

REPORT ON  
METHODS OF DETERMINING STAFF REQUIREMENTS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Staff costs represent some 66 percent of the regular assessed budgets of the organizations of the United Nations system. If one includes expenditures for such items as office space, utilities, office supplies, furniture and equipment which are roughly proportional to the number of staff, the percentage rises to approximately 70 percent. Seventy percent of the 1980 regular budgets represents more than \$900,000,000.
2. Despite the absolute and proportionate size of staff costs, the methods by which organizations determine the number of staff they require and their distribution among the various units of the secretariats are not always sufficiently precise or commensurate with the problem. Executive heads and their senior assistants do not always have all the information required to make informed decisions on their subordinates' staffing proposals. In most organizations there is a marked tendency to continue posts from one budget to the next with little critical examination. For example, in the 1980-1981 budget of the United Nations only 4 of the 10,695 posts existing in the 1978-1979 budget were abolished and a small number redeployed, i.e. transferred among units.
3. In addition, the information on staffing proposals presented to those legislative bodies which specifically approve these proposals is sometimes insufficient to permit them to judge whether the number of posts proposed is reasonable.
4. In the Inspector's view, the process for determining staff requirements under regular budgets needs to be strengthened both within secretariats and at the review of budgets by legislative bodies. This report examines briefly 1/: (a) the methods used within organizations to formulate staffing proposals; and (b) the extent of the information which is made available to executive heads and legislative bodies in order to enable them to judge the validity of these proposals. Recommendations are made, aimed at providing for executive heads and legislative bodies the necessary means for assessing staff requirements, and for determining the value of programme elements in the light of their estimated cost.
5. This report is based on the replies by the various organizations to a special questionnaire, supplemented by oral discussions with a number of organizations. The Inspector expresses his thanks to all concerned.

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1/ A detailed report on the budgets of the organizations of the United Nations system will be prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit in 1981.

## II. PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS ON STAFFING

6. The process by which secretariats prepare proposals on staffing for inclusion in their budget varies considerably between organizations. There are some common though negative features. Little use is made of work measurement or similar techniques for relating workloads to the number of staff required. Staffing reviews concentrate on proposals for new posts, while existing posts - the great majority - are usually routinely proposed for inclusion in the next budget. However, there have been some encouraging and at least partially successful efforts to remedy these shortcomings.

### A. Methods for Preparing Proposals on Staffing

7. Each unit of a secretariat has an interest in maintaining and strengthening its staff resources. This does not imply that heads of units are not cost conscious or that they propose unnecessary staff. But each unit believes that its programme is important and that it should be carried out effectively with an adequate number of staff. Unit heads cannot always be expected, in making proposals for staff, to take account of the relative priority of their programme or the overall budgetary situation of their organization. Therefore, during the budget process executive heads usually issue policy directives and ceilings to guide units in making their proposals. These proposals are reviewed in detail, usually by a central programming and budgetary service, and are considered and finalized by the executive head.

8. Individual units in all secretariats are required to justify their requests for staff. This justification takes different forms in each organization. The methods used in the larger organizations are described below.

9. United Nations. Each biennium, heads of departments prepare justifications for their staffing proposals, relating mainly to the redeployment of existing posts and to new posts. For new posts, job descriptions are required. More elaborate information is required for posts in the economic and social sectors than elsewhere. In the economic and social sectors, proposals for all posts are broken down into work months for each programme element, which clearly relates the posts proposed to the work to be done. In other parts of the secretariat, the relationship between proposed posts and work is less clear, though for some units such as translation, typing pools, editing and printing, past and estimated workload statistics are given per unit. But even in these instances there is a lack of accepted norms relating workload to staff requirements. UNDP is carrying out a special staffing review with the help of consultants, in order more closely to relate workload to staffing requirements in its staffing proposals.

