

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY
LA BIBLIOTECA

C.2 GENERAL

E/CN.12/600

20 March 1961

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Ninth Session
Caracas, May 1961

CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Note by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Note by the Secretariat</u>	3
ANNEX: <u>Reports on the control and limitation of</u> <u>documentation submitted to the General Assembly</u> <u>at its fifteenth session</u>	6
I. Report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/822).....	6
II. Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/4524).....	17

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

At its 770th and 771st meetings, on 18 and 19 October 1960, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly considered the question of control and limitation of United Nations documentation and therefore examined the reports submitted, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) of 14 November 1958, by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/822) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/4524). As a result, the Fifth Committee submitted a report (A/4611) to the General Assembly of which the latter took note without objection at its fifteenth session (960th plenary meeting).

The Fifth Committee "agreed that in order to give publicity to the problems involved, the Secretary-General's report, together with the Advisory Committee's comments, should be sent to all United Nations bodies concerned".^{1/} Accordingly, the two reports mentioned are being included as annexes to the present document for the information of the Governments of States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America.

The Fifth Committee "also concurred in the recommendations (A/4524, paragraphs 4 and 6) that editorial control services similar to those at Headquarters should be set up at the principal offices of the United Nations, and that the procedures for controlling the production of documents should be reviewed at regular intervals".^{2/}

In order to discourage the publication of non-essential documentation and taking into account the General Assembly's earlier recommendations in regard to editorial control, a "job card" system was introduced in ECLA in November 1959. Under this system any department or division of the secretariat which wishes a document to be edited, translated or reproduced, must complete a "job card" which requires the authorization of the Executive Office in consultation with the Editorial Section. This has, in practice, produced good results since it has led to the elimination of unnecessary documents and to the avoidance of duplication of work.

Apart from these measures of a general nature, steps have been taken

^{1/} A/4611, paragraph 6.

^{2/} Ibid.

since the Commission's eighth session at which this matter was also examined,^{3/} to eliminate redundant documentation. For instance, it was decided not to submit to the ninth session an extensive study of the chemical industry - some 700 pages in each language - because of its limited interest except to research specialists. A further example of the secretariat's efforts to curtail documentation is the decision not to publish English versions of certain Central American country studies (e.g. on the economic development of El Salvador, Honduras and Panama), because of the limited distribution which would be required in this language. It was also decided that the figures and tables of the very numerous documents reproduced for the Latin American Electric Power Seminar, which is scheduled to be held in Mexico City from 31 July to 12 August 1961, should be published in bilingual form. In the statistical supplements to the Economic Bulletin for Latin America, now being published separately, as well as in the Central American Statistical Compendium, instead of two separate editions - English and Spanish - the tables appear in Spanish only, with bilingual texts being provided only for the explanatory notes.

Again, the documentation for the ninth session has been reduced as far as possible by the decision not to present separate progress reports on the various aspects of the Commission's work but to include notes on unfinished studies in the overall progress report. Accordingly, delegations will find the corresponding material in the document submitted as the draft of Part I of the Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.12/573).

Moreover, to reduce the volume of documentation submitted to the ninth session, only a summarized version of some documents is being presented, including the Economic Development of Honduras (E/CN.12/585), The Electric Power Industry in Latin America: Present Status and Recent Developments (E/CN.12/560), Water Resources in Venezuela (E/CN.12/562), etc.

As in past years, the secretariat has continued the practice of dispensing with summary records for its sub-committees and other subsidiary bodies. Nor will summary records be prepared at the forthcoming Latin American Electric Power Seminar, sponsored by ECLA in conjunction with two Headquarters divisions.

^{3/} E/CN.12/502 and E/CN.12/530/Rev.2, paragraph 213. The question was also taken up at the seventh session of the Committee of the Whole, to which the secretariat submitted document E/CN.12/AC.45/11.

On the other hand, in view of the fact that some representatives at the eighth session suggested that it was desirable to avoid excessive compression of the statements made at meetings of the Commission and its committees and, since a proposal to this effect was adopted unanimously,^{4/} the records at the current session will be of normal length and contain all the important points raised by the participants.

