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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991

Work-load standards for various categories of conference-servicing staff, including clerical and typing staff, and work-load statistics for the various conference services in the 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 bienniums

Report by the Secretariat

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* A/45/50.

INTRODUCTION

1. In November 1976, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) addressed a request to the Secretary-General for work-load and other data that could be used as a basis for a standardized approach to calculating the financial implications of conferences and meetings. In response, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management submitted in October 1977 a standard list of conference-servicing requirements indicating the number of language and ancillary staff needed for a 10-meeting week. In November 1977, ACABQ informed the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management that it found the proposed work-load standards for Conference Services staff "generally satisfactory subject to certain observations".

2. Three years later, during the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, ACABQ was informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that the work-load standards introduced in late 1977 had remained the same. Detailed information on the standards applied by the Secretary-General in the calculation of the financial implications of conferences and meetings was contained in the annex to the Advisory Committee's report. 1/ In that report, ACABQ stated that it intended "to review these work-load standards from time to time in the light of the effects of technological innovations in the production of the publications and documentation of the Organization".

3. In its resolution 36/117 A III, the General Assembly requested a comprehensive analysis of existing budgetary techniques used in the calculation and presentation of conference-servicing costs in statements of administrative and financial implications, in the consolidated statement of conference-servicing costs and in the programme budget. The report prepared in response to that request (A/AC.172/75), inter alia, recapitulates the work-load standards for conference-servicing staff developed during 1977-1978. In commenting on the report ACABQ recommended, inter alia, that work-load standards be adjusted as necessary to reflect the introduction of new technology, such as word processing, and new procedures, such as self-revision by translators. 2/

4. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, 3/ ACABQ noted that a relevant aspect of the continuing introduction, application and use of new technologies was their impact on existing work-load standards for various categories of conference-servicing staff, including clerical and typing staff. In that connection, it recommended that revised work-load standards applicable to all duty stations be submitted for its consideration. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, 4/ ACABQ again indicated the urgent need for a review of work-load standards.

5. In paragraphs 29.18 to 29.21 of the same report, ACABQ noted significant variations between initial work-load estimates in recent bienniums and subsequent revisions and the fact that the impact of those variations on estimated resource requirements was not discussed in the proposed programme budget. Accordingly, it requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, before the end of 1989, information comparing the initial and the actual/revised work-load statistics for

the various conference services for the bienniums 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 and analysing their impact on conference-servicing resources approved under section 29 of the programme budget. This information was to be submitted in conjunction with the related report on work-load standards for conference-servicing staff referred to above. Subsequently, in its resolution 44/201 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit those reports to ACABQ at its spring 1990 session and to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

I. WORK-LOAD STANDARDS FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF CONFERENCE-SERVICING STAFF, INCLUDING CLERICAL AND TYPING STAFF

6. This section of the report considers various developments since the establishment of the current work-load standards that have affected the productivity of conference-servicing staff. The various major groups of staff are considered separately, with a recapitulation of current standards followed by an analysis of relevant developments and related conclusions.

A. Documentation

1. Typing

EXISTING STANDARD: (a) 1 work-day for every 1,650 words (or 5 standard final pages)* of translated text;

(b) 1 work-day for every 3,300 words (or 10 standard final pages) of original language text (i.e., copy-typing).

7. The Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish typing services in New York and Geneva have been fully converted to word processing, and limited capacities in these languages have been established in the joint United Nations/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) language services at Vienna. In addition, limited word-processing capacity has been established in New York and tests have been made at Geneva for the Chinese language, with full capacity expected by the end of the 1990-1991 biennium. In addition to the use of word processing in the typing units of the Department of Conference Services, there is increasing use of word processing by author departments, and some documents are submitted to the Department of Conference Services already in electronic form, for example, documents prepared for meetings of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is not yet, however, the norm.

8. Experience to date has indicated that, once fully established, word processing significantly increases the productivity of typists. Subject to the number and

* For planning purposes, a standard final page is estimated to have 30 lines or 330 words.

nature of changes to the original text, the length of the text, and the difficulty of retrieving the electronic document, it is often unnecessary to type a text in full more than once; many of the corrections and revisions that previously required retyping the entire document can be introduced into the original text by retrieving that document from the electronic memory of the word-processing equipment and incorporating the necessary revisions on screen. As a result of this and other features of word processing that greatly facilitate previously time-consuming operations, it is estimated that the time required for keyboarding documents has been reduced by as much as 50 per cent for standard texts without tables.

