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STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN
THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution
recommended by the First Committee (A/31/387, para. 8)

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. E. Brian NASON (Ireland)

1. At its 47th meeting, on 13 December 1976, the Fifth Committee, pursuant to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, considered a statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/31/65) on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee (A/31/387, para. 8).
2. Under the terms of that draft resolution, the General Assembly, having considered the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament, 1/ would endorse a set of agreed proposals, made by the Ad Hoc Committee as a step towards the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, with regard to the following subjects:
 - (a) Improved methods of work of the First Committee in disarmament matters;
 - (b) Relationship between the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies in the field of disarmament;
 - (c) Role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission;

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 36 (A/31/36).

(d) Role of the United Nations in providing assistance on request in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations;

(e) Relationship between the General Assembly and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament;

(f) Increased use of in-depth studies of the arms race, disarmament and related matters;

(g) Improvement of existing United Nations facilities for collection, compilation and dissemination of information on disarmament issues, in order to keep all Governments, as well as world public opinion, properly informed on progress achieved in the field of disarmament;

(h) Assistance by the Secretariat, on request, to States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in their duty to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements, including appropriate reviews;

(i) Strengthening of the resources of the United Nations Secretariat.

3. In paragraph 12 of his statement (A/C.5/31/65), the Secretary-General estimated the financial implications of the draft resolution at \$183,200, comprising \$55,000 for the cost of processing one issue of the Disarmament Yearbook and \$128,200 for eight additional posts as follows:

(a) United Nations Disarmament Yearbook:

1 P-5, 1 G-5, 1 G-4/1;

(b) Committee and Conference Services Section:

1 P-4, 1 P-2, 1 G-4/1;

(c) Transformation of the Disarmament Affairs Division into the United Nations Centre for Disarmament:

1 A S-G, 1 G-5.

4. As regards the United Nations disarmament periodical, the Secretary-General indicated that in document A/AC.181/4, alternative estimates of processing a disarmament periodical had been presented to the Ad Hoc Committee as well as a proposal of three new posts (1 P-4, 1 P-2/1 and 1 G-4/1). It was also indicated that the publication of a disarmament periodical would be considered by the General Assembly at a later date, as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee. Therefore no additional requirements would arise in this respect at the present time.

5. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, introducing the report of that Committee (A/31/8/Add.14, paras. 9 through 20), stated that the Advisory Committee, in examining the Secretary-General's request, had been mindful of the views expressed in the Ad Hoc Committee

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on the costs of the Committee's agreed proposals and also had taken into account the increase in manpower resources for the Disarmament Affairs Division approved by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.

6. The Advisory Committee recommended that the provision for processing the Yearbook, estimated at \$55,000 in the Secretary-General's statement, be reduced by \$10,000 to \$45,000, in the expectation that regular staff translators would be used to the maximum extent possible.

7. As regards the strengthening of the Committee and Conference Services Section, the Advisory Committee, recalling that the General Assembly at its thirtieth session had approved a strengthening of that section by four posts, stated that in its view the extra workload of the section, above the level foreseen at the thirtieth session of the Assembly, did not warrant the addition of three posts, and recommended that one new post (P-4) be approved in this regard.

8. Regarding the transformation of the Disarmament Affairs Division into the United Nations Centre for Disarmament, the Advisory Committee made several observations in its report (A/31/8/Add.14, paras. 14 to 17). In particular, should the General Assembly approve the recommendation that the Centre be headed by an Assistant Secretary-General, the United Nations would have two officials of that rank dealing with disarmament affairs, the other one being the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. It therefore recommended that the incumbent of the post of Assistant Secretary-General serve both as head of the Centre and as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

9. The Advisory Committee, with respect to the publication of a disarmament periodical, also recommended that the possibility of having two issues a year be studied instead of the three or four issues considered by the Secretary-General.

10. In summary, the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee would reduce the net additional appropriations under section 2 C for the biennium 1976-1977 from \$183,200 to \$145,000, comprising \$45,000 for the Yearbook and \$100,000 for six additional posts (1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 G-5 and 1 G-4). In addition to the above, requirements under section 2 A would be reduced by \$59,000 due to economies to be achieved in respect of salaries and common staff costs of the post of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and one General Service post.

11. Most of the delegations that intervened on this question indicated that they supported the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. In the view of a number of them, this strengthening should be accompanied by a concomitant increase in resources, as had been proposed by the Secretary-General in his statement. Other delegations, however, while supporting the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this field, were of the opinion that such strengthening could be achieved with the more modest resources

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proposed by the Advisory Committee in its report. As regards the additional post for an Assistant Secretary-General referred to by the Secretary-General in paragraph 11 of his statement, most delegations stated that, in their view, the establishment of this post - which was not opposed by the Advisory Committee - should be approved. Other delegations expressed the view that this post should be established by reclassifying to the Assistant Secretary-General level the D-2 post existing in the staffing table of the Disarmament Affairs Division.

12. Some delegations voiced support for the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, contained in the last sentence of paragraph 17 of its report, that the incumbent of the post of Assistant Secretary-General serve both as the Head of the Centre and as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. Other delegations, however, stated that in their view provision for the Secretary-General's Special Representative to that Conference should be maintained even if the post of Assistant Secretary-General for the Centre for Disarmament were established.

13. The delegation of Mexico formally proposed that the Committee recommend an additional post at the Assistant Secretary-General level, as indicated in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/31/65). The delegation of New Zealand formally proposed that the post of Assistant Secretary-General for the Centre for Disarmament be established by reclassifying to the Assistant Secretary-General level the D-2 post currently in the staffing table of the Disarmament Affairs Division.

DECISIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

14. The Committee decided, without objection, to approve the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/31/8/Add.14).

15. Following a request by Mexico that its proposal be given precedence over that of New Zealand, the Committee, by 51 votes to 7, with 29 abstentions, decided to accord priority to the proposal of Mexico.

16. It then, by 60 votes to 4, with 27 abstentions, adopted the proposal by Mexico that a new post of Assistant Secretary-General be established for the Head of the Centre for Disarmament.

17. Thereafter, the Committee, by 31 votes to 28, with 33 abstentions, rejected the proposal, contained in the last sentence of paragraph 17 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/31/8/Add.14), that the incumbent of the post of Assistant Secretary-General serve both as Head of the Centre and as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

18. Finally, the Fifth Committee decided, without objection, to inform the General Assembly that, should it approve the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee (A/31/387, para. 8), an additional appropriation of \$145,000 would be required under section 2 C of the programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977.