PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNUM 1992-1993

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF AFRICA

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN AFRICA, UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS


Twelfth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered four statements of programme budget implications concerning disarmament matters submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.5/46/40, A/C.5/46/42, A/C.5/46/43 and A/C.5/46/44). During its consideration of these statements, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information.
2. The financial implications of the draft resolutions to which the Secretary-General's statements relate can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Non-conference servicing</th>
<th>Conference servicing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/C.5/46/40 (A/C.1/46/L.38)</td>
<td>$10,300 a/</td>
<td>$853,600 b/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.5/46/42 (A/C.1/46/L.41)</td>
<td>$55,300</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.5/46/43 (A/C.1/46/L.14)</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.5/46/44 (A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1, as orally amended)</td>
<td>$318,500</td>
<td>$326,200 b/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$984,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,179,800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a/ To be absorbed within the overall level of resources under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

b/ To be covered by the provision for conference servicing in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

3. The Advisory Committee notes that in view of the provision made in the proposed programme budget to cover not only meetings which had already been programmed but also those that would be subsequently authorized, no additional appropriation is requested under section 32 of the proposed programme budget to cover the conference servicing requirements, estimated at $1,179,800, related to the draft resolutions.

4. The financial implications of implementing the four draft resolutions amount to $984,100 for non-conference servicing activities; as indicated above, the Secretary-General estimates that only $10,300, related to draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.38, could be absorbed within the provisions made in the proposed programme budget. Furthermore, notwithstanding the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 regarding the designation of alternatives, the Advisory Committee notes that in respect of draft resolutions A/C.1/46/L.14 ($600,000) and A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1 as orally amended ($318,500) "no activity has been identified for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 5 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993" (para. 17 of A/C.5/46/44 and para. 10 of
A/C.5/46/43). With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.41, for which the financial implications total $55,300, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 13 of A/C.5/46/42, indicates several low priority activities from which resources could be redeployed.

5. The Advisory Committee regrets that the approved procedure has not been followed in all cases; in this connection, it reiterates its previous observations:

"The Committee strongly stresses the need for the Secretariat, when preparing statements of programme budget implications of draft resolutions and decisions, not to abdicate its responsibility to provide, for consideration of intergovernmental bodies concerned, precise indications of alternatives in the event that total additional expenditures proposed exceed resources available within the contingency fund." 1/

6. Draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.38, discussed in document A/C.5/46/40, relates to the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean; as noted in paragraph 3 of A/C.5/46/40, the proposed programme budget includes provision "for substantive services for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and preparation for and substantive servicing of the Conference". Additional costs of $10,300 for the travel of representatives of national liberation movements would arise; however, as indicated above, these costs would be absorbed. In response to inquiries, the Committee was informed that the amount of $10,300 relates to the travel of representatives from the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

7. The financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.41, amount, as shown above, to $55,300; as stated in paragraph 4 of A/C.5/46/42, this relates to the holding of a five-day meeting at Addis Ababa of the Group of Experts designated by the United Nations in cooperation with the OAU. As shown in paragraph 9 of A/C.5/46/42, the amount of $55,300 comprises $6,900 for temporary assistance for meetings and $48,400 in substantive costs. In paragraph 10, the Secretary-General states that "it is not anticipated that the cost of $55,300 ... could be absorbed from within the provisions under section 5 of the proposed programme budget".

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 5 that "interpreters and translators would be hired locally for this meeting ...". Notwithstanding that statement, the Committee believes that the related cost of $6,900 should be financed under section 32 of the proposed programme budget; the estimate of additional non-conference-servicing requirements attributable to draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.41 should therefore be revised to $48,400.

9. Draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.14 (see A/C.5/46/43) calls for the administrative expenses of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to be financed from the regular budget. A breakdown of the
estimated requirements of $600,000 is provided in paragraph 6 of A/C.5/46/43. The Advisory Committee notes that this is over and above the resources included in the proposed programme budget to cover the posts of the directors of the centres.

10. The Advisory Committee has serious reservations regarding the recommendation of the First Committee on the financing of the regional centres. The Committee recalls that in section VI of its resolution 45/248 B, the General Assembly reaffirmed that "the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters"; it also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee and expressed "its concern at the tendency of its substantive committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters".

11. Moreover the Advisory Committee believes that a decision, such as that taken by the First Committee, should have been preceded by a comprehensive report containing a full description of the centres' programmes of work, the related costs, and adequate justification for the amount of administrative support that is being requested. The report would also have provided specific information, not only on the amount of voluntary contributions received but on the expenditures incurred by the centres. Such information, as well as a description of any administrative problems might have provided at least a partial rationale for such a decision. The Committee also points out that unless sufficient voluntary contributions are received to finance substantive activities it is doubtful whether mere financing of the administrative expenses from the regular budget would in and of itself ensure the financial viability of the centres.

12. In fact, the report submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/59 B of 4 December 1990 (A/46/365) makes no such case for the financing of the administrative expenses. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that although the report describes the activities of each centre no indication of the related costs is provided. Under headings entitled "Staffing and finance", the Secretary-General indicates the voluntary contributions which have been pledged or received for each centre since submission of his previous report (A/45/573); however, no data on the overall financial positions of the centres have been provided.