9. This reduction in keyboarding time cannot, however, be translated directly into gains in productivity, since word processing has brought with it the need for typists to carry out new functions in the preparation and printing of documents. Examples of these additional functions include: formatting documents, converting one software to another, reading the printed texts of documents for which diskettes are provided to make sure the documents are prepared in the correct form, filing and retrieving documents electronically, preparing instructions for printing and operating the printer. Word processing has also not reduced the time required for other related activities, such as proof-reading. Finally, in some instances delays that did not previously exist now occur, such as waiting time for pagination, finalization and printing of long documents, including the time required to assemble the various parts of a long document before final printing. The effects of these additional functions and of delays introduced by word processing offset to some extent the reduction in keyboarding time and reduce the overall gain in productivity in text-processing to an estimated 25 per cent.

10. Now that word processing is fully in place in the Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish units at Headquarters and Geneva, the work-load standards for typists in these units should be revised to reflect the consequent productivity increases. On the basis of the above information, the work-load standard for planning purposes should thus be increased from 3,300 to 4,125 words per day of original language text and from 1,650 to 2,060 words per day of final translated text, a net increase of 25 per cent for units fully converted to word processing. This standard should also be applied to other United Nations offices (i.e., Vienna, Nairobi and the regional commissions) as and when word processing is in place.

11. For planning conferences and meetings away from a United Nations headquarters location where the possibilities for word processing are often quite limited, if they exist at all, the current work-load standard linking the work of a typist directly with that of a translator and requiring one typist for every 1,650 words of translated text continues to be appropriate.

2. Translation

EXISTING STANDARD: (a) Translation - 1 work-day for every 1,650 words (or 5 standard final pages) of text translated;

(b) Revision - 1 work-day for every 4,950 words (or 15 standard final pages) of text translated.

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12. The introduction of new technology has generally been concentrated in the area of terminology and reference and translation staff have not yet acquired work stations. The actual translation process is therefore not affected by technological innovations. In view of this, no modification of the existing work-load standards for translation and revision is currently proposed as a result of technological innovations.

13. A major change that has occurred in the translation services since the introduction of the current work-load standards was the reclassification of language posts, accompanied by post reductions and the gradual introduction of self-revision, under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/225. In this resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia:

"Recognizing that the career of staff in all the language occupational groups at the United Nations represents a functional continuum within which the range of grade levels should reflect the increasingly complex and specialized nature of the assignments performed by language groups,

"Bearing in mind that the problems confronting the various language groups are not of a comparable nature and that the more recently introduced official languages require particular attention,

"1. Approves the proposals of the Secretary-General aimed at reclassifying language posts so that:

"...

"(b) The translators, interpreters, verbatim reporters, editors, copy-preparers and proof-readers benefit from the reclassification measures;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to apply self-revision on a provisional and experimental basis, to the extent that it does not affect the quality of United Nations documents, whatever the official or working language used."

14. A structure for the translation services that would enhance the career prospects of translators and improve the efficiency of the translation process was thus established in line with the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/75). That report took into account the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (JIU/REP/80/7) for a substantial move in the direction of self-revision as a basic mode of operation that would provide considerably better career prospects for translators and result in substantial economies.

15. At that time, the Department of Conference Services indicated that it intended to aim at an eventual target for self-revision of up to 45 per cent of the translation work-load. As stated in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/75), the Department estimated, on the assumption that the work-load prevailing in 1980 would not increase, that through self-revision a saving of 46 posts (i.e., 8.5 per cent of the translator posts existing at that time) could be achieved; those posts were abolished by the end of 1983.

