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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Organizational Nomenclature in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 32/204 of 21 December 1977, the General Assembly endorsed the general direction of reform in organizational nomenclature which had been proposed by the Secretary-General in his report 1/ to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, and encouraged the Secretary-General to proceed expeditiously with the application of the measures envisaged, taking into account the observations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions 2/ and the views expressed in the Fifth Committee. 3/ The General Assembly also decided to consider this question at its thirty-third session on the basis of a report which the Secretary-General had undertaken to submit to the General Assembly at that time.

2. As indicated in paragraph 19 of document A/C.5/32/17, the Secretary-General established an interdepartmental working group, under the leadership of the Administrative Management Service (AMS), with instructions to proceed with the task of converting existing organizational elements below the hierarchical level of department, secretariat or office (level 1) to the new nomenclature on an office-by-office basis as expeditiously as possible. The working group, as had been envisaged, first concentrated its attention on organizational elements at Headquarters. By July 1978, the working group had completed its review of all departments, offices and other major organizational elements at Headquarters except

1/ Document A/C.5/32/17.

2/ Document A/32/8/Add.5.

3/ Documents A/C.5/32/SR.34, A/C.5/32/SR.37 and A/C.5/32/SR.41.

those established as a result of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations 4/ and two other offices whose internal organization was under review in the first half of 1978. 5/ In the time available, the working group also completed the review of one major organizational element away from Headquarters - the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

3. Based on a report of the working group to the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management on the results of its work up to July 1978 and the recommendations thereon of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Secretary-General has approved, with certain exceptions (see paras. 12 to 16), the application of the new organizational nomenclature with effect from 1 January 1979 to the following:

- (a) Executive Office of the Secretary-General
- (b) Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Questions
- (c) Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs
- (d) Office of Legal Affairs
- (e) Department of Political and Security Council Affairs
- (f) Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization
- (g) Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- (h) Office of Personnel Services
- (i) Office of General Services
- (j) Internal Audit Division
- (k) Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Division
- (l) Department of Conference Services
- (m) Office of Public Information
- (n) United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations
- (o) Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia
- (p) Secretariat of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

4. The Secretary-General has also decided, on the basis of the definitions proposed in paragraph 17 of last year's report on nomenclature, that the Office of Public Information conforms to all the criteria contained in the definition of

4/ Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters.

5/ Offices of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs and the Office of Financial Services.

"department". He proposes, therefore, with effect from 1 January 1979, to restore to the Office the title Department of Public Information, by which it was originally known from the earliest years of the United Nations to 1958.

5. It will be recalled that in paragraph 17 of last year's report on nomenclature (A/C.5/32/17), six main hierarchical levels of organization were established as follows:

Level 1: Department, Secretariat or Office

Level 2: Centre

Level 3: Division

Level 4: Branch

Level 5: Section

Level 6: Unit

6. In addition to the use of the terms secretariat, office and centre to designate hierarchical levels 1 and 2 respectively, it was recognized that these terms would have to continue to be used on the basis of established practice (e.g. United Nations Information Centres) or to designate the immediate staff attached to senior officials of the Secretariat or bodies such as functional commissions, boards, committees, etc. ^{6/} The working group recommended, however, and the Secretary-General has agreed that the use of the term "office" in the generic sense should be limited to use only at hierarchical level 3 (division) and above.

7. In the light of the recommendations of the working group confirmed by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management in accordance with the group's terms of reference, the Secretary-General has also made a number of amendments to the definitions of the standard organizational nomenclature set out in paragraph 17 of A/C.5/32/17. With respect to hierarchical level 4, the Secretary-General has decided that the term "branch" shall be used to denote those organizational elements at this hierarchical level whose work is essentially substantive and the term "service" shall be utilized to designate organizational elements at the same level whose work is essentially of an administrative support or service nature.

8. In connexion with the term "unit" (hierarchical level 6), the working group recommended, and the Secretary-General has agreed, that the definition of the level of head of unit should be modified to reflect the existence of a considerable number of small organizational elements, the heads of which are at levels ranging from First Officer (P-4) to Assistant Secretary-General. Consistent with a basic premise of the Secretary-General's nomenclature proposals - namely, that the organizational designations should convey an indication of the size of an organizational element, the Secretary-General has decided to apply the term "unit" to such smaller elements

^{6/} See A/C.5/32/17, p. 6, foot-notes 11, 12 and 13.

and to redefine the level of head of unit in a flexible manner ranging up to the Assistant Secretary-General level. Accordingly, it has also been recognized that while the head of a unit normally reports to the chief of a section or the head of a branch or service, there are certain cases in which the head of a unit may report to the director of a division or to the head of a centre, department or office.

9. The Secretary-General has also approved, on the recommendations of the working group, the use of certain other special designations for organizational elements denoted by technical terms which are commonly known and widely used in particular fields. These special designations, which include terms such as "laboratory", "library", "news desk", "platoon" and "plant", have, with one exception, all been authorized only at hierarchical level 6.

