



Tenth session
Agenda item 38

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1956

Supplementary estimate for economic studies in the Middle EastThirty-third 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 (A/C.5/646) in which the Secretary-General proposes that the 1956 appropriations should be increased by \$25,000 - \$20,000 in section 14 and \$5,000 in section 8 - so that six officers of the Bureau of Economic Affairs may be sent to the Middle East, for periods of from two to six months, to collect material and to establish contacts in the countries of the region for the preparation of the Middle East supplement to the World Economic Report, and of any other study that may be authorized by the Economic and Social Council in respect of that area.
2. In addition to this specific proposal for 1956, the Secretary-General makes two further proposals which may be regarded as an extension of earlier proposals made by him in connexion with the organization of the Secretariat (A/3041) on the basis of the Survey Group's report. In the first place, the Secretary-General indicates (A/C.5/646, paragraph 3) that it would be necessary to station at some convenient point in the Middle East a small number of officers of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A proposal to establish a Middle East Social Affairs Office was included in the earlier report (A/3041); the Secretary-General now seeks to extend the same arrangement to the economic field, although it is not clear why the Survey Group did not cover this point in its study. The second proposal is that appropriate staff of the Technical Assistance Administration

should be detailed to the Middle East to assume operational responsibilities connected with requests from Middle East Governments for technical assistance (A/C.5/646, paragraph 7). The Secretary-General's previous report (A/3041) contained a general proposal for the partial decentralization of TAA, with provision, however, for the Middle East unit to continue to be located at Headquarters.

3. The Advisory Committee understands that the two further proposals mentioned in paragraph 2 above are not intended for immediate implementation; in the same way, it was envisaged that gradual effect would be given to the decentralization proposals contained in the report on organization of the Secretariat (A/3041). In its report on the proposed reorganization of the regional economic commission secretariats and TAA (A/3050), the Advisory Committee has recommended that, in view of the substantive policy considerations that arise, the Secretary-General's proposals should be studied in detail not only by Member States, but by the Economic and Social Council, before an administrative and financial appraisal of the proposals is made. In keeping with this general approach, the Advisory Committee now recommends that the study by the Economic and Social Council should cover also the two further proposals contained in the Secretary-General's more recent report (A/C.5/646).

4. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 2 of the last-named report that the main purpose of the proposals covering the deployment of the staff concerned with economic and social activities in the Middle East is to improve the quality of the Secretariat's studies and reports in this field. The specific proposal for 1956 mentioned in paragraph 1 above is calculated to make a start in this direction.

5. Accordingly, while further study should be given, as suggested in paragraph 3 above, to the general question covering the various proposals for decentralization, the Advisory Committee is prepared to agree to a limited implementation, as an experimental measure, of the specific proposal which the Secretary-General has made for 1956 in respect of economic studies in the Middle East. The Committee considers such a step as one of the possibilities, referred to in paragraph 13 of its earlier report (A/3050), of "undertaking, within the over-all budgetary appropriations to be approved for the year 1956, exploratory measures of a practical character with a view to testing the advantages and effectiveness of some of the proposals". The Committee, in reaching this conclusion, takes account of the fact that, in respect of other areas of the world, the corresponding economic studies are made in the regions concerned.

6. The Advisory Committee therefore recommends an additional provision of \$15,000 for this purpose in the 1956 budget - \$12,000 in section 14 (Travel of staff) and \$3,000 in section 8 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs). This recommendation takes account of the possibility that some assistance may be furnished from United Nations offices in the area, both for local transportation in the region and for some secretariat assistance.
