

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL
A/3029
17 November 1955
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Tenth session
Agenda items 37 and 38

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1955 BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1956

International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy

Seventeenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the tenth session of the General Assembly

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/638) concerning the budget estimates for the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy which, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 810B (IX) of 4 December 1954, was held during August 1955 at Geneva. The Secretary-General has circulated separately to the Members of the United Nations, as well as to other Governments and to specialized agencies which participated in the Conference, a general report (A/2967) on the work of the Conference.
2. The Secretary-General was authorized, by General Assembly resolution 891 (IX) of 17 December 1954, to enter into commitments for the financing of the Conference and, by resolution 892 (IX) of the same date, to draw on the Working Capital Fund to meet related expenditures arising during 1955. It was nevertheless agreed in the Fifth Committee at the ninth session^{1/} that an estimate of costs would in due course be submitted to the Advisory Committee.

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Fifth Committee, 471st meeting, paragraph 39.

3. Accordingly, the Secretary-General presented to the Advisory Committee, during June 1955, preliminary and tentative estimates for the Conference, showing, in respect of the year 1955, anticipated expenditure (excluding the contractual printing of the Conference records) to a total amount of \$1,016,000. The Advisory Committee suggested certain areas where economies might be possible, to a total of about \$100,000. The Secretary-General now estimates in document A/C.5/638 that the 1955 requirements for items other than contractual printing will amount to \$1,024,000; this figure is, however, exclusive of an amount of \$72,000 which was submitted in the original 1955 estimates for certain public information projects which have since been deferred until 1956.

4. The Secretary-General estimates that total expenditures, including printing costs (other than for the Russian language edition of the records) will amount to \$2,461,000, of which approximately \$1,474,000 is tentatively expected to be required during 1955, and the balance of \$987,000 during 1956. It is, however, to be noted that the respective figures for 1955 and 1956 are apparently indicated rather for purposes of appropriation than as precise estimates of the obligations that will be incurred in one or other of the two years. This is understood to be due to the difficulty at this stage, when a considerable volume of translation work is being done on outside contract in Europe, of making a firm estimate of the obligations that will be incurred prior to 1 January 1956. While appreciating the difficulty, the Advisory Committee considers that, on the basis of the volume of expenditure incurred up to 30 September 1955, the total requirements for 1955 are not likely to exceed an amount of \$1,400,000. Subject, however, to the reductions recommended later in this report, a corresponding increase may be made in the estimated requirements for 1956.

5. In paragraph 3 of his report (A/C.5/638), the Secretary-General suggests that, in addition to the appropriation in a separate new budget section of the amounts shown for each of the years 1955 and 1956, the revised 1955 appropriation resolution should provide that the credits so voted in respect of 1955 should remain available for obligation in 1956. The Advisory Committee, however, sees no reason to abandon or modify the normal budgetary procedures, as laid down in the Financial Regulations, for the surrender of unobligated balances after the close of the year

and for their subsequent reappropriation, where necessary, by means of supplementary appropriations. In this connexion, the proposal in paragraph 4 above to limit the 1955 appropriation to \$1,400,000 should reduce the possibility that any large amounts will remain unobligated at 31 December 1955.

The Conference was held at Geneva from 8 to 20 August 1955. In all, seventy-three States and eight specialized agencies were represented, with 1,428 official delegates. In addition, 1,334 observers attended, principally from non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and industrial concerns. Active participation in the Conference thus exceeded by far the original expectations on which the initial expenditure estimates were based.

7. Furthermore, account must be taken of the circumstances of urgency in which the General Assembly adopted, during the closing stages of its ninth session, resolution 810 B (IX) suggesting that the Conference should be held not later than August 1955. It is the view of the Advisory Committee that, but for these circumstances, the Secretary-General might well have been led to propose the deferment of a substantial number of normal United Nations activities, thereby releasing a corresponding volume of resources for the benefit of this major and exceptional project. The limited time available for the planning of the Conference may also have contributed to an expansion of costs. It must, on the other hand, be recognized, as a matter for gratification, that the Conference was organized with marked success.

8. Other factors which are relevant to a consideration of the sizeable estimates now submitted include, on the one hand, the nature and scope of the rules of procedure laid down for the Conference, and particularly those relating to the publication of its records, and, on the other hand, the alterations which were made in the Palais des Nations with resulting expenditures not exclusively related to the Conference.

9. Apart from its substantive achievements, the Conference has doubtless been useful in providing further experience in organizational planning and administration which should be of advantage in connexion with any future conference of a similar nature. The comments in the foregoing paragraphs have reference to certain general areas in which this unique undertaking may afford valuable experience.