In connection with the suggestion of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documents that delegations should be invited to make available enough copies of their official statements - a practice which has resulted in considerable savings for the United Nations, although not necessarily in a reduction of the volume of documents delegations have to study - delegations might consider the advisability of providing the secretariat with sufficient advance copies of their prepared statements for distribution at the meetings in the original language only. It is hoped that this procedure, which has also been advocated and is beginning to be applied by ECAFE and ECE, will lighten the burden of documentation which the secretariat may be called upon to translate, reproduce and distribute at short notice during sessions. In any event, official statements will be given adequate coverage in the summary records.

^{4/} E/CN.12/530/Rev.2, paragraph 213.

ANNEX

REPORTS ON THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

I

Report of the Secretary-General

(A/C.5/822)

1. This report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) of 14 November 1958 on control and limitation of documentation. It incorporates the summary of the action taken by the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies for which the Council had asked in its resolution 742 (XXVIII).
2. Resolution 1272 (XIII), which was in continuation of action taken by the General Assembly at previous sessions, commended the Secretary-General for the appreciable results achieved in 1958 and requested him and the representatives of Member States to continue their efforts along the lines indicated in the report of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation.^{1/} The resolution suggested separate lines of action to delegations and to the Secretariat, but such actions are in fact generally connected. The Secretariat frequently assists in the preparation of action taken by delegations and Secretariat initiatives are often effective only if accepted by the delegations. A good example of Secretariat practice in this respect is to be found in document A/4406, where the Secretariat objectively considers certain possibilities in preparation for the decision to be taken by the General Assembly. For convenience of exposition, action taken primarily by delegations and action taken primarily by the Secretariat are here considered under separate heads.

Action by delegations

3. Resolution 1272 (XIII) drew the particular attention of all United Nations organs and subsidiary bodies to the recommendations of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation that, first, they should

^{1/} A/3888

/include the

include the question of control and limitation of their documentation in the agenda of their next session, and, secondly, that full use should be made of regulation 13.1 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations. This regulation provides that "No council, commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving expenditure unless it has before it a report from the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the proposal."

4. Both recommendations have been generally complied with. All United Nations bodies, including the regional economic commissions, have considered the question of control and limitation of documentation since the adoption of resolution 1272 (XIII) and some have considered it at regular intervals. The Economic and Social Council in its resolution 742 (XXVIII) asked the Secretary-General to submit proposals for "streamlining" each year and at its thirtieth session suggested that other members of the United Nations family might find a similar regular review of their work programmes beneficial. Resolution 742 (XXVIII) also drew the attention of the Council's subsidiary bodies to the fact that control of documentation was a continuing problem. Among these subsidiary bodies, the Population Commission at its tenth session in February 1959, the Social Commission at its twelfth session in April-May 1959 and the Statistical Commission at its eleventh session in May 1960 have given particular attention to resolution 1272 (XIII).

5. There has been a continuing emphasis on the application of the financial regulations and rules of procedure relating to the financial implications of proposals, but there is still room for improvement. The statements of financial implications required by these rules cover documentation requirements (translation, reproduction and distribution) as well as other needs, and it is now the practice to include the number of pages of a given document in statements of financial implications wherever possible. A detailed check list of items of expense, including documentation, that may be involved in proposals has been provided to departments by the Office of the Controller. It may be noted that the Publications Board has a standing rule that it will not accept any proposal for recurrent

/publications unless

publications unless the proposal, with a statement of financial implications, has been submitted to the General Assembly and approved by it.

6. It must be admitted that, the established controls notwithstanding, documents of great length called for by competent bodies occasionally come into existence without the submission to those bodies of a statement of the work they entail. This recently occurred in the case of a report, submitted by a specialized agency at the request of the Economic and Social Council, subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, which was expected to be quite short and not to involve additional translation or reproduction. Yet the report turned out to be 500 pages long, to require translation into each of two other languages and reproduction in all three languages, this work devolving on the Secretariat. This case brings out the need not only for continued vigilance on the part of the Secretariat to ensure that the financial implications procedure is strictly followed, but for caution on the part of delegations in requesting elaborate studies from bodies not subject to United Nations controls. It should be added that there has been a gratifying experience in a contrary sense in the case of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on New Sources of Energy. Participants in that conference have already been given detailed suggestions as to the subjects to be covered in technical papers, while further indications as to length, submission date and the like will be given later.