13. The Secretary-General also emphasizes that, "under the terms of the General Assembly resolutions establishing the three centres, the basis for their financing has been existing resources and voluntary contributions from Member States and interested organizations" (para. 19). Bearing this in mind, the Secretary-General, with reference to the regional centre in Africa, emphasizes the importance of continued voluntary contributions "if the Centre's programme of work is to be maintained and increased, and in view of the continuing financial crises facing the United Nations" (para. 20).

/...
14. Furthermore, the Secretary-General states that "in accordance with the terms on which the regional centre in Latin America and the Caribbean was established, and in view of the financial crisis facing the United Nations, no resources from the regular budget of the Organization can be made available for the Centre's various work programmes", hence the need for voluntary contributions (para. 44). Similarly, in paragraph 54, the Secretary-General makes an appeal for voluntary contributions to the regional centre in Asia and the Pacific. Thus, far from requesting a change in the financing of the centres, the Secretary-General, in explicit terms, indicated that this was not an option.

15. As stated above, the basis for the financing of the regional centres, as stipulated by the General Assembly was to be existing resources and voluntary contributions. Although by its resolution 44/117 F of 15 December 1989 the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish the posts of Directors, to be funded from the regular budget, the Advisory Committee sees no reason to modify the underlying policy regarding the financing of the centres. The Committee also points out that, as shown in paragraph 6 of A/C.5/46/43, the amount of $600,000 requested would provide for the salaries and common staff costs of 22 local level posts, thereby increasing the regular budget staffing table of the Organization. In this connection, the Committee also recalls recommendation 62 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts 2/ which states that "a serious effort should be made by the Secretary-General to discourage the present practice of transferring extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget".

16. The question also arises whether, in the event that voluntary funding of the centres' substantive activities falls short of expectations, financing of those activities under the regular budget will, in future, be requested. Should that occur, the Committee is convinced that other requests of a similar nature would be forthcoming.

17. Without prejudice to its above observations, the Advisory Committee recommends that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.14, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee, bearing in mind their respective responsibilities, would advise the Assembly as to the actual level of administrative support which will "ensure the continued financial viability of the centres". To that end, the Advisory Committee also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a detailed report to the Fifth Committee, providing, inter alia, a full disclosure of the financial position of each centre, with supporting documentation, the proposed programme of work, and a functional breakdown of all staff, whether administrative or operational. On the basis of this report, it would be the Advisory Committee's intention to submit recommendations as to the level of administrative resources to be funded from the regular budget, by means of either a subvention or otherwise. Pending receipt of that report, the Advisory Committee recommends no change to the existing arrangements for financing the centres.
18. As stated in paragraph 6 of A/C.5/46/44, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1, as orally amended, "the Secretary-General would establish and maintain at the Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms"; he would also establish a panel of governmental technical experts which would hold three sessions in New York in 1992. The related non-conference-serving requirements amount to $318,500, comprising $258,500 for the travel and subsistence allowance for 18 governmental experts, $49,200 for consultants (both actual consultancy services and the travel and subsistence of consultants to attend the sessions of the experts) and $10,800 for three work-months of temporary assistance.

19. In paragraph 14, the Secretary-General states that "no provision has been made under section 5 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 for the holding of meetings of the panel ..." and "it is not anticipated that the cost of $318,500 ... could be absorbed from within the appropriations proposed under section 5". In this connection, the Advisory Committee points out that in paragraph 5.22 of the proposed programme budget, under the heading of disarmament studies, the Secretary-General explains that a provision of $329,800 (at revised 1991 rates) has been included in the proposed programme budget and distributed among general temporary assistance, ad hoc expert groups, consultants and travel of staff in anticipation of disarmament studies which may be authorized by the General Assembly in 1992-1993. However, the Committee notes that no such studies have as yet been authorized for the biennium to be covered by this provision.

20. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee believes that the amount of $329,800 (at revised 1991 rates) can be appropriately used for this purpose; consequently no additional appropriation is needed. Furthermore, although the breakdown of the amount of $318,500 by object of expenditure does not dovetail exactly with the breakdown of the $329,800 in the proposed programme budget, the Committee, noting that the overall amount is sufficient, recommends that amounts be redeployed among the objects of expenditure as needed.

21. Furthermore, in the opinion of the Committee, there is scope for economy; i.e. the estimated amount of $318,500 is excessive, particularly the amount included for consultancy services. The Committee therefore expects that the activities will be administered judiciously with a view to achieving savings. In keeping with its previous observations in respect of disarmament studies, the Committee also believes that in future the structure for undertaking such activities should be reconsidered, particularly in respect of the number of experts, the number of sessions convened, and the amount of consultancy services.

22. The Advisory Committee points out that should requests for disarmament studies arise at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General can submit the related requirements at that time.
23. Bearing in mind its observations in the preceding paragraphs, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that should it adopt the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/46/L.38, A/C.1/46/L.41, A/C.1/46/L.14, and A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1, as orally amended, an additional expenditure would be required under section 5, Disarmament affairs activities as follows:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/C.1/46/L.38</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.1/46/L.41</td>
<td>48 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.1/46/L.14</td>
<td>a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1, as orally amended</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48 400</strong></td>
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\(a/\) To be determined – see para. 17 above.

24. The Advisory Committee notes that the additional requirements of $48,400 will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines for the operation and use of the Contingency Fund. Accordingly, such additional appropriations as may be requested by the Secretary-General will be considered in the context of a consolidated statement to be submitted to the General Assembly at the end of its current session in accordance with section C of the annex to resolution 42/211.

Notes