10. In applying the new organizational nomenclature to the organizational elements listed in paragraph 3 above, the working group recommended the designation of one major element as a secretariat at hierarchical level 1, conforming in all respects to the standard criteria for that level set out in A/C.5/32/17 (para. 17). Similarly, it recommended that three other major elements be designated as centres, conforming in all respects to the standard criteria set out for hierarchical level 2. At the same time, the working group also recommended that eight other elements should be designated as secretariats, and 51 United Nations Information Centres should continue to be designated as centres under the special circumstances described in paragraph 6 above.

11. At hierarchical levels 3 to 6 inclusive the working group recommended the designation of 25 divisions (all of them conforming in all respects to the standard criteria set for hierarchical level 3), 32 services and 13 branches (hierarchical level 4), 96 sections (hierarchical level 5) and 115 units (hierarchical level 6).

12. Reference was made in paragraph 3 to the fact that the Secretary-General has approved, with certain exceptions, the recommendations of the working group as to the detailed application of the new organizational nomenclature to the organizational elements listed in that paragraph. Full details as to the designations to be applied to each element will be contained in the Secretary-General's Bulletin to be issued shortly and to take effect on 1 January 1979. With respect to a number of the working group's recommendations, however, affecting a number of elements presently designated as divisions which the working group proposes to redesignate as branches or services, the Secretary-General has decided to defer his decision until the review of organizational elements away from Headquarters has been completed.

13. The organizational elements on which a final decision is being deferred are as follows:

- (i) Division of General Assembly Affairs (Office of Political and General Assembly Affairs) - 7 Professionals, 4 General Service, headed by a D-2;
- (ii) Codification Division (Office of Legal Affairs) - 12 Professionals, 6 General Service, headed by a D-2;
- (iii) Outer Space Affairs Division (Department of Political and Security Council Affairs) - 10 Professionals, 6 General Service, headed by a D-1;

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- (iv) Political Affairs Division (Department of Political and Security Council Affairs) - 10 Professionals, 5 General Service, headed by a D-1;
- (v) Secretariat Services Division (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization) - 15 Professionals, 11 General Service, headed by a D-1;
- (vi) Africa Division (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization) - 7 Professionals, 1 General Service, headed by a D-1;
- (vii) Caribbean/Asia-Pacific Division (Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization) - 8 Professionals, 4 General Service, headed by a D-1;
- (viii) Division for Trade Among Countries Having Different Economic and Social Systems (UNCTAD) - 10 Professionals, 5 General Service, headed by a D-2;
- (ix) Transfer of Technology Division (UNCTAD) - 16 Professionals, 9 General Service, headed by a D-1;
- (x) Information Analysis Division (Centre on Transnational Corporations) - 13 Professionals, 11 General Service, headed by a D-2;
- (xi) Policy Analysis Division (Centre on Transnational Corporations) - 11 Professionals, 8 General Service, headed by a D-2.

14. The working group has pointed out that, according to the standard criteria for different hierarchical levels set out in A/C.5/32/17, the minimum requirements for divisional status include not less than 15 Professionals, headed normally by an officer at the D-2 level; whereas minimum requirements for a branch (or service) include not less than 8 Professionals, headed normally by an officer at the D-1 level. Since, on the basis of these criteria the aforementioned organizational elements do not conform to stated requirements for a division, the group has recommended that they be given the designation of a branch (or, in the case of (i) and (v)), the equivalent designation of a service.

15. Objections have been raised to these recommendations of the working group by the responsible heads of the departments or offices concerned. It has been pointed out that, in a number of instances, the designation of division has historical significance, going back to the earliest years of the Organization; that in the majority of cases the organizational elements affected form part of a "political" office or department and that criteria which may be appropriate for application to economic and administrative departments are not equally appropriate for political elements. Concern has also been expressed as to the possibly adverse effect which a change from division to branch or service might have on the perceived importance or prestige of the organizational element concerned.

16. The Secretary-General has taken account of the concerns thus expressed and has noted that the working group's report has thus far dealt only with most organizational elements at Headquarters (plus UNCTAD). Most of the major elements

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away from Headquarters (including UNIDO, UNEP, UNOG and the five regional commissions) still have to be studied. For this reason, the Secretary-General has decided that it would be desirable to defer a final decision on the working group's recommendations as they affect the organizational elements listed in paragraph 13 above, until the review of all major organizational elements had been completed. This will permit a clearer view of the impact of the working group's proposals and of the criteria set out in A/C.5/32/17 with respect to "division" on the structure of the Secretariat as a whole.

17. Although the process of applying the new organizational nomenclature has proved, as had been expected, to be difficult and time-consuming, the Secretary-General believes that the balance of the task will be completed in time for him to present a full and final report on the matter to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. During the next year, it will be necessary to complete the review for the organizational elements recently created at headquarters as a part of the restructuring process (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters), as well as for other headquarters offices (Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs and Office of Financial Services). Major organizational elements at Geneva (except for UNCTAD), Vienna and Nairobi, as well as the five regional commissions, remain to be examined. Once the review of all major organizational elements of the Secretariat has been completed, a new edition of the Organization Manual, ST/SGB/Organization, will be issued, reflecting the application of the new nomenclature to all parts of the United Nations Secretariat and including respective organization charts.
