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BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1958

System of honoraria and special allowances to members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations

Tenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the twelfth session of the General Assembly

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report (A/C.5/713) which the Secretary-General has submitted, pursuant to a request made by the Fifth Committee (A/3539, para. 8)^{1/} at the eleventh session of the General Assembly, on the system of honoraria and special allowances to members of commissions, committees and other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations.
2. It is important at the outset to draw a distinction between a subsistence allowance, on the one hand, and honoraria and special allowances, on the other. The Advisory Committee agrees in this regard with the Secretary-General (A/C.5/713, paras. 7-10) that there are in fact only two types of payment: (a) subsistence allowance; and (b) any payment in addition to this allowance.

Subsistence allowance

3. The General Assembly, by resolution 1075 (II) of 7 December 1956, set out clearly the principles governing the payment of subsistence allowance. These are that:
 - (a) The subsistence allowance shall provide for the extra expenses which an individual incurs in attending an official meeting or session and shall not include any element of fee or remuneration for services rendered;
 - (b) The subsistence allowance shall be paid uniformly to members of all eligible bodies;

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 53.

- (c) The rates of subsistence allowance shall be:
- (i) \$25 per diem for meetings at Headquarters (New York);
 - (ii) \$20 per diem for meetings away from Headquarters, provided that the allowance shall be reduced to \$10 per diem for a member whose duty station is also the place of meeting;
 - (iii) During periods of travel aboard vessels, trains and aeroplanes, \$8 per diem.

4. The General Assembly has never dissented from the decision of the Fifth Committee that intangible factors such as importance of the work assigned to an expert body, or the eminence of its membership, cannot appropriately determine the proper level of a subsistence allowance.

5. The only question at issue, therefore, is whether there are adequate grounds for the Assembly to authorize, in respect of any United Nations body, payments in addition to the subsistence allowance. In view of the principles enumerated above, any such payment must clearly be in the nature of honoraria.

Honoraria

6. The Advisory Committee has opposed the payment of any addition by way of honorarium to the subsistence allowance drawn by members of such bodies. It must be recognized, however, that certain special exceptions to this policy have been approved by the Assembly, in particular:

- (a) The President and members of the Permanent Central Opium Board and of the Drug Supervisory Body receive honoraria at the following rates:

	<u>Dollars per annum</u>
President	1,000
Vice-President	500
Members	300

- (b) The Chairman and special rapporteurs of the International Law Commission may receive honoraria not exceeding \$1,500 per annum in any one case, in respect of studies prepared between sessions;
- (c) Members of the International Law Commission receive a special allowance at the rate of \$15 per day for periods of attendance at meetings of the Commission.

7. Subject to these special exceptions, the general principle against any payment of honoraria to members of United Nations bodies has been maintained.

8. The Secretary-General suggests, in paragraph 14 of his report, that two general approaches to the question are open to the General Assembly:

- (a) To retain the existing system without change (that is, to continue the exceptional payments which are currently authorized); or
- (b) To modify it in one of the following ways:
 - (i) To treat all expert bodies in an identical manner (that is, to pay honoraria to members of all expert bodies); or
 - (ii) To examine individual cases on their merits and, in arriving at a solution appropriate to each body, to establish thereby guiding principles, as well as an administrative basis on which any new case arising in the future might be considered by the General Assembly.

9. While the Advisory Committee recognizes the logical basis of the approach suggested by the Secretary-General, it suggests that, in view of the long history of this question and the need to arrive at a practical and final settlement of the whole matter, the General Assembly should now decide between the following alternatives:

- (a) To continue the currently authorized exceptional payments; or
- (b) To abolish altogether these payments, thus treating members of all expert bodies in an identical manner.

10. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee cannot recommend the adoption of course (b) (i) or (ii) suggested in paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report. The Committee also recognizes the practical difficulty at this stage of abolishing the existing exceptional payments which have for so long been in operation. This fact may suggest to the General Assembly the adoption of the course suggested in paragraph 9 (a) above, namely, the continuance of the present exceptional payments. In that event, however, the Advisory Committee would strongly advise that all such payments to members of United Nations bodies over and above the prescribed uniform rate of subsistence allowance should be regarded as honoraria and should be in terms of an appropriate lump sum.