10. ILO. Procedures include the use of various management techniques, such as work measurement, and "self recording" in which officials record the time they spend on various activities. One particularly interesting technique called "analytical estimating" <sup>1/</sup> is used in some cases: a job is broken down into its major component parts, and the time taken to complete each of these is estimated on the basis of practical experience, after which this serves as a norm. Selected production records are collected and maintained, using the computer. **E**mphasis is placed on measuring productivity per unit rather than per official, because of fluctuations in the daily mix of tasks performed. One important problem in the size of all these methods is the lack of comparable data from other organizations. ILO internal procedures call for the preparation by the responsible unit of estimates of the work months required for each programme element.

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<sup>1/</sup> As defined by the British Standards Institution.

11. FAO. The Director-General's instructions to department heads stress the need to seek reductions in staff and to provide detailed justifications for new proposals. While the FAO budget is presented by programme and sub-programme the estimates are also presented for information by object of expenditure, organizational unit and source of funds. For the internal review process, posts or work months are not sub-divided among programmes or sub-programmes, but estimated work months for each sub-programme are shown in the budget document. FAO has often used work measurement techniques for various purposes, including determining staff requirements. Time reporting has also been used as one of the bases for distributing work months among sub-programmes.

12. UNESCO did not report any specific methods by which units justify their requests for new posts or the continuation of existing posts, though justifications for both are prepared. Both the establishment of new posts and the continuation of existing posts are examined by the Director-General from the view-point of programme priorities and the policy of decentralization. UNESCO is the only organization which has had (in the past) a fairly comprehensive work measurement system for, among other things, assessing staff requirements in 18 units with repetitive work products. Since then, work measurement techniques have evolved, but the UNESCO system or some updated variation of it would meet requirements. By way of illustration an item on Work Measurement Reports from the UNESCO Manual of 1966 is attached as Annex I. This system was subsequently abandoned because at the time a computer was not available and the clerical work for maintaining it was considerable.

13. WHO's approach is different from that of other organizations since, because of its decentralized structure, staffing proposals for projects at the country and inter-country levels are not included in its programme budget but are developed later closer to the actual date of implementation. Divisions or offices are required to justify the setting up of posts in terms of workload and programme activity.

14. In IAEA, work measurement and workload statistics are used on an ad hoc basis to determine staff requirements in the General Service category, for Safeguards Inspectors and occasionally for lower level professional posts. Estimates of work years are made for each programme, sub-programme and programme component (equivalent of programme element in the United Nations). It is the policy of the IAEA to see whether work requirements may be met by available manpower before any new posts are requested.

15. Organizations with relatively small staff do not as a rule have specific procedures for determining staffing requirements. ICAO uses norms established by work measurement techniques for some posts, with output rates per work hour. It also uses workload indicators (e.g., number of contracting states served, mission programmes, publications to be originated and regularly updated, etc.) when recommending strengthening or reducing staff.

16. The Inspector recommends that the organizations while maintaining the features of their systems which have proved to be satisfactory include or reinforce the following principles and techniques in their processes for internal justification of staffing requirements:

- (a) The same justification process and techniques should be required for existing and proposed new posts.

- (b) For posts in units with repetitive work products (e.g., administrative, language and conference services, libraries and documentation centres, administrative units in substantive departments, etc.), estimated as comprising on the average 25 percent of the total posts of the organizations, a work measurement or similar system should be used. See for example the outline of a system developed by UNESCO and described in Annex I. If such a system suitably updated is introduced it is important that the results obtained be compared between organizations to help identify successful or unsuccessful management techniques and to establish realistic norms against which to determine staffing requirements.
- (c) For posts in units which do not have repetitive work products (most parts of substantive departments and some parts of administrative services) a technique such as "analytical estimating" (where an estimate is made of the work-months required to carry out a programme element or its equivalent, and a determination made of the time needed to complete each of its component parts) should be utilized. This involves estimating, on the basis of experience, the staff time required for specific activities, such as the organization and servicing of a conference of a given category, the preparation of a publication, substantive backstopping of technical co-operation activities, etc. These estimates would then be expressed as rough norms and used as a guide in determining the staff required. One output of this system would be a more accurate calculation of the work months required to carry out each programme element. Here again, it is important that any system used should provide for the comparison between organizations of the established norms for the reasons described in (b) above.

