



Eleventh session

SYSTEM OF ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND
OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR OTHER ORGANS
OF THE UNITED NATIONSThird report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary
Questions to the eleventh session of the General Assembly

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report (A/3130) which the Secretary-General has submitted, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 875 A (IX) of 4 December 1954, on the system of allowances to members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations.
2. By the above-mentioned resolution the General Assembly deferred for consideration at its forthcoming (eleventh) session the question of applying a uniform system of subsistence allowances to all eligible bodies of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's report, while principally directed to that point, also deals with certain related matters, including the possibility of consolidating in a single resolution all the decisions taken by the Assembly on this general subject.
3. In noting that the Secretary-General's report deals solely "with matters relating to travel and subsistence expenses, to the exclusion of the question of honoraria or remuneration to rapporteurs or other members of United Nations bodies", the Advisory Committee wishes to emphasize that the General Assembly has already accepted the principle that a subsistence allowance should not include any element of remuneration or fee for services rendered (A/2814, paragraph 3).^{1/}

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Annexes, agenda item 47.

Application of uniform rates of subsistence allowances

4. The system of subsistence allowances at present in force is uniform, with one exception: the special allowance of \$35 a day authorized for members of the International Law Commission until 31 December 1956. Paragraphs 5 to 10 of the Secretary-General's report contain a concise summary of the developments that have led to this exceptional provision. The sole point at issue is whether this special allowance should be continued beyond that date.

5. The Advisory Committee has previously recorded its views on this question: in 1954 it recommended that no exceptions to a uniform system should be authorized (A/2688, paragraph 263).^{2/} As no new circumstances have arisen to warrant a change of position, the Committee recommends that, as from 1 January 1957, rates of allowances, to be determined by the Assembly, should be applied uniformly to all eligible bodies, including the International Law Commission.

Rate of subsistence allowance to members located at the place of meeting

6. In paragraph 18 of his report, the Secretary-General suggests the continuance of the present practice of reducing to \$10 the rate of daily subsistence allowance payable to "local" members of an eligible body, subject, however, to the modification that the criterion for this purpose would be the duty station of the member and not, as at present, a choice between duty station and place of residence.

7. The Advisory Committee does not dissent from the observations offered in paragraphs 16 to 18 of the Secretary-General's report, even though a case might be made for the payment of the allowance, at the reduced rate, for the entire duration of a session, without limiting it to days of actual attendance. Furthermore, while the formula proposed by the Secretary-General is doubtless adequate to a majority of cases in this category, certain situations will still remain ambiguous: for example, where the member concerned, being a retired

^{2/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No. 7.

official of his Government, currently has no "duty station". It is, of course, possible for the Secretary-General to provide, in the administrative rules which he would establish (paragraph 6 of draft resolution in annex I to document A/3130) for a method of determination in any exceptional situation.

8. Since various approaches to this question are possible, it seems appropriate that the Advisory Committee, which is itself a body that will be affected by these provisions, should refrain from making a recommendation on this particular point.

Rate of subsistence allowance applicable during periods of
actual travel aboard carriers

9. The Advisory Committee concurs generally in the observations in paragraphs 19 to 21 of the Secretary-General's report.

Reimbursement of travel expenses

10. In paragraphs 22 to 27 of his report, the Secretary-General refers to the problem of whether or not valid grounds exist for the reimbursement, within the meaning of General Assembly resolution 14 D (I) of 13 February 1946, of expenses in respect of the travel of Permanent Representatives or other members of a Permanent Mission who are appointed as representatives or alternates to the General Assembly. Although the Secretary-General generally interprets the provisions of resolution 14 D (I) as excluding cases of this type, there may, in his opinion, be exceptional circumstances in which a strict adherence to this interpretation may be impracticable. Instances of such circumstances are given in paragraph 24 of the report.

11. While the Advisory Committee is fully in agreement with the Secretary-General's general interpretation (paragraph 23) of resolution 14 D (I), it has some doubt as to the validity of admitting exceptions and it suggests that, in view of the situation that has developed, a specific decision of the Assembly would be desirable.

12. Should the Assembly decide in favour of exceptional treatment in cases covered by paragraph 24 of the report, the Advisory Committee would recommend (a) that the practices described in paragraph 26 should be approved; and (b) that

any such exception should be limited to sessions of the Assembly, and in no case be extended to sessions of other bodies.

13. Attention should also be drawn to a related question, namely, the administrative difficulties which arise from the delayed submission of claims for reimbursement of travel expenses. The funds necessary for such reimbursement in respect of sessions in a given year are normally included in their entirety in the budget for that year, on the assumption that all admissible claims will be settled before the end of the year. Consequently, should claims be received beyond that date, it would be necessary to treat them as unforeseen items in terms of the annual resolution relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures. Such a procedure seems undesirable from the point of view of good financial management, and especially where the claims are submitted with a delay of several years.

14. In these circumstances, the General Assembly may wish to consider the establishment of a time-limit, possibly of one or two years from the close of the relevant session, within which all claims in respect of reimbursement should be submitted.

Consolidation of existing legislation

15. The Advisory Committee sees considerable merit in the Secretary-General's suggestion for consolidating in a single resolution all decisions and directives relating to the payment of travel and subsistence allowances to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

16. The observations or recommendations in the foregoing paragraphs would necessitate the following revisions in the draft resolution included in annex I to the Secretary-General's report:

- (a) Resolution 485 (V) of 12 December 1950, by which a special allowance of \$35 a day was initially authorized for members of the International Law Commission, should be included in operative paragraph 1 among the resolutions to be rescinded;
- (b) In operative paragraph 4, the words in brackets "With the exception indicated in paragraph 5 below" should be deleted;

- (c) The proviso in the second sentence of paragraph 4 concerning the reduction of the allowance to \$10 per diem in the case of "local" members may need to be modified in the light of whatever decision is taken by the Assembly; a similar need may arise with regard to the last part of the following sentence reading "except that a member ... actually attends a meeting";
- (d) Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution should be deleted.
