



Sixteenth session  
Agenda item 54

## BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1962

Comprehensive review of the question of the payment of honoraria to members serving on organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations in an individual, personal capacity

### Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Antonio ARRAIZ (Venezuela)

1. At the fifteenth session, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, requested the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to review the question of the payment of honoraria to members serving on organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations in an individual, personal capacity, and to report to the Assembly at its sixteenth session.<sup>1/</sup>
2. At its 850th meeting, held on 6 October 1961, the Fifth Committee considered a report of the Advisory Committee (A/4813), to which was attached a memorandum by the Secretary-General setting forth the previous history of the question.
3. The Advisory Committee indicated that its review of the question had not disclosed any new consideration that would lead the Committee to change its previous points of view: first, that as a general principle, honoraria - in the sense of payments additional to subsistence allowance (at the standard rate) and authorized travel expenses - should not be paid to members of expert bodies of the United Nations; and, secondly, that it was important, given the fact that the General Assembly had approved certain special exceptions to its own principle, that further exceptions should not be admitted.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 50 (A/4609, para. 10).

4. There was general support in the Fifth Committee for the position of principle which the Advisory Committee had consistently upheld. The General Assembly had laid it down, as a basic rule, that the appointment of a person as rapporteur of a United Nations body should not carry any remuneration, and the Assembly had further intended the rule to apply equally to the members of expert bodies serving in a personal capacity; it had accordingly stipulated that the payment of a subsistence allowance should in no case be deemed to contain any element of fee or remuneration.

5. Nevertheless, it appeared to a number of delegations that it would be extremely difficult for the Committee, in the light of the past history of the question and the departures that had been sanctioned from the basic principle, to vary the practice of recent years and withhold the honoraria that were at present authorized in certain exceptional cases. Instead, the Committee should seek, through its recommendations to the General Assembly, so to strengthen the basic principle that no proposals for further exceptions could be admitted unless they rested on the strongest possible justification. Considerations of economy also argued in favour of such a course.

6. Other representatives considered that a much stricter approach was called for, in conformity with the principle initially laid down by the General Assembly. For there could be little doubt that, were the Committee to concur in the maintenance of the exceptions at present admitted, it would be constrained to agree to further exceptions in coming years: what had been granted to one group of expert bodies could not in equity be denied to other such bodies similarly placed. Rather than undermine the basic principle, it would be wiser to abolish the existing exceptional payments and accord uniform treatment to the members of all expert bodies of the United Nations. Such a step would remove the injustices caused by the present system and, subordinately, represent an appropriate, if minor, source of budgetary economy.

7. The opinion was also heard that, inasmuch as the exceptions already authorized by the General Assembly virtually sacrosanct, it might be opportune to review the basic principle itself. Sound reasons might be adduced in some cases for the exceptions which the General Assembly had approved. For example, the issue might be whether the person best qualified, or even the only suitable person, for a particular task could be induced to accept the appointment unless some financial provision was made to compensate for the loss of professional earnings. If therefore it proved

impracticable or undesirable to do away with any exceptions to the rule, there might still be advantage in attempting, in the light of experience, to draw up a set of principles for the guidance of those United Nations organs or subsidiary bodies in which the payment of honoraria might in future be mooted.

Special representatives performing tasks of an  
ad hoc character

8. A closely analogous question, which the Committee also examined, concerns the emoluments to be paid to persons appointed by the General Assembly for the performance of special tasks of an ad hoc character - for example, the United Nations Representative on Hungary and the Plebiscite Commissioners for the supervision of elections in the Cameroons, Togoland and Ruanda-Urundi - a question which, though not coming within the immediate scope of the present agenda item, had been raised in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/4813, annex, paras. 38, 39) and considered by the Advisory Committee (A/4813, paras. 7-10).

9. The Committee endorsed the observations and views of the Advisory Committee, which may be summarized as follows:

(a) The emoluments paid to such special representatives were analogous to the honoraria paid to members of expert bodies, and should therefore be governed by the same basic principles;

(b) The emoluments in question had varied according to the circumstances attending each particular appointment; a determining factor had been whether the person concerned had or had not remained in the service of a Government or other organization;

(c) Experience showed that special circumstances might warrant some remuneration over and above the subsistence allowance and travel expenses. But any such additional payment should be of an exceptional nature, and, as a general rule, the principle laid down in General Assembly resolution 677 (VII) of 21 December 1952<sup>2/</sup> should apply equally to persons within the category under reference;

2/ The resolution reads:

"The General Assembly,

"Recognizing that the appointment of a person as rapporteur of a United Nations body confers honour upon his country and distinction upon himself,

"1. Considers that no such appointment should carry remuneration;

"2. Requests all organs of the United Nations to bear in mind in future the views of the General Assembly as expressed in the present resolution." /...

(d) As a matter of administrative convenience, each case should be decided by the General Assembly on an ad hoc basis at the time of appointment and in connexion therewith it should be expressly stated what exceptional payments, if any, should be made by way of remuneration in excess of normal travel and subsistence payments. The adoption of the decision should be preceded in every case by the submission to the General Assembly, under rule 154 of the rules of procedure, of a statement of financial implications and by a scrutiny of the estimated expenditure on the part of the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee.

#### Recommendations of the Fifth Committee

10. Accordingly, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following decisions:

(a) The General Assembly reaffirms the basic principles governing the emoluments of persons who serve on organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, according to which neither fee nor other remuneration shall normally be paid to:

- (i) A rapporteur of a United Nations body;
- (ii) Members serving on organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations in an individual personal capacity.

Where appropriate, a subsistence allowance at the standard rate, together with travel expenses, shall be payable, but the allowance shall not be deemed to contain any element of fee or remuneration;

(b) The General Assembly decides that like principles shall normally govern payments to special representatives or equivalent officials appointed by the Assembly for the performance of ad hoc tasks. Unless the draft resolution proposing such an appointment expressly so provides, no fee or remuneration shall be paid. If, in exceptional circumstances, a fee or remuneration is proposed, the decision shall invariably be taken by the General Assembly, according to the requirements of the individual case. The statement of financial implications submitted under rule 154 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly shall specify the nature and amount of such payment and shall be subject to prior examination and report by the Fifth Committee;

(c) The decisions set out under (a) and (b) above shall not be deemed to embrace any honoraria which the General Assembly has already authorized for payment on an exceptional basis.