

United Nations Telecommunications System

The Secretary-General's plan for a United Nations telecommunications system was approved unanimously by the Assembly. The principle of the plan had been approved by the Assembly in 1948, and its details worked out later by a committee of experts. At that time a complete, world-wide system was envisaged.

The present plan, however, is a modification of the original proposals since the Secretary-General considered that existing commercial arrangements are adequate and that the present volume of traffic would not warrant the expenditure involved. Only minimal broadcasting facilities are, therefore, authorized. These are to be used for special priority services and services to areas which cannot be served by available national facilities. To minimize costs, they will be operated by an outside contractor.

The Secretary-General did not anticipate an addition to the budget for operating costs, since current rental charges for transmitting facilities would be eliminated. He proposed, however, that the capital cost of the new installation, estimated at \$1,983,000, should be financed entirely by voluntary contributions. He was authorized to accept funds provided in this way on the clear understanding that the facilities would become the exclusive property of and be controlled entirely by the United Nations.

Permanent Financial Regulations

The General Assembly adopted a set of permanent financial regulations to replace the provisional regulations in force since 1947. The regulations cover such diverse matters as preparation of the budget estimates, voting and use of appropriations, provision of funds, and control of expenditures.

The regulations have been drafted with a view to achieving uniformity in financial practices between the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. After extensive inter-Agency discussions, the Secretary-General and the heads of the Agencies finally agreed on a draft set of regulations which they were prepared to recommend to their organizations.

The regulations were presented to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General and were adopted after acceptance of amendments recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. They will now be submitted to the 1951 conferences of the Agencies.

Services of Investments Committee

The General Assembly passed a resolution, jointly sponsored by Australia and Canada, making the services of the United Nations Investments Committee available upon request to the Specialized Agencies. The Investments Committee, which is comprised of three financial experts of international prominence, advises the Secretary-General on the investment of certain reserve and special funds, such as the Joint Staff Pension Fund. Its extensive technical knowledge and financial experience will now be available to the Agencies.