\* 17. One way of proceeding along the lines of (b) and (c) above, would in the Inspector's opinion be through CCAQ. If necessary, a task force composed preferably of the chiefs of the organizations' management services or persons of similar competence could be set up under CCAQ to determine the feasibility and, if appropriate, the main lines of the systems and consider any special requirements of individual organizations. Then one organization could be designated to develop the systems which could be used, flexibly and with any required adaptations, by each organization. The Inspector believes that the central management or similar services should play a role in adapting systems and procedures to the requirements of their organization (see in this connection the report on Internal Management Services of Organizations of the United Nations System to be issued by the JIU in 1981).

#### B. Review of Staffing Proposals within Secretariats

18. In all organizations proposals for staffing are finalized by the executive head and in most these proposals are then submitted to legislative bodies for approval (see Chapter III). To assist executive heads in making their deci-



sions, organizations have created a variety of review mechanisms in which all units of secretariats concerned participate. The process is co-ordinated, and proposals are made to the executive head, by a central programming and/or budget service. In some organizations the central management service participates. At present the estimated percentage of resources of central management services devoted to proposed staffing requirements ranges from 5 to 35 percent, with only the United Nations in New York (30 percent) and ICAO (35 percent) exceeding 15 percent.

19. The Inspector considers that the review mechanisms as such are by and large adequate, though in many organizations greater participation by central management services in the review of staffing proposals would be beneficial. The main problem is the inadequacy of the data which the review mechanism uses. Only sporadic use is made of work measurement or similar techniques for staffing determinations in units with repetitive outputs, and only ILO and ICAO appear to have used - occasionally - a technique for establishing norms for non-repetitive work. The review mechanisms would benefit greatly from the adoption of the proposals in para. 16 above, and if central management services participated more actively in the review of staffing proposals.

### III. DECISIONS ON STAFFING PROPOSALS

#### A. Authority of Executive Heads and Legislative Bodies

20. In most organizations, the legislative body approves the number and at times the grade of posts: in some others, the executive head. The practice in each organization is briefly as follows. As will be seen, there are wide variations:

- (a) United Nations. The number and grade of posts are examined and approved by the General Assembly on the basis of proposals by the Secretary-General, recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and any recommendations by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Once approved, no changes may be made during the budgetary period in the total number of posts at each grade. Redeployment of posts within a budget section during a budgetary period is permissible under specific procedures and is reported to the General Assembly in the context of performance reports.
- (b) ILO. The programme and budget proposals and a separate document on the "Composition and Structure of the Staff" are considered by the Governing Body, and the former is then referred to the International Labour Conference. The final programme and budget includes a schedule of established posts showing the number of posts by major programme and by grade for staff on contracts without limits of time (WLT) only. The Director-General may approve changes in the grade of posts up to and including P5 without the approval of the Governing Body, but may not increase the total number of posts without the approval of the Governing Body and the Conference. However, no such restrictions apply to the grading or number of fixed-term or temporary positions, which are limited only by availability of funds. When additional resources or transfers are required at the level of major programmes, the amounts concerned are included in a document on budgetary performance and transfers which is submitted to the Governing Body at the end of the biennium in question.
- (c) FAO. In accordance with the FAO Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Director-General to submit his proposed Programme of Work and Budget to the Conference, and of the Conference to examine and vote upon it (by a two-thirds majority). The Director-General has full power and authority to direct the work of the Organization and to appoint staff. He submits proposals to the Finance Committee and/or to the Council on the general structure of the administration and technical services of the Organization. The Council reviews the action by the Director-General in regard to new posts for which prior authority does not exist. The Director-General is required to present budget estimates on a programme-budget basis, divided into chapters and programme objectives; he also, as appropriate, provides additional information as required or requested by the Conference or Council. In practice, the Director-General submits details of proposed changes in number, grading and classification of posts proposed. He also, as appropriate, reports to, or seeks authority from, the Programme Committee, Finance Committee or Council concerning staffing changes involving additional financial obligations by Member Governments.

