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GOVERNING COUNCIL

BUDGETARY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Twenty-ninth session
June 1982

DRAFT REPORT OF THE BUDGETARY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rapporteur: Mr. Finn Norman Christensen (Denmark)

CHAPTER IV

PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BUDGET, 1982-1983

B. Administrator's request for authority to reinstate posts

Summary of the discussion of the Committee

1. In relation to the Administrator's request for authority to reinstate, in the event of an increase of resources, 40 per cent of the posts being relinquished, the majority of members stated that they did not see the need to provide the Administrator with this authority. Many members stated that the issue of reinstatement was an academic one, as increased resources were unlikely to be forthcoming for 1983. Some members pointed out that if indications of increased resources were available following the Pledging Conference in November 1982, the Governing Council would still be able to take action on staffing requests at its session in June 1983. As any increases in programme delivery resulting from increased resources were not likely to occur until much later, this should not pose any operational problems to the Administrator. A number of members requested the Administrator to explain the basis for the 40 per cent figure.
2. Some members stated that they wished to see the proposed cuts effected and subsequently to evaluate the operational implications of these cuts in the field, before authorizing the Administrator to reinstate posts.

3. Several members indicated that they might be more inclined to accept a proposal to authorize flexibility if it could be expressed in more specific terms indicating the maximum number and the categories of posts which might be required. Other members favoured a more general authority to propose additional requirements should the Administrator deem this necessary. One member stated that the Council should provide the Administrator with a financial framework within which he would be authorized to make his deployment of resources, taking into account the relative priorities established by the Council.

4. Most members expressed the view that, even if the Administrator's request were approved, reinstatement should be restricted to posts in the field, and preferably to local staff. They did not see the need for the authority to be extended to posts at headquarters.

Response of the Administration

5. In response to the many reservations expressed by members on granting the Administrator authority to reinstate posts, the Assistant Administrator drew attention to paragraph 1 of decision 81/26 which prohibits the Administrator from putting forward proposals for additional resources once the biennial budget estimates have been approved by the Council. He pointed out that, unlike the United Nations Regular Budget, where the level of activity is decided by the budget, the level of UNDP administrative activity is determined by the level of voluntary contributions, which may fluctuate considerably. These fluctuations affect the workload of the field offices and also, to some extent, that of headquarters. The Assistant Administrator also stressed that UNDP staff have been very understanding about the need to reduce staff under the present financial constraints. The Administrator had considered reasonable their request for assurances for a rapid reinstatement of posts, should the resources picture and related workload change significantly.

6. With regard to the level of post reinstatement requested, i.e. 40 per cent, the Assistant Administrator stated that this was a rough estimate related to increases in resources that would permit programming above the present level of 60 per cent of IPFs. In response to those members who had expressed a desire to establish specific limits for the reinstatement of posts in 1983, he stated that 5 professional posts and 25 local posts in the field, which represented approximately 1 per cent of the revised staffing structure, might be sufficient.

7. On the question of limiting the reinstatement of posts to the field, the Assistant Administrator stated that, although he agreed that the workload in the field would be more directly and quickly affected by increased resources, such increases would also affect the workload of units at headquarters. As examples, he mentioned the increased workload related to programming in the Regional Bureaux and additional receipts, placements of funds in treasury.

8. The majority of members agreed that the Administrator should be provided with the necessary flexibility to carry out responsible management of the programme. The Governing Council, however, should remain the sole authority for approving increases in the biennial budget. Members therefore agreed that the Administrator should be authorized to request additional resources in 1983 should resources permit programming for 1983 of the illustrative IPFs at the 80 per cent level or above and that the Administrator should review the question of the operational implications for UNDP of paragraph 1 of Governing Council decision 81/26 and report thereon to the Council at its next session.

Recommendation of the Committee

9. The Committee recommends that:

The Governing Council,

Expressing its appreciation to the Administrator for the responsive action to reduce staff in light of current resources,

Noting that it is unlikely that any posts will need to be reinstated for the 1982-1983 biennium, but considering that there may be the need to provide the Administrator with the flexibility to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to him by the Governing Council,

(a) Authorize the Administrator to propose, if necessary, additional field posts in 1983 for consideration by the Council should resources permit programming for 1983 of the illustrative IPFs at the 80 per cent level or above;

(b) Request the Administrator to review the operational implications for UNDP of paragraph 1 of Governing Council decision 81/26 and to report thereon to the Governing Council at its next session.

