearly not be attempted in advance of the related technical studies. It should also be borne in mind that, in so far as the fixed pattern of conferences is concerned, the experimental four-year period prescribed in General Assembly resolution 694 (VII) of 20 December 1952 comes to a close at the end of 1957, at which time it will be open to the Assembly, if it so wishes, to adopt a conference programme which shall concurrently provide for a fuller use of Headquarters conference facilities and, by offsetting the increased number of meetings of Geneva-based bodies, and notably of the Economic Commission for Europe, afford a corresponding reduction in the conference workload of the European Office. The Advisory Committee is not seeking by these comments to prejudge the outcome of the experiment in question but merely to bring to notice the fact - reflected in the annual budget estimates - that there exists at Headquarters surplus conference capacity which, through a mere adjustment of the programme, could be utilized and prove a source of actual economy.

12. The Advisory Committee has reached the conclusion that the provision of funds for the above-mentioned purpose might properly be deferred pending the completion of the detailed study of a possible extension of the technical facilities of the European Office, and pending also the review of the four-year

conference programme at Headquarters and Geneva. The Committee has further taken account of the improvements to the conference facilities of the Palais which were made in connexion with the 1955 Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.

Detailed recommendations on the 1956 budget estimates

Chapter I. General Services

Initial budget amounts (total for chapter)		Additional provision		Total
		posts	\$	
\$				\$
2,362,500	1955 Posts authorized 462	-	-	2,362,500
2,385,120	1956 Posts requested 465	6 <sup>(a)</sup>	23,500 <sup>(b)</sup>	2,408,620
2,359,620	1956 Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee..... 465	3 <sup>(a)</sup>	1,000 <sup>(b)</sup>	2,360,620

(a) Net increase, including two posts transferred from Headquarters.

(b) With allowance made for an adjustment of approximately 15 per cent (A/3041, annex VI, page 12), and for the abolition of two established posts.

13. The Advisory Committee concurs, on the grounds developed in paragraphs 48 to 50 of the survey report, in the Secretary-General's proposal that a post of Senior Officer and a General Service post in the Liaison Unit (Office of the Director) should be abolished.

14. The Secretary-General further proposes the addition of a post at First Officer level for a staff assistant to the Deputy Director in his capacity of head of Conference and General Services. The Committee, in agreeing to this post, has been assured that the duties to be entrusted to this officer will include the continuous study of ways and means of reducing temporary assistance costs, a problem to which the Survey Group has referred in paragraph 41 of its report. In addition, however, the Committee recommends that the post should be established on

the further understanding that the services of the officer in question will be available, as appropriate, not only to the Deputy Director but also to the Director of the Office and to the Head of Administrative and Financial Services.

15. The Committee likewise concurs in the proposed transfer from Headquarters of two posts (at Second Officer level) of Russian translator. It is noted that the posts will be used, as occasion requires, for supplementing the strength of the Interpreting Section, and that they are additional to the three translator posts proposed (in the original 1956 estimates) for similar transfer from the French and Spanish Sections at Headquarters in connexion with the establishment at Geneva of the Division of Narcotic Drugs.

16. As regards the proposed reclassification of six posts of proof-reader from Assistant Officer to Associate Officer level, the Advisory Committee has taken note of the Survey Group's opinion that "it is impossible...indefinitely to deny to the six Geneva staff members concerned equality of grading with their opposite numbers at Headquarters, particularly if posts and staff are to be regarded as freely interchangeable". While there is force in this argument, from the standpoint of the uniform classification of posts subject to international recruitment, the Advisory Committee finds difficulty in recommending what it regards as a clear case of over-grading, and the more so since it is informed that the proposed upward reclassification is opposed by one of the largest specialized agencies in Geneva.