- (d) UNESCO. Final approval of the number of posts is given by the General Conference when it adopts the Appropriation Resolution, which specifies the maximum number of posts but makes no reference to their grades. Information on the grades of posts and their distribution is contained in the appendix to the draft programme and budget. The total number of posts approved in the Appropriation Resolution includes those in the approved Programme and Budget plus 4 percent to provide a margin for meeting programme requirements. Within this margin the Director-General may create new posts. The Director-General may also change the grades of posts.
- (e) WHO. Much of the detailed project budgeting, particularly at the country and inter-country levels, takes place after the initial programme budget has been prepared. Therefore, information on posts in respect of projects cannot be shown in the budget and WHO does not have a staffing table specifically approved by any legislative body. The Director-General can create new posts or reclassify posts after the beginning of a budgetary period, provided that the cost can be accommodated within the approved budget.
- (f) ICAO. Proposals on staffing in the Draft Budget Estimates are considered by the ICAO Council and then incorporated in the Council's Budget Estimates to the ICAO triennial Assembly. The Secretary-General may modify the grading of some posts; changes at or above the director level require the Council's approval.
- (g) UPU. The number of posts is fixed by the Executive Board on the proposal of the Director-General and within budgetary limits established by the Congress. Creation of new posts is very rare; it requires special approval by the Executive Board. The grade of posts up to D-1 is decided by the Director-General, and above that by the Executive Board.
- (h) ITU. The Secretary-General has authority to create, abolish or regrade posts in the General Service category only, within credits available for the purpose. The Administrative Council has exclusive jurisdiction over the creation, abolition and regrading of other posts. The Council itself conducts studies on reclassification and retains authority.
- (i) WMO. The Secretary-General's staffing proposals are submitted to the Congress for each four-year financial period, and proposals for the annual budget are submitted to the Executive Committee. The Congress sets a ceiling for the maximum number of established posts and the maximum number of staff at D-1 and above. The Secretary-General has flexibility in allocating and shifting posts according to programme requirements.

- (j) IMCO: The Secretary-General's proposals on the structure and staffing of the Secretariat, with detailed explanations and justifications for the creation of new posts, if any, or the abolition of posts as appropriate, are submitted to the Council for consideration in the draft biennial Work Programme and Budget. After consideration by the Council, the proposals, with any modifications or recommendations agreed by the Council, are submitted to the Assembly for approval. After the budget is approved, any proposals for changes in the number of posts have to be considered by the Council. The Council is empowered to authorize additional posts in the course of the two-year budgetary period but this is done only rarely. Within a global allocation, the Secretary-General has authority to effect reclassification of posts up to P.5. Reclassification of posts to D.1 and above requires the approval of the Council or Assembly.
- (k) IAEA. Staffing proposals made in the draft budget are discussed first by the Administrative and Budgetary Committee. Its recommendations are taken into account by the Board of Governors in the final document, which is submitted by the Board to the General Conference. Within the total number of established posts and grades approved by the General Conference, the Director-General may make re-allocations to meet programme requirements or changes in priorities. Such redeployment of posts is reported to the policy-making organs in the next budget document.

21. These practices have evolved in each organization according to its requirements as determined by its legislative body. The Inspector does not believe that there would be any advantage in a uniform approach, though some organizations when reconsidering their practices might wish to know what others are doing. The main problems that the Inspector has identified concern the information made available to legislative bodies on staffing proposals, particularly in those organizations in which legislative bodies approve staffing tables. These problems are described in the following paragraphs.

B. Information Provided to Legislative Bodies on Staffing

22. Legislative bodies that decide on the number of posts to be authorized need appropriate information in the draft budget. The nature and quality of the information that is actually provided varies considerably between organizations. Those that provide, in the view of the Inspector, the most complete information indicate in respect of each programme element or equivalent (the smallest building block of the programme) the estimated number of work months required to carry it out. This clearly relates the number of proposed staff to the proposed programme of work, thus enabling legislative bodies to judge whether the number of people proposed is reasonable.