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16. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/225, the Department gradually introduced the practice of self-revision, starting in 1981. Self-revision has increased the sense of responsibility and job satisfaction of translators and improved career prospects. More importantly, the quality of self-revised translations has proved generally satisfactory, although revised translations on the whole are of better quality. The extent of self-revision depends on the nature of the text, the state of current terminology in some of the official languages and the number of experienced translators in a given service at a given time. As a rule, legal texts, draft resolutions, sensitive political documents and particularly difficult texts require revision, as do longer jobs in order to ensure consistency. By contrast, shorter and less sensitive jobs and, particularly, summary record translation lend themselves more to self-revision. Given these factors, the experience gained since 1981 demonstrates that the Translation Services are unlikely to exceed the 45 per cent target set earlier.

17. Experience has shown that through self-revision it is possible to process a higher volume of documentation, thus saving a corresponding number of reviser days. This was the rationale for the abolition of 46 posts referred to in paragraph 15 above. During the past two years, self-revision has accounted for 30 to 40 per cent of the total output of the translation services. The savings expected from the introduction of self-revision have thus already been achieved to a large extent. The additional reduction of 10.7 per cent which took effect on 1 January 1990 represents a loss of 37 posts for the Translation Division. Efforts will be made by the translation services to cope with these new cuts while maintaining the present level of self-revision and without sacrificing quality.

18. These developments have not affected the individual productivity or work-load standards of translators and revisers. Each reviser is still assumed to complete, on average, 15 pages per work-day and each translator 5. On the assumption that approximately 40 per cent of translation volume will not be submitted for revision, however, the work-load standard for revision can be said to have increased to a notional 25 pages per work-day when related to total translation volumes. This increase must be viewed in the light of the fact that self-revised translation involves more time and effort than translation subject to revision. Accordingly, it is proposed that a new standard be established for translators/self-revisers at a level of 1,400 words per work-day (or 4.25 standard final pages). The effect of these proposals is illustrated below for a notional translation job of 150 standard final pages (49,500 words):

	Current standards <u>(work-days)</u>	Revised standards <u>(work-days)</u>
Translators	30.0	18.0
Translators/self-revisers	-	14.1
Revisers	<u>10.0</u>	<u>6.0</u>
	40.0	38.1

19. The translation services are also responsible for précis-writing, which is dealt with under the heading "Meeting services" below.

3. Reproduction

EXISTING STANDARDS: None

20. The unit of measurement for reproduction work is the page impression, i.e., the press run of each document and publication multiplied by the number of page originals. While no work-load standard for reproduction has been applied at Headquarters, a standard of 15,000 page impressions per work-day has been used to estimate temporary assistance requirements at Geneva.

21. Because the requirements of the work generated at Geneva and New York are fundamentally different, the equipment configurations, the methods of work, the capacities and other factors are also different. For example, since many documents prepared in New York reach the recommended maximum length of 32 pages, the Department of Conference Services has acquired equipment capable of producing this number of pages, rendering the press and finishing/bindery operations very efficient. At Geneva, however, the majority of documents consist of four or eight pages and the average number of copies required is low.

22. For these reasons, it was found that it was not possible to propose a standard that would be applicable both at Headquarters and at Geneva. In order to comply with the ACABQ request for consistent procedures, however, a single formula has been devised that is considered practicable and that could be used at both duty stations. The total number of page impressions for the year 1987 was divided by the total number of working days per year, i.e., 210 work-days as established for conference-servicing staff. Furthermore, only staff directly involved in production, i.e., those working in the pre-press, press and finishing areas, would be included in calculating work-days available; support staff (e.g., monitoring, stock inventory and clerical staff) would be excluded.

23. The above formula produced a work-load standard of 15,000 page impressions per work-day for Geneva and 30,000 page impressions per work-day for New York, for statistical reporting purposes. For budgetary purposes, the Programme Planning and Budget Division will continue to be provided with the most current data for the development of unit rates to be applied in the preparation of statements of programme budget implications.

24. The proposed figures of 15,000 page impressions for Geneva and 30,000 for New York are not individual performance standards, but are aggregate figures for a group of staff that take into account the variables inherent in the printing process of the documents and publications at the United Nations. Moreover, for both New York and Geneva they are considered experimental standards that should be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, when the full impact of staff reductions, the restructuring that will follow and further technological innovations in the reproduction plants have been fully evaluated.

B. Meeting services

1. Interpretation

EXISTING STANDARD: 1.5 work-days per meeting (of 2 1/2 to 3 hours' duration) per language for English, French, Russian and Spanish; 2 work-days per meeting per language for Arabic and Chinese.

