

It has been estimated that fully 75 per cent of the assessments in the UN go towards salaries of secretariat officials. The UN system employs a staff of 40,000 from 140 countries posted at 700 duty stations. Each country has a desirable quota of positions for its nationals, based primarily on its level of contribution, although the quotas have no legal status and positions are open to any qualified candidate. Canada is currently within its desirable range. The developing countries are eager to place nationals from their regions in high secretariat positions to increase their influence in the running of the UN. The developed countries believe that since they provide most of the organization's resources they should continue to have a higher secretariat representation, and that standards of efficiency, competence and integrity should be the paramount consideration in recruitment.

This division in the membership is symptomatic of the larger problem of controlling the UN's expenditures, which have increased by almost 20 per cent annually since 1974. The developing countries want to increase the spending of the UN, particularly in sectors such as technical assistance, while the major contributors, feeling the pinch of austerity, are not inclined to pay continually larger amounts into the UN, especially when they do not have control either individually or as a group over the level of their contributions. Some believe that too many low-priority programs with unrealistic targets continue to absorb a disproportionate amount of the UN's regular budget. Further rapid growth in these expenditures could lead some of the major contributors to reduce their assessed contributions, although such a development would be a setback to the principle of collective responsibility of the membership, and a threat to the viability of the UN as an institution.

III. Rules and procedures

At the time of its conception and establishment the United Nations represented, as an institution, the generally-accepted realities of power in 1945. The five "great powers" that emerged victorious from the war were granted the status of permanent members of the Security Council and the right of veto. The rest were to be regarded as more or less equal, with one vote each in the Assembly and the right to stand every two years (but not consecutively) for election to one of the six non-permanent seats on the Security Council. Universality of membership of the United Nations, which was the inevitable consequence of decolonization, was only vaguely perceived at San Francisco.

These realities have changed in the last three decades. Expansion of the membership from 51 to almost 150 states has led to the enlargement of the Security and the Economic and Social Councils and to a fixed pattern of representation on them from various regions, reflecting the new realities of African and Asian nationalism. Some states, such as Japan and Brazil, have assumed the status of quasi-permanent members of the Security Council through frequent re-election. But as economic and social issues have come to dominate the UN agenda, new forms of organization (such as UNCTAD) and