23. When examining programmes and budgets legislative bodies attempt, among other things, to determine whether the cost of an activity is commensurate with its value. In most organizations, the budget presentation at present permits such a determination only at the level of programmes and sub-programmes. This

allows only a judgement of the validity of broad objectives and of the global resources necessary to attain them. Any examination of the building blocks which make up each programme - the programme elements - on the basis of cost is precluded. Yet it is at the level of the programme element that obsolete, marginal or low priority items can best be identified (as called for in General Assembly resolution 34/225) and such an identification has to be based largely on cost - of which staff costs are usually the most significant part.

24. All organizations present, in their draft budget, tables which recapitulate their staffing proposals at the level of the whole organization and of major organizational units. The following paragraphs summarize the methods of organizations for relating staffing proposals with specific parts of the programme. These paragraphs concern only the substantive parts of the budget - for the administrative parts see para. 25 below.

(a) United Nations. When examining the Secretary-General's staffing proposals and formulating recommendations for the Fifth Committee, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has before it information showing the estimated number of work months required to carry out each programme element. But this information is not included in the Draft Programme and Budget and thus is not available to the General Assembly. In fact, the budget provides no cost figures at all for programme elements, although such figures are available in the Secretariat and are the basis for making cost and staff proposals at the sub-programme and programme levels. Thus, when reviewing the budget, the Fifth Committee of the Assembly and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination do not have the information which would permit them to make two important judgements:

- (i) One concerns the number of staff required to carry out the programme. Such a judgement is difficult to make at the level of a programme or sub-programme (for which staffing proposals are shown in the budget) without examining the component parts which are the programme elements (for which no staffing proposals are shown in the budget).
- (ii) The second concerns the relative value or priority of programme elements, as part of the effort to eliminate marginal activities. This judgement cannot be made because the cost of programme elements - even in work months - is not shown in the budget. For example, a programme element costing \$5,000 may be considered to be useful, but if its cost is \$50,000 it may be considered only marginally so.

(b) ILO. The situation regarding work months estimates is somewhat similar to that in the United Nations. The secretariat estimates the work months required for each programme element, but these are shown in the budget only for the subprogrammes. The accompanying budget text gives details of activities for particularly large or important programme elements.

(c) FAO shows estimated work years and their cost at the sub-programme level in its Programme of Work and budget.

(d) UNESCO. The Draft Programme and Budget for 1981-1983 shows staff costs but not work months at the Objective level, whereas in previous budgets staff costs were shown at a lower level (Theme). A staff summary is presented at the end of each programme chapter. However, UNESCO alone among the organizations shows for each "proposed action" (equivalent of "programme element" at the United Nations) its estimated cost but excluding staff costs. This is somewhat misleading, since the estimated cost which includes such expenses as contracts, consultants, travel and printing, omits an estimate of staff costs which are often as great or greater than the others. This gives the impression that the "proposed actions" cost much less than they really do. The legislative bodies cannot make an informed judgement of the value of these "actions" because they know only part of their cost.

(e) WHO indicates estimated work months and years (but not for project staff) in its Proposed Programme and Budget at the sub-programme level, which appears to be equivalent to the programme element level at the United Nations.

(f) ICAO. Staff costs and staffing tables are shown in the budget at the sub-programme level, expressed in posts not work months.

(g) UPU has an object-of-expenditure budget and since all staff (except for a small number working on technical co-operation) are assigned to a single programme there is no indication of work months in the budget.

(h) ITU. The budget is prepared according to objects of expenditure and not programmes. There is a separate Chapter on staff costs.

(i) WMO. Staffing tables are shown by organizational unit for each programme.

(j) IMCO has an object-of-expenditure budget which does not show estimated work months.

(k) IAEA. The Budget contains staffing tables which show posts at the Divisional level. In addition, staff costs and where appropriate work months are shown for each programme, sub-programme and programme component. In the opinion of the Inspector, IAEA's presentation of staff costs in its budget is clear and complete.