25. In June 1974, the United Nations Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) presented a report on the conditions of services of staff interpreters, endorsed by the Medical Service, recommending that the normal work-load for United Nations interpreters should be not more than two meetings per day and seven meetings per week. This work-load standard was endorsed by ACABQ in its reviews carried out in 1977 and 1980.

26. In 1986, JIU prepared a comprehensive study on the "Management of interpretation services in the United Nations" (JIU/REP/86/5). In its report, JIU noted the considerable amount of stress that simultaneous conference interpretation work involves. It pointed out that, unlike most other professions, interpreters' work was subject to constant, immediate and very public scrutiny and that no supervisory review or revision was possible before the "product" was delivered. To perform effectively, interpreters need to be familiar with the subject-matter and terminology of the particular meeting before the meeting begins. The work requires intensive concentration; interpreters must pay very close attention to what is being said, including nuances, carefully chosen formulations and statements on sensitive issues, in order to interpret it into another language with speed and precision.

27. No new factors have emerged during the last 10 years that would affect the working conditions of interpreters and warrant any change in the existing standard. In the interpretation services, the number of meeting assignments and the pace thereof continue to be determined by the calendar of conferences mandated by intergovernmental organs. In view of this, no change in the existing work-load standard for interpreters is proposed at the present time.

2. Précis-writing

EXISTING STANDARD: (a) Précis-writing/translation: 3 work-days of précis-writing per meeting; 2 work-days of translation per language per meeting;

(b) Revision: 0.5 work-day per language per meeting.

28. Under the current system, summary records are drafted by members of the English, French, Spanish and Russian translation services at Headquarters. The Russian Service started précis-writing during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. At Geneva, original summary records are prepared in English and French only.

29. Summary records are prepared by teams of précis-writers, who attend the meeting and take notes, listening to the speaker in the original language or using the speaker's text, when available. After the meeting, they draft their summaries, which are subsequently revised by a senior colleague. The drafts are then sent for final typing to the relevant typing unit and from there to the various translation services for translation into the working languages of the bodies concerned other than the language in which the record was drafted. Records of Main Committees of the General Assembly are issued in all six official languages.

30. At the time when the standards were established, teams of three précis-writers were assigned to meetings and thus the work-load standard for précis writing and revision per meeting was set at 3.5 work-days. The increasing emphasis on the better utilization of conference resources resulting in the earlier starting time of many morning meetings (10 a.m. instead of 10.30 a.m.), however, and the increasing tendency towards longer written statements have made it impossible to achieve the current work-load standard in preparing summary records for many committees. The prepared texts read out by delegations, often at great speed when a time-limit has been imposed on speeches, already represent a synthesis of delegations' views and therefore contain a great deal of substance and are difficult to condense. In such cases, three précis-writers cannot complete the drafting of the summary record for a three-hour meeting within half a work-day and the record cannot be revised in half a work-day. In practice, therefore, for most meetings that are scheduled for a full three hours, teams of four précis-writers must be assigned and a full day's revision is often required. This trend will be monitored and, should it continue, some adjustment in the work-load standards may be required in order to reflect the increase in the number of work-days needed per meeting. As regards technological innovation, no new technology has yet been proposed that would affect the précis-writing process and so no change in the existing work-load standard is therefore warranted on that account.

3. Verbatim reporting

EXISTING STANDARD: (a) Verbatim reporting: 4 work-days per meeting per language;

(b) Verbatim revision: 1 work-day per meeting per language.

31. Verbatim records were first introduced at the United Nations in 1946. At that time the work-load standards for verbatim reporting were based on those applied at the League of Nations, which in turn had adapted them from those applied in the English and French parliaments.

32. The basic principle was that eight verbatim reporters would be able to cover two three-hour meetings a day, on the basis of four to five takes (a 10-minute portion of a meeting to be transcribed at one time by a verbatim reporter) a day per person, and allowing 90 minutes to 2 hours for the transcription of one take. In other words, for two three-hour meetings, 36 takes were distributed among 8 persons, or, for one meeting 18 takes among 4 persons, hence the standard of 4 work-days per meeting per language for verbatim reporting. In addition, one

reviser was assigned for the revision of one meeting, hence the standard of 1 work-day per meeting per language for revision. On the assumption that one meeting does not exceed three hours from the scheduled opening time to the actual closing time, no change is proposed in the present work-load standard.