7. The Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies have been especially effective in their efforts to control documentation. The Trusteeship Council at its twenty-fourth session in 1959, and again at its twenty-sixth session in 1960, decided to continue for a further year the temporary procedure for dealing with petitions laid down in its resolution 1713 (XX) of 8 July 1957. This procedure, which allows the screening and summarizing of certain categories of petitions by a Committee on Classification of Communications, has resulted in a very considerable reduction in documentation.

8. The Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies have taken action to control documentation along several lines, including review and reduction of existing publications, spacing of proposed publications over a longer period and rescinding of resolutions which made publications mandatory.

/The Secretariat's

The Secretariat's suggestions for the avoidance of duplication between Governments' triennial reports on human rights and the Yearbook on Human Rights are now being implemented and the Commission on Human Rights will review the matter at its seventeenth session in 1961. At its twenty-sixth session the Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights that the Yearbook should be reduced to about 330 pages in the English edition and that the account therein of United Nations action in the matter should be reduced to a list of documentary references. There have been many instances of the spacing of publications over a longer period. For example, the study of discrimination in political rights initiated by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities is now scheduled to be completed only in 1962. At its thirteenth session the Commission on the Status of Women decided that the annual progress report submitted by UNESCO on its activities in women's education should in future be prepared on a biennial basis, and that the next report on the occupational outlook for women should be postponed to the Commission's fifteenth session in 1961. The Commission has continued its policy of spacing and staggering the reports relating to the status of women in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories in such a way as to treat various subjects in alternate years.

9. In accordance with the suggestion of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation that United Nations organs should be invited to revise resolutions and rules requiring periodic reports, the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-eighth session rescinded paragraph 2(d) of its resolution 626 C III (XXII), which had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a summary of national laws and regulations relating to narcotics control every five years. Another of the Committee's suggestions, that documents already produced on a given subject might be used instead of new studies, has been followed by the Commission on International Commodity Trade. At its seventh session the Commission decided that a previously published document, Commodity Trade and Economic Development, might be used as a basis for discussion of item 7 of the agenda for its eighth session. Furthermore, several chapters of the World Economic Survey, 1958, published in June 1959, served as agenda documentation for the same session, thus obviating the need to prepare a special study.

10. Yet another of the Committee's suggestions, that delegations should be invited to make some material available themselves, has resulted in considerable savings for the United Nations, although not necessarily in a reduction of the volume of documentation delegations have to consider. For example, the number of texts of official statements produced by the Office of Public Information at the request of delegations fell to thirty-five during the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, while the number produced by the delegations themselves rose to about 170. As another example, at its fifteenth session the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East decided to ask Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental agencies to provide enough copies of their papers for distribution as background material for participants in meetings of the Commission's subsidiary bodies. In the Economic Commission for Europe national offices or collaborating international organizations have in appropriate cases been asked to supply enough copies of their memoranda or reports to relieve the Secretariat of the burden of reproducing them for the required distribution.

Action by the Secretariat

11. In paragraph 2 of resolution 1272 (XIII) the Assembly endorsed "the basic approaches enunciated in paragraph 10 and the proposals set out in paragraph 27, except those contained in sub-paragraph (c)" of the report of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation, and in paragraph 5 of resolution 1272 (XIII) it urged the Secretary-General to continue his action on the lines the Committee had laid down. The Committee's proposals amounted almost to a code of drafting practice, into the application of which it is unnecessary to go in detail. The Secretariat has, however, borne these proposals constantly in mind, with generally satisfactory results. Editorial Control has been especially vigilant in this respect and, in order to make the Committee's recommendations easier of application, has produced detailed rules on the drafting of different types of report.