25. For the administrative parts of the budget, where work is often of a repetitive character or where outputs of units can often be described in fairly standard work products (page translated, person recruited, claim processed, document registered, etc.) some organizations provide workload statistics to justify their requests for staff. But these statistics are not particularly meaningful since they are not accompanied by accepted productivity norms. Thus, although translation in a particular language may be shown as increasing by 10,000 pages, it is not demonstrated how many additional translators this will require.

26. In general, each organization during its budget process generates much more information to justify its staff requirements than it presents in the budget. For example, ILO has estimates of work months required at the programme element level but presents in its budget tables work months only at the sub-programme level with some explanations of the more important programme elements in the budget text. The United Nations also has estimates of work months at the programme element level but does not show work months at all in its budget. Only IAEA shows estimated work months in its budget at the programme element level.

27. All organizations include in their budgets a variety of staffing tables showing, among other things, the number of staff proposed for each main part of the secretariat compared with the number approved in the previous budget. Other tables show staffing requirements at the level of smaller organizational units. Several organizations show staff costs at the equivalent of the sub-programme level. Such tables provide useful information but they do not permit a judgement to be made of the reasonableness of the proposals because, except in IAEA, no clear correlation is made between the staff proposed and the precise work they will do.

28. It is important to consider what information on staff requirements in budgets would be useful to legislative bodies in their review of staffing proposals. This information should not be so voluminous as to obscure the issues nor should it be so summary as to defy analysis. Two main types of information are lacking in almost all budgets at present:

- (a) An indication of the cost of each programme element.
- (b) An indication in work months of the staff estimated to be necessary to carry out each programme element or equivalent, and in the administrative units of the secretariat workload figures and norms.

Such information would enable judgements to be made on the relative priority of programme elements in the light of their cost and, when costs were shown to be high, could point to the need for less expensive methods for obtaining similar results.

29. The Inspector recommends that organizations that have programme budgets should present in their budgets information on costs at the programme element or equivalent level. Staff costs could be presented in the form of estimated work months, or fractions of years, required to carry out the programme element. For the administrative and service parts of the budget workload figures and norms as well as the cost of producing the main outputs should be given. This information need not be voluminous - for example, in the budget of the United Nations it could be inserted without increasing the length of the document. If their legislative bodies feel that they would not require information on the cost of small programme elements, organizations could provide it only for those that are estimated to cost more than \$100,000.

30. Such information would be of use mainly to those committees of legislative bodies that make detailed examinations of the budget estimates. It should also be useful to executive heads and their senior assistants in drawing up their proposals for staffing and for making any changes, in accordance with legislative authorization, during a budgetary period.

#### IV. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

31. By far the most important feature of the budgetary process from the points of view of cost and administrative efficiency is the determination of the number of staff required to carry out the programme, and the distribution of the staff among units of the secretariats. Staff costs average about 70 percent of the total regular budgets of the organizations and in 1980 will represent some \$900,000,000.

32. The preparation of proposals on staffing by individual units of secretariats, the review of these proposals by executive heads, and the approval of proposals by legislative bodies suffer from four shortcomings:

- (a) units of secretariats that propose staffing do not have available to them sufficiently precise techniques - work measurement, analytical estimating, or work norms - for accurately assessing their requirements in relation to the work to be accomplished;
- (b) central management services in secretariats could play a greater role in devising and applying techniques and procedures for assessing staffing requirements;
- (c) reviews of staffing requirements concentrate on proposals for increases and do not give sufficient attention to demonstrating the continuing need for existing staff or to identifying obsolete or marginal activities;
- (d) legislative bodies which are called upon to decide on staffing proposals do not always have the information needed to permit them to make an informed judgement.

33. To remedy these shortcomings, the Inspector proposes the following measures:

Recommendation 1. Techniques for determining staffing requirements within secretariats should be strengthened by devising work measurement or similar systems for repetitive work and by applying "analytical estimating" or similar techniques for non-repetitive work. The systems should apply not only to new posts but also to existing posts which would be treated in the same manner. The result of the systems should be the adoption of productivity norms which would guide the preparation of staffing proposals. These norms should be verified periodically by inter-agency comparison, perhaps in the framework of CCAQ (paras. 7 to 17).