33. The recent introduction of word processing has affected the mechanical aspect of the work positively, but has not improved productivity, since a great part of the time necessary for the transcription is used for such tasks as checking references, correcting inaccuracies or translating missing parts from the interpretation. A permanent core of one team of verbatim reporters for each of the six official languages exists only at New York. Following the implementation of staff reductions in January 1990, the teams now comprise seven reporters for all six languages, one reviser each for English, French, Russian and Spanish and two revisers each for Arabic and Chinese.

4. Supporting staff

Conference Officer

EXISTING STANDARD: 1 work-day for a meeting of 50 or more participants and 0.5 work-day for a meeting of less than 50 participants.

34. No change is proposed.

Documents Distribution Clerk

EXISTING STANDARD: 0.5 work-day per meeting.

35. No change is proposed.

II. WORK-LOAD STATISTICS FOR THE VARIOUS CONFERENCE SERVICES IN THE 1986-1987 AND 1988-1989 BIENNIUMS

36. Work-load statistics covering various aspects of conference servicing have been presented in section 29 of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets as well as in subsequent programme performance reports. The statistics are compiled by the Documents Control Units at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna on the basis of reports of conference and meetings servicing officers as well as individual units responsible for the various stages of documents-processing. The statistics are used for long-term planning purposes as indicators of trends in the demand for conference services. They are reviewed periodically by programme managers in the course of the year and form a basis for analysing how efficiently and effectively conference-servicing resources are utilized.

37. While work-load statistics from previous bienniums are useful for estimating future conference-servicing requirements, their limitations should be recognized. The schedule for the preparation of programme budget proposals makes it difficult to use work-load statistics for the current biennium as a precise measure of the demand for conference services expected during the next biennium since such statistics are not available when the budget is drafted. The preparation of the programme budget proposals for 1986-1987, for example, began in mid-1984 and the final proposals were prepared before work-load statistics for that year were available. In addition, as pointed out by ACABQ in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985, 5/ the structure of conferences and their services, and hence their respective costs, tend to vary from one year to the next. Most important, it must be borne in mind that conference-servicing requirements depend upon the flow of work as well as its volume. Work that could easily be performed by the established staff resources in normal circumstances may require temporary assistance if it has to be completed in a very short time or during periods of peak work-load when the capacity of the established work force is fully used or even exceeded, as often happens.

38. Tables 1 and 2 below provide a comparison between initial estimates, revised estimates and actual work-load statistics at Headquarters and Geneva. Initial estimates for 1986-1987 were prepared on the basis of revised estimates for 1984-1985, and revised estimates took into account actual work-load figures for 1984-1985. The last two columns in each table compare revised estimates for 1986-1987 and actual work-load figures, as definitively reported in the programme budget proposals for 1990-1991 6/ rather than the performance report for 1986-1987 (A/43/326/Add.1).

39. The work-load estimates used to prepare the programme budget proposals for 1986-1987 reflected the actual work-load for conference services in the bienniums 1980-1981 and 1982-1983 and the revised work-load estimates for 1984-1985. They were also based on the assumption that the trend of an increasing demand for most conference services would continue through the 1986-1987 biennium. When the Secretariat prepared the programme budget proposals for the 1986-1987 biennium late in 1984, it did not anticipate either the severity or the duration of the financial crisis that the Organization experienced from 1986, and work-load projections based upon trends and experience during the first half of the decade were deemed realistic and justified at the time.