12. The Secretary-General has left the Secretariat in no doubt as to the importance he attaches to the purposes set forth in resolution 1272 (XIII) and periodically obtains from heads of departments a report on the action taken by their staffs to achieve these purposes. In the newest of the regional economic commissions, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Executive

/Secretary has

Secretary has taken early and vigorous action to keep the impending volume of documentation within reasonable bounds by declining to accept "as a matter of course" the burden of processing all material received, irrespective of length, and by reserving the right to summarize or condense such material. There are several examples of parallel action in the other regional economic commissions. Although comparable statistics of documentation for the Economic Commissions are not available at Headquarters, it would appear that the volume of documentation issued by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in 1959 was some 25 per cent less than in 1957, notwithstanding amendments to the Commission's terms of reference which brought social aspects of economic development within its scope. Furthermore, at its fifteenth session ECAFE decided that the Commission's reports should be reduced in size and this decision was strictly followed during 1959. ECAFE has kept under constant review the number and duration of meetings of its subsidiary bodies. The number of meetings convened in 1959 was fifteen, as compared with the seventeen envisaged in the original programme. In the Economic Commission for Europe it is now a practice to circulate information notes stating that detailed or technical material is available to interested Governments on request. ECE has also made successful efforts to concentrate the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. A number of subsidiary bodies, such as the Working Party on Fiscal Changes, are being kept in abeyance. The number of ECE meetings held each year has declined from 820 half days in 1956 to 616 half days in 1959.

13. Like the Economic and Social Council itself, the Secretariat has given constant attention to the documentation for the Council's functional commissions, with appreciable results. In consequence of suggestions the Secretary-General made to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifteenth session as to the time and manner of presentation of the triennial reports concerning human rights - suggestions endorsed by the Council in its resolution 728 B (XXVIII) - it is hoped that the future summaries of the reports prepared by the Secretariat will be shorter than the summary of the first series. Documentation for the Population Commission's tenth session was reduced by 40 per cent, as compared with the ninth session, and documentation for the Statistical Commission's eleventh session by more than 20 per cent, as compared with the tenth session. In addition, the Statistical Commission was invited to make suggestions as to the possibility of further reducing documentation. Documentation for the Transport and Communications Commission's ninth and last session was some 50 per cent less than at the previous session.

14. The Division of Narcotic Drugs has been particularly active in limiting documentation. The number of pages in the Bulletin on Narcotics has been reduced by an average of one-quarter. Material concerning new drugs received from Governments, which under treaty provisions must be circulated to the Parties, is in principle circulated only in the language in which it is received. As an experiment, texts of national laws and regulations are being issued in one language only instead of in all the working languages. An annual paper on diacetylmorphine has been discontinued and the information incorporated in the annual report on control. The former annual list of authorities entitled to issue import and export licences is now published every two years, with a corrigendum in alternate years. A big saving in documentation and translation has resulted from a decision to publish summaries only of the 130-140 reports received from Governments every year instead of the full reports. The Economic and Social Council at its thirtieth session noted "with satisfaction the special efforts made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs" in this matter and expressed its belief that other Commissions should seek to take further action along the same lines.

15. Before the report of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation, the Secretary-General had already sought other means of reducing the volume of documentation initiated in the Secretariat and the cost of such documentation to the United Nations. For example, in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 378 G (XIII) of 10 August 1951, the Secretariat prepared plans for a continuing series of comprehensive descriptions of national tax systems but at the Secretariat's request the execution of the plans was taken over by the International Program in Taxation of the Harvard Law School. Since then the collection of International Tax Agreements has been placed on a loose-leaf basis, in order to ensure that the texts and data are issued more promptly while achieving a saving in total documentation.

/Need for

Need for continued effort

16. It may perhaps be said that in general the economies to be expected in documentation for which the Secretariat is directly responsible - official records and studies and reports prepared by the departments - have been realized.