17. The Committee is likewise not satisfied of the necessity for an additional post, at Second Officer level, for the chief of the proposed new Engineering Section. Account must be taken in this connexion of the recent reclassification from First Officer to Senior Officer level of the post of head of the Building Management Division; it is recommended that the proposed addition to the establishment, as well as the upgrading of the post of chief of the Building Management Section, and of two General Service posts in the Purchase, Supply and Transportation Division, should be held over, for re-examination in connexion with the 1957 estimates.

18. In so far as Administrative and Financial Services are concerned, the Committee considers that the 1956 establishment as originally proposed by the Secretary-General (A/2904, page 61) constitutes a reasonable provision. With the exception therefore of one General Service Post for the Finance Division and of one Professional post for the Joint Medical Service, it is not prepared at this time to recommend additions to the establishment, having regard also to the new post of staff assistant to the Deputy Director, the holder of which would, as suggested in paragraph 14 above, be in a position to render a measure of assistance to the head of this Division.

19. As regards the Joint Medical Service, the Committee agrees to the proposal, in which the participating specialized agencies have concurred, that the existing panel of part-time doctors should be replaced by a full-time medical officer at First Officer level.

20. On the remaining items in chapter I, the Advisory Committee submits the following recommendations:

- (a) The estimate of \$164,000 for temporary assistance to be reduced by \$18,000, of which \$12,000 to be applied, pending a decision on the 1956 meeting place, to the item relating to the International Law Commission, and the balance of \$6,000 to "local needs" (A/2904, page 62), and in particular to the provision for the training of translators; and
- (b) the estimate of \$7,500 for travel on official business to be reduced by \$2,500 to the 1955 level.



## Chapter II. Information Centre

### Budget amounts

(total for chapter)

\$		
96,500	1955 Posts authorized.....	12
94,700	1956 Posts requested.....	11
94,700	1956 Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee...	11

21. The Advisory Committee recommends an appropriation under chapter II of \$94,700, the figure submitted by the Secretary-General. It is, however, to be noted that while the original 1956 budget submission (A/2904, pages 62, 63) provides for a reduction by one in the number of Professional posts, a transfer of approximately \$10,000 to this section is contemplated from section 10 or section 20 of the 1956 budget (A/3041, annex VI, page 6), with a view to strengthening the Centre in the manner recommended by the Survey Group (paragraphs 67, 68). Such a transfer would be in accordance with the terms of the draft appropriation resolution for 1956, but the Committee would wish to receive, in conjunction with the 1957 estimates, further evidence on the appropriate number and levels of established posts in the reconstituted Information Service of the European Office.

Chapter III. Joint Secretariat of the Permanent Central Opium Board and the Drug Supervisory Body

Initial budget amounts (total for chapter) \$			Additional provision		Total \$
			Posts	\$	
54,500	1955 Posts authorized	8	-		54,500
56,370	1956 Posts requested	8	1	9,600 <sup>(a)</sup>	65,970
48,170	1956 Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee	7	1	9,600 <sup>(a)</sup>	57,770

(a) With allowance made for an adjustment of approximately 15 per cent (A/3041, annex VI, page 12).

22. The Advisory Committee has considered, in conjunction with the estimates submitted by the Secretary-General, the comments offered by the Survey Group in paragraphs 73 to 78 of its report. It is prepared, in view of the volume of preparatory work connected with the 1953 Opium Protocol (which has not yet come into force), to concur in the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary, at the First Officer level, which has been charged since 1954 to temporary assistance. But the Committee notes at the same time that the Survey Group refers (paragraph 77) to the "surplus capacity in another existing Professional post and one General Service post," as well as to the opportunity which the transfer of the Narcotics Division to Geneva affords to "all parts of the international narcotics control system... for more effective co-operation and greater possibilities of helping each other out in times of pressure." These factors should, in the Committee's opinion, be reflected in the 1956 manning table, and it is accordingly recommended that one Second Officer post should be abolished, with a consequent reduction of \$8,200.