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Table 1. Department of Conference Services, New York

	Revised estimate 1984-1985	Initial estimate 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1984-1985	Revised estimate 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1986-1987
Interpretation (No. assignments)	65 000	65 500	67 817	64 000	59 789
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	181 500	199 650	153 500	155 025	149 804
Typing ('000 words)	370 000	397 000	365 098	346 000	292 658
Editing ('000 words)	166 000	178 000	189 080	174 000	146 770
Reproduction ('000 pages)	1 450 000	1 500 000	1 514 000	1 600 000	1 454 000
Distribution ('000 pieces)	115 000	120 000	88 269	90 000	75 577

Table 2. Conference Services, Geneva

	Revised estimate 1984-1985	Initial estimate 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1984-1985	Revised estimate 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1986-1987
Interpretation (No. assignments)	73 000	73 000	68 500	62 000	55 987
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	113 000	113 000	112 140	99 800	85 022
Typing ('000 words)	334 000	334 000	336 746	280 000	280 550
Editing ('000 words)	30 000	33 000	30 682	28 700	20 771
Reproduction ('000 pages)	552 000	552 000	592 000	536 000	518
Distribution ('000 pieces)	47 800	48 000	46 346	47 000	45 477

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40. With the onset of the financial crisis and the imposition of economy measures in 1986, the work-load estimates for 1986-1987 were revised downward as reflected in the budget proposals for 1988-1989. 7/ Although at that time it was assumed that the effects of the financial crisis would be temporary, as can be seen from a comparison between the revised estimates prepared late in 1986 and the final work-load statistics for 1986-1987, conference services actually required during the biennium were considerably less than anticipated, reflecting, *inter alia*, a 25 per cent reduction in the number of meetings with interpretation held at Headquarters (from 3,603 in 1985 to 2,792 in 1986) and a 20 per cent reduction in the number of meetings for which summary records were prepared (from 600 to 488).

41. Tables 3 and 4 below provide a comparison between initial estimates and revised work-load estimates at Headquarters and Geneva for the biennium 1988-1989.

42. When the initial estimates for 1988-1989 were prepared late in 1986, it was assumed that, once the financial crisis had ended, the requirements for conference services would resume their upward trend; therefore the work-load estimates for 1988-1989 reflected modest increases over the actual work-load experienced in 1984-1985. In late 1988, however, when revised estimates for 1988-1989 were prepared, actual work-load statistics available for 1988 indicated that the levels of activity experienced in 1986-1987 were continuing in 1988. The work-load estimates for 1988-1989 were accordingly revised downward on the assumption that conference servicing requirements during 1988-1989 would be at about the same levels as in 1986-1987. These revised estimates were used in preparing the budget proposals for 1990-1991. Experience to date has indicated that this assumption was correct. For planning purposes, it has been assumed that conference servicing requirements in 1990-1991 will remain at about the same levels as in 1986-1987 and 1988-1989.

Table 3. Department of Conference Services, New York

	Revised estimate 1986-1987	Initial estimate 1988-1989	Actual work-load 1986-1987	Revised estimate 1988-1989	Actual work-load 1988-1989
Interpretation (No. assignments)	64 000	68 700	59 789	60 000	57 623
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	155 025	162 200	149 804	151 250	140 689
Typing ('000 words)	346 000	367 000	292 658	300 000	286 089
Editing ('000 words)	174 000	183 000	146 770	150 000	134 039
Reproduction ('000 pages)	1 600 000	1 700 000	1 454 000	1 500 000	1 372 000
Distribution ('000 pieces)	90 000	90 000	75 577	75 500	90 160

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Table 4. Conference Services, Geneva

	Revised estimate 1986-1987	Initial estimate 1988-1989	Actual work-load 1986-1987	Revised estimate 1988-1989	Actual work-load 1988-1989
Interpretation (No. assignments)	62 000	70 000	55 987	56 500	54 921
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	99 800	115 000	85 022	89 200	93 641
Typing ('000 words)	280 000	334 000	280 550	302 600	304 283
Editing ('000 words)	28 700	33 200	20 771	25 000	24 760
Reproduction ('000 pages)	536 000	540 000	519 000	508 000	523 000
Distribution ('000 pieces)	47 800	47 000	45 477	48 200	46 444

Table 5. Department of Conference Services, New York

	Actual work-load 1980-1981	Actual work-load 1982-1983	Actual work-load 1984-1985	Actual work-load 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1988-1989	Estimated work-load 1990-1991
Interpretation (No. assignments)	61 039	61 654	67 817	59 789	57 623	60 000
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	132 088	161 140	153 500	149 804	140 689	151 250
Typing ('000 words)	339 455	360 253	365 098	292 658	286 089	300 000
Editing ('000 words)	144 840	155 472	189 000	146 770	134 039	150 000
Reproduction ('000 pages)	1 319 000	1 406 000	1 514 000	1 500 000	1 372 000	1 500 000
Distribution ('000 pieces)	105 352	97 714	88 269	75 577	90 160	75 500

