



Twentieth session
Agenda item 76

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1966

Revised estimates 1966 for the United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development, section 20

Twenty-third report of the Advisory Committee on
Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the
General Assembly at its twentieth session

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1042) submitting revised estimates for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, section 20 of the budget estimates for 1966.^{1/}
2. The Secretary-General advises that these revised estimates are requested as a consequence of the following three decisions of the Trade and Development Board at its second session, held in Geneva from 24 August to 15 September 1965, its resumed second session, held in New York from 25 to 28 October 1965, and its special session held in New York on 28 and 29 October 1965. The Board:
 - (a) Decided, by resolution 20 (II), to recommend to the General Assembly that the second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development be held in the first part of 1967 and that the basic documentation for the Conference should be prepared as soon as possible;
 - (b) Recommended to the General Assembly, by resolution 22 (S.I), that the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Conference be established on a permanent basis at Geneva and confirmed the provision of its resolution 5 (I) concerning the establishment of a liaison office at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/6005).

The Board also considered that in order to enhance the influence of the Conference and to enable its members to acquaint themselves at first hand with problems of trade and development in different regions, some of the meetings of the Conference, the Board, and of the other bodies of the Conference could from time to time be held elsewhere, especially in developing countries;

(c) Approved a revised calendar of meetings for the year 1966,^{2/} and authorized the Secretary-General of the Conference to make adjustments from time to time as necessary.

3. The Secretary-General points out that should the General Assembly approve the Board's recommendations, it would be necessary, as he had already indicated in his statement to the Fifth Committee on 11 October 1965 (A/C.5/1037), to revise the initial estimates for the Conference under section 20 of the budget for the financial year 1966, and accordingly submits in his present report such revised estimates, which have been prepared in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Director of the European Office of the United Nations.

4. The Advisory Committee believes that it may be useful at this point to recall its previous report^{3/} on the Secretary-General's initial estimates of \$7,024,400 for section 20, in which it recommended an appropriation of \$6.8 million, or a reduction of \$224,400 in the estimate proposed by the Secretary-General. In considering the provision for staff requirements, the Committee observed that although it had been informed that no major recruitment problem was anticipated, it seemed probable, inasmuch as only some 50 per cent of the sixty-nine professional posts authorized for 1965 had been committed at that time, that not all of the ninety-two professional posts requested for 1966 would be filled for the full year. The Committee also considered that the estimates under chapter II (Travel of staff), chapter IV (Permanent equipment), and chapter V (General expenses) totalling \$1,040,000 were by their nature subject to firm administrative control and susceptible of some reduction. Additionally, it questioned the large numbers of interpreters, translators, précis writers, revisers, other temporary language staff and the documents staff requested for a total estimate of \$1,472,600 and considered that substantial savings could be achieved by a greater

^{2/} A/6023/Add.1, para. 115.

^{3/} Ibid., Supplement No. 7 (A/6007), para. 357.

utilization of the language staff and central services both at Geneva and New York. In recommending the reduction of \$224,400, the Advisory Committee stated that it had taken into account the preliminary nature of the estimates, which included a provisional amount of \$2 million for the second session of the Conference scheduled for 1966, and the fact that there had not been a full year's activity of that organization on the basis of which the Secretary-General could present more precise estimates.

5. In considering the Secretary-General's revised estimates for section 20 (A/C.5/1042), the Advisory Committee noted that postponement of the second session of the Conference from 1966 to 1967, as recommended by the Board, would obviate the need for the provisional estimate of \$2 million submitted by the Secretary-General in his initial estimates for 1966 under section 20 for this purpose. However, the Secretary-General points out that it will be necessary to maintain some provision for the preparation of the basic documentation required for the Conference, which the Board recommends be undertaken as soon as possible. Bearing in mind the staff resources already requested for the Conference secretariat for 1966 and the additional staff requested in his revised estimates, the Secretary-General believes that these requirements could be met by providing the Conference with the facility for recruiting further consultant and temporary staff with related secretarial assistance for undertaking the studies and preparatory documentation, up to a total estimated expenditure of \$250,000 in 1966. While the Committee would agree that certain preparatory work will be necessary for the efficient servicing of the second session of the Conference, it assumes that the expenditures incurred in 1966 will be taken into account in the preparation of the estimates for the Conference in 1967. Its comments on the proposed additional staff increases are given in paragraph 8 below.

