

Monitoring of the Application of the Criteria for the Provision of Meetings Records

The criteria developed by the Secretariat and approved by the General Assembly two years ago have had a significant impact, though not as far-reaching as hoped for. Efforts rationalizing documentation services should be pursued vigorously to include the production and distribution of all documents from their inception by substantive departments to delivery to their users. The difficulties which member states experience with documentation are enormous and manifold. Monitoring, careful supervision, modern word processing techniques will, over a period of time, help to provide better documentation services to member states as they have helped others to cope with information. If the life of the Committee on Conferences is extended, its mandate should include documentation. I would hope that one of the Committee's first steps next year would be to establish a simple monitoring procedure for timely reporting to avoid encountering a situation as determined by the Committee on Conferences when it was requested to postpone the CPC meetings. To illustrate the problem it may be useful to know that the Budget Division received the first submissions for the 1978-79 Programme Budget from substantive departments more than three months later than requested. Submissions continued to arrive almost until CPC commenced its meetings late in May. As a result the report of CPC was published too late to be taken properly into account by ACABQ in its work on the Budget. Nor did ECOSOC have sufficient time to study it, as it was not published until after the beginning of the ECOSOC summer session. This is no doubt the major reason why the CPC report, instead of helping our present work on the Programme Budget, is a source of needless confusion due to apparent over-lapping and unreconciled recommendations. The unhappy situation illustrated by the production of the Programme Budget repeats itself in almost every part of the United Nations. The situation should not be allowed to continue.