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Table 6. Conference Services, Geneva

	Actual work-load 1980-1981	Actual work-load 1982-1983	Actual work-load 1984-1985	Actual work-load 1986-1987	Actual work-load 1988-1989	Estimated work-load 1990-1991
Interpretation (No. assignments)	65 563	68 027	68 500	55 987	54 921	56 500
Translation/rev. ('000 words)	113 604	111 881	112 140	85 022	93 641	92 000
Typing ('000 words)	333 097	333 702	336 746	280 550	304 283	302 600
Editing ('000 words)	26 166	28 775	30 682	20 771	24 760	25 000
Reproduction ('000 pages)	572 000	552 000	592 000	519 000	523 000	508 000
Distribution ('000 pieces)	45 750	43 868	46 346	45 477	46 444	48 200

43. Unlike New York and Geneva, work-load estimates have not been consistently available for conference services at Vienna. The statistics shown in table 7 below reflect exclusively actual work-loads and are presented for information only.

Table 7. Conference Services - Vienna

	<u>Actual work-load</u>			
	1986	1987	1988	1989
Translation ('000 words)	9 345.8	11 352.5	12 970.0	10 519.5
Typing ('000 words)	227.4	400.6	444.9	464.8
Editing ('000 words)	2 444.2	2 297.5	2 137.7	1 614.6
Documents Control (printed pages)	101 963	125 135	142 590	131 926
Printing (hours logged)	3 211.3	5 484.4	5 346.9	3 582.1
Distribution ('000 pieces)	2 387.8	2 379.4	2 671.1	2 063.9
Reproduction ('000 page impressions)	42 004.7	45 768.0	54 926.4	39 816.6

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Impact of work-load statistics on the level of
conference resources

44. Permanent conference-servicing capacity providing the full range of services exists at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna. In view, however, of the uncertainties that traditionally surround the features and schedule details of the calendar of conferences and, in particular, the uneven distribution of meetings in any given year, permanent conference-servicing resources at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna are programmed to varying degrees below the actual level that is required. The difference is made up through the use of temporary staff. The corresponding resources are estimated and appropriated as temporary assistance for meetings.

45. The procedures followed for the 1986-1987 biennium were described in paragraph 29.6 of the proposed programme budget for 1986-1987: 8/

"The requirements for temporary assistance for meetings at Geneva and Vienna are estimated taking into account projections of the recent work-load into the biennium and the conference-servicing capacity of the permanent establishment at these locations. At Headquarters, however, because of the need to provide for permanent staff resources for the Security Council at all times and the higher ratio of permanent to temporary staff requirements, the latter have not been included in these estimates. No provision, therefore, is made in the current proposed programme budget for temporary assistance for meetings at Headquarters, except in respect of the amount requested for the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the General Assembly Such amounts as may be required in this respect and any adjustments to the amounts approved for Geneva and Vienna will be requested towards the end of each session of the Assembly."

The final budget appropriations for 1986-1987 included provisions for temporary assistance based upon consolidated statements of administrative and financial implications in respect of conference-servicing costs prepared at the end of each session of the General Assembly and reviewed by ACABQ.

46. As a result of the decision to treat as non-recurrent costs the provisions for temporary assistance for meetings other than the General Assembly in New York and those for non-recurrent meetings at Geneva and Vienna, the impact of work-load statistics upon conference-servicing resources approved in the 1986-1987 programme budget was minimized.

47. In the case of Headquarters, temporary assistance requirements for the General Assembly for 1986-1987 were set out in table 29.56 of the proposed programme budget, 8/ which gave a detailed breakdown of the temporary assistance required to service the General Assembly. ACABQ recommended the approval of \$11,440,300, the amount requested. This amount was based upon the specific requirements of the General Assembly rather than upon the estimates of total work-load for the biennium 1986-1987.