6. The Secretary-General reports that the Trade Board's recommendation on the location of the headquarters of the Conference secretariat at Geneva and on the establishment of a liaison office at United Nations Headquarters, New York, as previously recommended by the Board at its first session held in New York from 5 to 30 April 1965, does not in itself require any significant change in the initial 1966 estimates. With regard to the question of meetings of the Conference, the Board, and other bodies of the Conference being held elsewhere from time to time, especially in developing countries, the Committee would assume that it is

implicit in the Board's recommendation that the provisions laid down by the General Assembly in paragraph 2 (e) of resolution 1202 (XII) of 13 December 1957, and subsequently extended by resolutions 1851 (XVII) of 19 December 1962 and 1987 (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, would apply, and that therefore all the additional costs involved would be defrayed by the host Governments.

7. The Advisory Committee paid particular attention to the Secretary-General's proposals for increased staff requirements both for the secretariat of the Conference and for the basic supporting services of the European Office, requested as a result of the work programme adopted by the Board since the initial 1966 estimates were prepared. The request relates to the administrative arrangements made for the installation of the Conference secretariat in the Palais des Nations, and takes into account the experience gained during 1965 in the servicing of the meetings of the Board and its subsidiary organs.

8. In his revised estimates, the Secretary-General requests a further eleven professional posts for the Conference secretariat in the substantive fields, in addition to the ninety-two professional posts initially proposed for 1966. Of the eleven new posts, four are earmarked for the Commodities Division, two to co-ordinate all statistical studies undertaken by the Conference secretariat, one to provide a senior officer for the substantive editing of reports and documents, two posts to provide secretaries to sessional committees and other working groups, one personnel officer and one conference officer. Additionally, eight general service posts are requested to provide the necessary clerical and secretarial assistance to the proposed eleven professional posts. In its questioning of the staffing situation, the Committee was informed that the recruitment for professional posts was proceeding very satisfactorily. Of the total ninety-two professional posts initially requested for 1965 and 1966, fifty-three have been filled and seventeen additional appointments or transfers have been approved. A further twelve appointments or transfers are in the various recruitment processes and twenty applications have been received for the ten remaining posts. The Committee is bound to point out, however, that of the sixty-nine professional posts approved for 1965 only fifty-three are at present filled and it seems unlikely that by the end of the year the Conference secretariat will have been able to operate with its full complement authorized for 1965.

The Committee doubts that the experience obtained thus far in operating with only a partially filled manning table is sufficient to serve as a basis for a request of the character and magnitude now submitted. Although it may be possible for the Conference to absorb and assimilate in 1966 the additional twenty-three professional posts initially requested for that year, the Committee considers that until this proves to be the case it is difficult to justify a request for further additions to the permanent staff. The Committee recognizes the importance attached by Member Governments to the activities of the Conference and the priority to be accorded to them, but is of the opinion that a more orderly development in the recruitment of professional substantive staff would better reflect the views expressed by the Fifth Committee during its consideration of the estimates for staff increases under section 3 for 1966. The Advisory Committee, while concerned over the need to establish adequate machinery for the conference, considers that it would be prudent first to evaluate the effectiveness of the staff initially requested for 1966 in the light of its work programmes, before adding to the establishment.

9. As regards the proposed additional two professional posts and nine general service posts for the further strengthening of the basic services at Geneva, and in particular the request for two professional and four general service posts for the information service, purely on account of the anticipated increase in work related to trade activities, the Committee is also of the opinion that such increases should first await an appraisal of the functioning of those services on the basis of a full year's Conference programme.

10. The Advisory Committee has noted the change in emphasis in the proposals for the servicing of Conference meetings at Geneva. In this connexion, the initial estimates for 1966 envisaged that all of these requirements would be met through the employment of temporary personnel, many of whom would have been required on a continuous basis for periods up to nine months. The Secretary-General advises that the calendar of meetings for 1966 as approved by the Trade and Development Board requires revision of the estimates for servicing the meetings. He reports that the provision of temporary personnel on an extensive scale has many disadvantages in that it would not in practice provide adequately for the expeditious day-to-day translation, editing, typing, reproduction and distribution of documents and reports essential to the work programme. It would not provide for the minimum number of

regular staff needed to ensure an adequate balance between such staff and the temporary personnel employed for specific meetings, nor for the proper servicing of meetings, particularly in view of the considerable annual conference programme of the subsidiary organs of the Conference for meeting in almost continuous session throughout the year.

