



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
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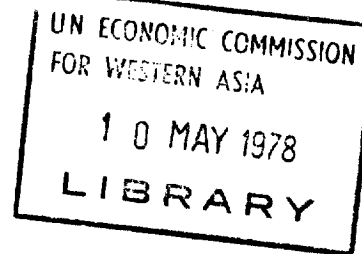
E/ECWA/60
22 March 1978

Original: ARABIC

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Fifth session
2-6 May 1978
Beirut, Lebanon

Item 6(c) of the provisional Agenda



The 1978 - 1979 Programme Budget

Note of the Executive Secretary

At its fourth session the Commission adopted resolution 41(IV) approving with some provisos the Draft Programme of Work and Priorities of the Commission for the period 1978-1979. In operative paragraph 3 of the resolution, the Commission "urges the United Nations secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies to increase their contributions to the development of the capabilities and organs of the Economic Commission for Western Asia and the implementation of its projects".

The proposed programme budget for the period 1978-1979 represented a resource growth of \$552,100 (at revised 1977-rates) related mainly to staffing proposals which included 10 professional posts, 4 local-level posts and one reclassification.

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) considering the proposed programme budget at its summer session in 1977 accepted the Secretary-General's proposals with respect to 5 professional posts, one local-level post and the reclassification. The Committee did not recommend for various reasons 5 professional and 3 local-level posts also proposed by the Secretary-General.

The ACABQ recommendations were studied in detail by the Secretariat which did not find sufficient justification for reducing the Secretary-General's

staffing proposals for the Commission. The Secretariat's position was communicated to the United Nations Controller at Headquarters with a view to obtaining a reconsideration of ECWA's proposed programme budget and reinstatement of the posts affected by the ACABQ decisions.

In order to clarify the Commission's position, the Executive Secretary made a statement at the 42nd meeting of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) of the 32nd General Assembly, held on 15 November 1977. In his statement, the Executive Secretary while recalling the many difficulties the Commission had experienced at its preliminary stage of development, stressed that the proposed programme budget for the period 1978-1979 represented the absolute minimum of the Commission's requirements. The hope was expressed by him that the General Assembly would adopt the same position and would ensure for ECWA the minimum requirements for growth in the service of the countries of the region.

Throughout the deliberations in the Fifth Committee, representatives of ECWA Member countries supported fully the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for ECWA. Following the debate at its 43rd meeting, the Fifth Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should approve the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and to approve one additional post, on the understanding that the Secretary-General would review the ECWA situation and, if necessary, request additional appropriations in 1978.

The General Assembly adopted in its Resolution 32/213 on 22 December 1977, the Programme Budget for the Biennium 1978-1979.

In total, the General Assembly approved for ECWA

- 6 additional professional posts,
- 1 local-level post and
- 1 reclassification.

The 7 posts not approved concerned:

- 1 professional post in the labour, management and employment programme
- 1 professional and)
- 1 local-level post in the development finance and administration programme)
- 1 professional post and)
- 1 local-level post in the science and technology programme)
- 1 professional post in the statistics programme
- 1 local-level post in the population programme.

In the light of the General Assembly's Resolution, the Secretariat envisages: to revise the 1978-1979 programme budget taking into account the various staff reductions and to submit a request for additional appropriations to the Controller for consideration at the June Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Moreover,, the secretariat expects to intensify its efforts to secure extra-budetary resources to finance those programme elements indicated in ECWA's programme budget for 1978-1979 (E/ECWA/44/Rev.1).