



COUNCIL  
102nd session  
Agenda item 8

C 102/8/1  
19 June 2009  
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**RESULTS-BASED BUDGET  
FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH FINANCIAL PERIOD 2010-2011**

**Proposals to limit workload**

**Submitted by the Bahamas**

**SUMMARY**

<i>Executive summary:</i>	To help the Secretary-General reduce the size of the budget, suggestions are made to reduce the costs of the Organization by capping the number of meeting-weeks in each year and changing the reporting procedure at the end of each meeting
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	4.1
<i>High-level action:</i>	4.1.3
<i>Planned output:</i>	4.1.3.1
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 8
<i>Related document:</i>	C 102/8

**Introduction**

1 In document C 102/8, the Secretary-General sets out his budget proposals for the next biennium. This document comments on that document and is submitted in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Council (Circular letter No.2601). The critical issue for Member States is the proposed increase of 22% in the assessment. This is a very large increase at any time but, at a time of financial crisis, it is not an acceptable figure.

**Discussion**

2 Economies can certainly be achieved within the Secretariat, but the principal reason for expenditure by the Secretariat is to carry out work required by the Member States. It follows, therefore, that if the budget is to be reduced substantially the work to be carried out must be reduced. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

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- .1 the number of work programme items could be cut but it is difficult to envisage how this may be achieved. At the recent meeting of MSC 86 over 20 new items were added to the work programme, virtually all being designated as high priority according to the current criteria. This represents an increase of about 20% in the total work programme of the Organization. All of these items were submitted by Member States and were considered important by those States;
- .2 a limit could be introduced to the amount of work which can be conducted in a year, thus forcing States to decide on the real priorities within the work programme. Less important items can be allowed to wait on the work programme until there is sufficient time within the agenda of the body designated to deal with them. In the present system this poses a problem because it is very easy to achieve the criteria to be assigned high priority status and the chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees are reluctant to postpone any item with this designation;
- .3 a further reduction in the number of sub-committees could be carried out either reallocating items to different bodies or amalgamating sub-committees;
- .4 a limit could be placed on the number of intersessional meetings which can be held each year and stricter criteria introduced to decide whether such meetings should be held. There has been a large increase in the number of intersessional meeting being held, sometimes having more than one in the same week; and
- .5 the methods of work in the Committees and sub-committees could be changed to enable more work to be carried out within the time allocated for a meeting.

### **Recommendations**

3 Of the above choices, the Bahamas would propose two which should be considered by the Council in the first instance, namely:

- .1 there should be a limit placed on the work carried out in a year by capping the number of meeting-weeks; and
- .2 secondly, the methods of work should be modified to change the final reporting process at each meeting.

4 By placing a cap on the number of meeting-weeks in a year, and this would include all meetings both regular and intersessional, if any fresh meeting was proposed it would have to be decided which meeting could be dropped if the new session were to go ahead. Any meeting changes would have to be fully justified and would require Council approval. This would begin to impose a stricter order of priority on Members and the Organization. The Bahamas proposes a limit of 50 weeks in the next biennium. It is noted that a total of 41.4 meeting-weeks is proposed in annex 6 of the budget but this includes no time for any intersessional meetings, although it is known that a number will be held and have been provisionally allocated meeting-weeks. It is said that intersessional meetings are not included in the budget because they do not produce a cost to the Organization, however, there is no evidence submitted to support this assumption.

5 The Bahamas believes that the full cost of all meetings should be calculated and included in the budget. These costs should cover: staff time, at the meeting, preparing documents for the meeting, briefing, post meeting, etc.; translation; interpretation; paper reproduction; overheads, lighting, heating, etc. Staff costs should include the manning of working, drafting, expert, informal and other groups within the meeting. If such costs were available it would facilitate decisions on the allocation of meeting time. In the mean time all meetings should be treated in the same way and if an intersessional meeting is proposed it should be treated as involving the same use of resources as any other meeting.

6 The second proposal, to modify the reporting of meetings has been discussed before but in the light of the proposed assessment increase should be reconsidered. It is proposed that the final report of a meeting should not be presented before the end of a meeting, but circulated as soon as possible afterwards and then considered at the beginning of the next meeting. A record of decisions could be presented at the end of the meeting, if necessary. When the report is subsequently considered only comments submitted in advance in writing should be allowed to be discussed.

7 Not considering the report of the meeting at the end of the meeting would bring a number of advantages. The costs of producing the report overnight and having it translated would be reduced. There would be additional time for both plenary and working groups to work during the week. The need to have working groups working late into the evening would be reduced, saving both staff time and overheads.

#### **Action requested of the Council**

8 The Council is invited to consider the proposals to:

- .1 cap the number of meeting-weeks in each year;
- .2 submit full costings for each meeting; and
- .3 change the reporting procedure at the end of each meeting,

and decide as appropriate.

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