10. The most important single item of expenditure in the estimates is contractual printing, for which provision is made to a total amount of \$1,115,000 representing almost half of the entire Conference budget. Account must also be taken of the additional provision of \$460,000 for contractual and other translation services that form an integral part of the publication process. The Secretary-General has drawn attention to the fact that the rules of procedure of the Conference provided that verbatim records of all plenary and section meetings should be established (rule 20), and that the proceedings of the Conference should be published in the four working languages of the Conference and should include, in addition to introductory material relating to the convening of the Conference, its organization and composition, the records of plenary and section meetings and all conference papers (rule 22). Of the total amount of \$1,115,000 provided for printing, about \$230,000 was spent for reproduction by offset process, under outside contract, of the 1,067 conference papers, for distribution prior to the Conference; the reproduction of the related abstracts was done by offset process within the Secretariat. The balance of about \$885,000 represents the estimated cost of printing the English, French and Spanish editions of the records. The translation and printing of the Russian language edition, as well as its sale, are being undertaken by the USSR Academy of Science and, while no cost estimates have yet been received, receipts from sales are expected to cover the cost of printing.

11. The Advisory Committee understands that such part of the printing of the English edition as has been contracted for is being undertaken in the United States, on the grounds that the immediate presence of certain technical staff is necessary for correcting the proofs and that it would be much slower, with a consequent loss of sales revenue, to have the printing done in Europe unless arrangements were made at added cost for the ancillary work of proof correction to be undertaken there. The Committee is assured that, from an over-all point of view, it would be financially advantageous to have the English edition printed in the United States. It is expected that the French and Spanish editions will be printed in Europe, and that use will as far as possible be made of the work already done for the English edition on charts, graphs and illustrations.

12. While every effort should be made to reduce printing costs to the lowest level consistent both with quality and with the technical needs of proof correction, it is equally important to secure the largest possible revenue from the sale of the volumes. In view of the fact that these volumes, of a highly technical content, will appeal primarily to Governments, institutions, industrial concerns, research groups and scientists, the Committee is confident that the pricing of the volumes, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, is not inconsistent with the widest possible dissemination of the material contained in the records. The expeditious publication of the volumes is also necessary to ensure that the demand for the material included therein is not seriously affected by earlier publication by commercial publishers.

13. The estimate of \$460,000 under item (viii) of chapter V (A/C.5/638, annex A, page 8) for contractual and other translation services is based on an average of \$25 to \$30 per 1,000 words. This rate exceeds that which would have been incurred had the work been entrusted to translators of the United Nations establishment, reinforced as necessary by scientific consultants. It serves to lend weight to the observations offered in paragraph 7 above regarding the deferment of normal programmes. The Advisory Committee is also concerned to ensure that translations made under contract shall attain the standard of quality laid down for the translation of the Official Records. On this latter point, however, it is assured that arrangements have been made for the revision of translations by highly reputed institutions such as the Academy of Science in Madrid for translations into the Spanish language.

14. In connexion with the estimates for translation and printing of the records of the Conference, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$50,000, considering that it is important, whenever such a sizeable new project is undertaken, to review normal projects for the purpose of deferring some of the less important ones. It is suggested that this amount of \$50,000, to the extent that it is needed, should be met out of the normal 1956 appropriations for publications.

15. As regards the estimates under chapter IV (A/C.5/638, annex A, pages 4 and 5) in respect of the Department of Public Information, the Advisory Committee agrees that the Conference has afforded a major opportunity for education through mass

media on the peaceful application of atomic energy. It is therefore appropriate that the Department should concentrate a large part of its normal programme on information in this field. Thus, while the Committee generally concurs in the special projects listed under items (vi) and (vii) of chapter IV, though with some reservation as to the scope and cost of projects (a) and (b), it nevertheless considers that a part of the cost of these activities, to the extent of \$50,000, should be met out of the over-all allocation of funds for the Department under the initial budget estimates for 1956. As these projects have still to be undertaken, it should be possible so to adjust the priorities and work programmes of 1956 as to release sufficient resources for the above purposes.

16. Most of the other items in the estimates now submitted relate to expenditures already incurred, and on these the Committee's views were made known to the Secretary-General prior to the Conference. It was found that no economies were in fact possible in the estimates originally submitted by the Secretary-General to the Committee.

17. In the light of the foregoing observations, the Advisory Committee recommends that, to meet the expenditures connected with the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, the General Assembly should appropriate:

- (a) \$1,400,000 in a separate new section of the 1955 budget as approved by resolution 890 (IX) of 17 December 1954; and
- (b) \$961,000 in a separate new section of the 1956 budget.