23. Furthermore, the Advisory recommends a reduction of \$6,000 in the figure of \$18,000 appearing in paragraph (c) of the draft resolution relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses (A/2921, page 11, appendix II<sup>2/</sup>). The Committee is informed that expenditure that may arise out of the coming into force of the 1953 Protocol is estimated at some \$12,000 in respect of sessions of the Board and the Body. Additional provision does not appear to be called for in the case of their Joint Secretariat.

<sup>2/</sup> See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 7.

Chapter IV. Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe

Initial  
budget amounts  
(total for chapter)

				Additional provision		Total
\$						
				posts	\$	\$
985,000	1955	Posts authorized	155	-	-	985,000
985,000	1956	Posts requested	155	(-5)	(-26,400)	958,600
985,000	1956	Posts recommended by the Advisory Committee.....	155	-	-	985,000

24. The Advisory Committee is offering in a separate report (A/3050) its comments on the organization of the Secretariat for the Economic Commission for Europe. The Committee considers it appropriate to recommend for approval the estimates originally submitted by the Secretary-General (A/2904, pages 63, 64). Although this recommendation covers a slightly larger number of posts than is contemplated in the Secretary-General's revised estimates (A/3041, annex VI, page 6), the Committee is confident that the Secretary-General will in fact achieve all possible economy under this chapter.

Chapter V. Narcotic Drugs Division

Budget amounts  
(total for chapter)

\$

220,000

187,910

186,910

1955 Posts authorized..... 29

1956 Posts requested..... 26

1956 Posts recommended by  
the Advisory Committee 26

25. The estimate submitted by the Secretary-General provides for a decrease of three in the number of General Service posts as compared with 1955. The Advisory Committee concurs in the proposed provision subject to a reduction of \$1,000 in the item for travel on official business.

Chapter VI. Common staff costs

	\$
Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General. . . . .	671,000
Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . .	671,000

26. The Secretary-General has indicated (A/3041, annex VI, page 6) that he does not desire to propose a revision of the original estimates under this chapter (A/2904, page 65), although the proposed staff changes would involve adjustments to most of the component items. The Advisory Committee recommends for approval the estimates as submitted, at the total figure of \$671,000.

Chapter VII. Common services

\$

Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General. . . . . 389,000

Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee . . . . . 389,000

27. The Advisory Committee concurs in the provision proposed by the Secretary-General for this chapter.

Chapter VIII. Permanent equipment		Additional provision	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Estimate submitted by the Secretary-General.	100,900	50,000	150,900
Estimate recommended by the Advisory Committee. . . . .	96,000	-	96,000

28. The Advisory Committee has offered comment in paragraphs 10 to 12 above on the supplementary provision of \$50,000 which the Secretary-General has proposed as the first instalment towards the cost of modernizing and improving the physical facilities at the Palais des Nations.

29. As regards his original 1956 submission under the present chapter, the Committee considers that the sum of \$96,000 should prove an adequate provision. The resulting reduction might be applied, in part, to item (iii) - Office equipment, and in part, to item (vii) - Miscellaneous equipment, in which further expenditure is proposed for the catering services at Geneva. The Committee suggests in this connexion that the various commercial activities at the Palais des Nations might be the subject of enquiry on the part of the Board of Auditors, in conjunction with the examination of the 1955 accounts.

30. On this basis, the Advisory Committee recommends an appropriation under chapter VIII of \$96,000 representing a reduction of \$4,900 in the original estimate submitted by the Secretary-General, and of \$54,900 in the total provision which he has proposed under this chapter.

31. The following is a summary of the appropriations recommended by the Advisory Committee:

	\$
Chapter I . . . . .	2,360,620
" II . . . . .	94,700
" III . . . . .	57,770
" IV . . . . .	985,000
" V . . . . .	186,910
" VI . . . . .	671,000
" VII . . . . .	389,000
" VIII . . . . .	96,000
Total, section 18 . . . . .	\$4,841,000
Total proposed by the Secretary-General . . . . .	\$4,926,700
Total recommended by Advisory Committee . . . . .	4,841,000
Reduction . . . . .	\$ 85,700

-----