Recommendation 2: Organizations that have central management services should ensure that they participate in the process of determining staffing requirements by helping to introduce the systems proposed in Recommendation 1 and assisting in their implementation (para. 19).

Recommendation 3: Secretariats should provide committees of legislative bodies with information in their draft budgets which would permit them to better assess staffing proposals. This should include, for organizations with programme budgets, an indication of the estimated cost of each programme element and/or the estimated work months that will be required to carry it out and, for all organizations, workload estimates and norms for administrative and service activities. (paras. 22 to 30)



Recommendation 4: Legislative bodies should also use the additional information provided for determining whether the cost of programme elements is commensurate with their value, especially in competition with other claims on resources, and whether there are less costly methods to achieve objectives. (para. 28)

34. The information proposed for inclusion in draft budgets in Recommendation 3 would not be voluminous. It could be inserted in budgets without increasing their overall length by adding after programme elements their estimated cost and work months required. Organizations could if their legislative bodies deem it more appropriate include in a first phase such information only for the larger programme elements, e.g., those estimated to cost over \$100,000 (para. 29).



Extract from 1966 Item of UNESCO Manual (now withdrawn)  
on Work Measurement Reports

A. Work Measurement is a management technique aimed at determining the relationship between the volume of work performed and the staff time expended. It provides the basis for comparing quantitative performance in the same activity in the same unit over a long period of time and in similar activity in different organizations. It also provides an important element in assessing productivity and staff requirements. However, work measurement is applicable only to Units whose main work products can be expressed in terms of recurring actions of a similar nature (e.g. pages translated, staff recruited, pages indexed, etc.).

B. The General Conference at its 11th session (11C/Resolution 29) requested the Director-General to make workload studies, and the Executive Board at its 60th session (60 EX/Decision 15.7) endorsed the basis for establishing the work measurement reports described in the paragraphs which follow.

C. Responsibility. Guidance on technical aspects and the final preparation of work measurement reports are the responsibility of the Management Division of the Bureau of the Budget (BB). These reports cover each calendar year and are prepared on the basis of annual data supplied by selected Units in the form specified in para. F below.

D. The Organizational Units for which work measurement reports are to be made are proposed by BB in consultation with the department director and approved by the Assistant Director-General for Administration (ADG/ADM).

E. Work products. One or more work products are selected by BB in agreement with the department for each Organizational Unit for which a work measurement report is to be prepared. Work products should be representative of the output of the Unit and should be produced in reasonably large quantities by an identifiable group of staff members. Examples of work products are: a standard page translated; a personnel action; a request for information answered; a purchase order despatched; a document classified; etc.

F. Data supplied by Units. Each unit for which a work measurement report is required forwards, through its department director, to BB by 31 January of each year data covering the activities of the preceding calendar year under the following headings for each work product:

1. a list, showing the post number, grade and name of incumbent, of established posts engaged in producing or supervising the production of the agreed work products. When the work product represents only part of a staff member's time, the estimated percentage of time devoted to that activity is specified. The supervisory posts are indicated by an asterisk;
2. a list of the number of working days lost, by category of staff (General Service and Professional), because of:
  - a. annual leave;
  - b. sick leave;
  - c. maternity leave;
  - d. other leave;

3. a list of the number of working days for which posts listed in para.1 above were vacant, broken down by category of posts (General Service and Professional);
4. a list of the number of working days of temporary assistance, broken down by category (General Service and Professional);

The data may be accompanied, at the discretion of the chief of the unit, by explanatory statements of any unusual workload problems encountered during the year or other remarks.

G. Preparation of reports. Using the data described in para.F above BB prepares a report for each unit in the form of a work measurement table.

H. Distribution of reports. Copies of the reports are sent to the ADG/ADM and for each unit to the director of the department in which the unit is located and to the chief of the unit.