



Eighth session
Agenda item 50

STAFF REGULATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS:
QUESTION OF A PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Report of the Secretary-General

1. During the sixth session of the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions proposed (A/1912/Add.1)^{1/} that the following text should be inserted in the Staff Regulations of the United Nations:

"Regulation 9.1A

"The probationary period for confirmation of a permanent appointment shall normally not exceed two years. Service in a temporary capacity may be allowed to count towards such confirmation."

2. Subsequently, during the discussion by the Fifth Committee of the permanent Staff Regulations, the Advisory Committee decided to withdraw the above regulation following upon a suggestion by the Secretary-General that the matter of fixing a probationary period should be postponed for consideration at the seventh session of the General Assembly.^{2/} During the seventh session, the Advisory Committee, while adhering to the position of principle reflected in the draft text it had proposed, raised no objection to the Secretary-General's request to postpone discussion of the question at that session, particularly in view of the desirability of proceeding in consultation with the specialized agencies and of the fact that the review of temporary staff had not been completed.

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Annexes, agenda item 45, page 14.

2/ Ibid., document A/2108, page 37.

Thereupon, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, adopted resolution 682 (VII) requesting the Secretary-General to submit, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, a final proposal for the consideration of the General Assembly at its eighth session.

3. The Secretary-General has consulted with the executive heads and the administrative representatives of the specialized agencies at meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions. In those discussions, it was agreed that, in principle, all permanent appointments should be preceded by a trial period of service, either in the form of a specific period of probation or on a fixed-term basis, for one or two years.

4. The experience gained in the Secretariat during the past years has led the Secretary-General to the firm conclusion that a period of two years is normally necessary for a proper and accurate assessment of the fitness for permanent appointment of a newly appointed staff member; moreover, the possibility of extending that period in special cases for one additional year should be provided. The diversity of the programmes and the size of the staff of the Secretariat as compared with those of the programmes and staffs of the specialized agencies are factors which should not be overlooked in setting the length of the probationary period.

5. In his report on personnel policy presented at the eighth session of the General Assembly (A/2533), the Secretary-General has defined the categories of staff which will be eligible for permanent appointment. He has also announced a system of temporary appointments, in which a clear distinction is made between those which are probationary for permanent appointment and those which do not carry such an expectation. Accordingly, the text of the new regulation should provide for this distinction.

6. In the light of these considerations, and in the belief that the principles embodied in the draft regulation proposed earlier by the Advisory Committee are preserved in the text, the Secretary-General submits, for the consideration and

approval of the General Assembly, the following additional paragraph to be included in staff regulation 4.5. The Secretary-General understands that the full effect of the new regulation on probationary period would apply to staff appointed after 1 January 1954.

"(b) The Secretary-General shall prescribe which staff members are eligible for permanent appointments. The probationary period for granting or confirming a permanent appointment shall normally not exceed two years, provided that in individual cases the Secretary-General may extend the probationary period for not more than one additional year."