11. The Secretary-General therefore proposes the addition of the following eighty-nine permanent posts to enable the European Office to create a language section which would have as its priority task the servicing of the Conference secretariat and its related conference programme:

- (a) One (P-5) Chief of Section;
- (b) Sixteen (P-4) revisers, editors and interpreters;
- (c) Twenty-six (P-3) translators and interpreters;
- (d) Forty-six (general service) stenographers and typists.

The total cost of establishing the language section on a permanent basis is estimated at \$750,000. The Advisory Committee noted that in these circumstances it would be possible to effect some reduction in the initial 1966 estimates for temporary assistance staff for servicing meetings at Geneva. In paragraphs 11 and 12 of his report (A/C.5/1042) the Secretary-General states that the offsetting reduction in temporary assistance funds for temporary conference servicing staff would need to take into account not only the proposed establishment of the aforementioned language section at Geneva but also the increases which have taken place in the calendar of meetings for both Geneva and New York as approved by the Board for 1966, as compared with the tentative schedule used in preparing his initial estimates earlier this year. As regards meetings at Geneva the revised requirements for the various Conference bodies for conference servicing purposes, taking into account the language and conference staff proposed under paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's report, would have the effect of reducing the initial estimate of \$1,193,800 under chapter VIII of section 20 for 1966 to \$649,500, or a decrease of \$544,300.

12. In view of the increase in the approved conference programme of the Conference for 1966, the Advisory Committee would see merit in allocating a permanent nucleus of technically qualified language staff at Geneva for the Conference. However, the Committee has some doubt as to the necessity of creating a permanent language section for the Conference as envisaged by the Secretary-General. The Committee considers

that for reasons of administrative efficiency such staff should form an integral part of the regular language services of the European Office, with a certain number of those staff available for work with the Conference on a priority basis. In this connexion, it would draw attention to the appreciable increase in language staff recommended by the Committee for 1966.^{4/}

13. As regards the meetings programme for the Conference at Headquarters, New York, the Secretary-General advises that the initial 1966 estimates have been revised to provide for the servicing of 390 meetings as approved by the Board, as compared with 205 meetings originally forecast. While existing staff will be used to the fullest extent for the servicing of these meetings, the Secretary-General estimates that provision of the additional temporary staff and related services will require an upward revision of the initial estimates of \$278,800 to \$637,000, or an increase of \$358,200. The Advisory Committee believes that by better control and planning at Headquarters it should be possible to provide substantial meetings services requirements from within existing resources, resulting in a considerable reduction in this figure.

14. The Secretary-General reports that in the event of approval of the new established posts proposed in paragraphs 7 to 10 of his report, it would be necessary to increase by \$233,800 the initial provision of \$505,000 for common staff costs under chapter I (v) of section 20 to a total of \$738,800. However, should the General Assembly approve the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the amount of the increase would require a downward adjustment. Additionally, the Secretary-General stated that the initial amount of \$525,000 for income from staff assessment for section 20 under Income Section 1 would be increased to \$682,000 as a consequence of his revised estimates. Should the Assembly approve the Committee's recommendations, the total estimate for staff assessment should be reduced in relation to the adjustments made in staff requirements.

15. In considering the Secretary-General's revised estimates for the Conference, the Advisory Committee noted the proliferation in the number of sub-groups and other ancillary bodies of that organization, and expressed its concern as to the nature of the control machinery established for the creation of such bodies. It was also concerned over what appeared to be a lack of over-all control of proposals having

^{4/} Ibid., para. 175.

financial implications, and considered that the Trade and Development Board should ensure that future proposals submitted to it should, where appropriate, be accompanied by financial statements. In this regard it is pertinent to note the provision of financial regulation 13.1 which reads as follows: "No council, commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving expenditure unless it has before it a report from the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the proposals."

Conclusions

16. In the light of the foregoing observations, and in particular its comments in paragraphs 4, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14, the Advisory Committee recommends a total expenditure estimate of \$5,820,600 for section 20 (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) for 1966, or a reduction of \$400,000 in the revised estimate of \$6,220,600 proposed by the Secretary-General. The Committee would express the view that this reduction should not be disproportionately applied to any particular area and that the needs for the expansion of the supporting services at Geneva should be kept well in mind.

17. The Advisory Committee wishes to point out that its recommendation represents an increase of \$770,600 as compared with its initial recommendation for section 20 for 1966, taking account of the estimate of \$2 million for the second session of the Conference originally proposed for 1966, now scheduled for 1967, and allowing for \$250,000 required in 1966 for preparatory work for that Conference.