48. In the case of the requirements for temporary assistance for meetings at Geneva, ACABQ noted that the work-load statistics presented in table 29.59 of the

proposed programme budget had been revised and acknowledged that the 1986-1987 estimates for temporary assistance for meetings at Geneva were slightly more conservative than before. ACABQ expressed the belief, however, that further improvements were possible in the method of compiling work-load statistics at Geneva. It therefore recommended a reduction in the provisions for temporary assistance for meetings by \$703,000, from \$10,603,000 to \$9.9 million, in addition to the reduction of \$2,389,200 already proposed by the Secretary-General from the 1984-1985 level.

49. The resource requirements for conference servicing at Vienna were based upon work-load statistics presented in tables 29.61 and 29.62 of the proposed programme budget, which gave actual figures for the years 1980-1983 and estimates for the years 1984-1987. ACABQ viewed the work-load statistics of Vienna with caution and recommended a reduction in the provisions for temporary assistance for meetings by \$256,800, from \$6,256,800 to \$6 million.

50. Thus, in the case of both Geneva and Vienna, the initial budget appropriations approved for the biennium 1986-1987 were significantly lower than the amounts requested. Moreover, ACABQ did not agree to additional appropriations requested for Vienna in the consolidated statements of conference-servicing costs submitted by the Secretary-General in December 1985 (A/C.5/40/92) and 1986 (A/C.5/41/58) and it recommended reductions in the additional appropriations requested for New York and Geneva. Appropriations were therefore not based entirely upon the work-load estimates made by the Secretariat. In the case of Headquarters and Geneva, the actual expenditures during the biennium for temporary assistance for meetings were lower than approved appropriations by \$2,038,800 and \$932,900 respectively as a result of special economy measures introduced in response to the financial crisis; in the case of Vienna, however, an increase of \$4,108,900 was necessary to reflect the actual division of work-load between the United Nations and UNIDO (see A/C.5/42/40/Add.29). As a result of all of the above factors, the work-load estimates for 1986-1987 included in the programme budget proposals for 1986-1987 had a relatively slight impact upon final appropriations for temporary assistance for meetings during the biennium.

51. For the biennium 1988-1989, the relevance of work-load statistics to the preparation of budget estimates for such temporary assistance diminished as a result of the new approach to the provision for temporary assistance for meetings introduced in the 1988-1989 biennium. On the basis of experience over the previous five years, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 incorporated in the resource base of the Department of Conference Services temporary assistance requirements for meetings, other than the General Assembly, in order to eliminate the need for subsequent "add-ons" hitherto contained in the annual consolidated statements. The level of resources so estimated were to accommodate not only recurrent meetings, but also special conferences within the limits set by General Assembly resolution 40/243 (five per year). Statements of programme budget implications provided to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary organs continued to contain, for information purposes, a statement of the cost of meetings at full cost, it being understood that no subsequent appropriation would be required through a consolidated statement. A similar approach was adopted in the preparation of estimates for temporary

assistance for meetings included in the 1990-1991 programme budget proposals. Thus temporary assistance provisions are now based primarily on the actual expenditure experience over past years as reflected in budget appropriations rather than on work-load estimates for the next biennium.

52. As noted in the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991, there was a modest decrease in temporary assistance expenditures at Headquarters during 1988-1989. This decrease can be linked to the improved scheduling of meetings and conferences and some reduction both in time wastage and the overall volume of documentation, the latter being an after-effect of the financial crisis and the consequent economy measures in 1986-1987 and 1988-1989. Potentially, greater savings could thus have been achieved during these bienniums. The freeze on recruitment in respect of established posts occasioned by the financial crisis, however, created a large number of vacancies that resulted in a greater reliance on more costly temporary assistance personnel to service meetings. An analysis of actual expenditures for 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 shows that a major portion of the resources for temporary assistance for meetings for conference services at New York and Geneva were utilized in the interpretation, translation and typing areas. Therefore, while actual work-loads, as compared to estimated work-loads, for 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 indicate a downward trend, there was a rise in actual expenditures for the aforesaid reasons.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/35/7/Add.7).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/37/7), para. 24.

3/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/42/7), para. 29.18.

4/ Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/44/7), para. 29.22.

5/ Ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/38/7), para. 29.12.

6/ Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/46/6).

7/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/42/6).