17. There have, however, been some shortcomings. The Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation specifically recommended^{2/} that reproduction of publications in both mimeographed and printed form should be limited to cases of "strict necessity" and the Secretariat has exerted constant efforts to follow this recommendation. The Economic Commission for Europe has for some years dispensed with the mimeographed version of the Economic Survey of Europe in both the English and the French editions. In 1959 the International Survey of Programmes of Social Development (190 pages) and Training for Social Work - Third International Survey (393 pages) were printed in both French and English well in advance of the convening of the Social Commission, thereby eliminating the need for mimeographed texts. The summaries of information for the Committee on Information from Non-Self Governing Territories are also now, in two years out of three, not distributed twice, in mimeographed and in printed form, but only once, in offset fascicles. But the general position has not much improved. The rules of various organs, such as the six-weeks' rule for documentation for the Economic and Social Council, combined with the need for the latest available information and the fact that Governments are sometimes late in reporting, make it difficult to avoid the issue of certain economic publications in both mimeographed and printed form.

18. This is one area in which the Secretariat's efforts will have to be continued. Another area which has recently been given special attention comprises the ever-growing number of technical assistance experts' reports and of reports on seminars of many kinds. The Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations is endeavouring to reduce the volume of experts' reports by providing the experts with guidance on the preparation of their reports from the outset of their missions and by having their

^{2/} A/3888, paragraph 27 (d).

drafts reviewed by the substantive office in Technical Assistance and by Editorial Control. The Bureau has also decided that henceforward the two cumulative lists of reports of experts and seminars which it issues will no longer be revised and reissued annually; instead, addenda to the original list dated 31 December 1958 will be issued.

19. The principal area to which the Secretariat must devote attention in the next few years is the documentation produced at some of the offices other than Headquarters. Time has not been sufficient to allow them to reach drafting standards on quite the same level as the standards applied at Headquarters, often because of staffing difficulties, and a sustained effort will have to be made in order to achieve comparability of standards in all United Nations documentation.

Time distribution of documents

20. At its thirtieth session the Economic and Social Council reiterated in resolution 802 (XXX) the view it had already expressed in resolution 742 (XVIII) that "a primary objective of control and limitation of documentation should be to ensure the distribution of documents in all the working languages of the Council within the six-weeks' time-limit". The Secretary-General entirely sympathizes with the view thus expressed and the Secretariat will, as always, do everything in its power to ensure that the requirements of the rules of procedure are met. It must, however, be pointed out that there are factors not entirely under the control of the Secretariat which sometimes make it difficult to give the principle effect, in particular in the case of documents which involve the collection of up-to-date information from outside sources.

Effect of expanding activities

21. The volume of documentation reproduced by mimeographed and offset processes at Headquarters in 1958, expressed in final standards impressions, was some 15 per cent less than in 1957 and in 1959 was some 10 per cent less than in 1957. Detailed figures of this documentation are not given for the reason that such figures may sometimes be misleading. For example,

/an apparent

an apparent increase may be due to the transference of documents from external printing to internal reproduction, which represents not an increase of expenditure, but a saving. The reprinting of successful publications by internal processes also represents an increase in revenue for the Organization. There are also fluctuations from year to year which are in fact merely a reflection of the postponement or advancement of certain activities. If, for example, the General Assembly defers a part of its session to the following year - which it has done on several occasions - there is inevitably a departure from the estimates of documentation for that year.

22. In other cases an increase in documentation may be due to factors beyond the reach of the established controls. A United Nations organ may require verbatim as well as summary records of its debates on a particular subject, as both the Sixth Committee and the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly have done. Creation of new bodies, such as the Economic Commission for Africa, the Special Fund or the Commission on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources, is reflected in increased documentation. So is increased activity by existing bodies. The Statistical Office, for example, expects that the total volume of documentation circulating to statistical offices throughout the world from United Nations sources will increase if its world-wide programme is to be pursued effectively, although this increase may result in a reduction of national statistical publications, with a consequent saving to Member States. The Commission on International Commodity Trade has also stated that "expansion of activity in the commodity field would be followed by an increase in documentation, translation requirements and possibly printing". Admission of new Members leads to an increase in reporting by Member States to the Organization and an increase in the volume of documentation distributed by the Organization to Member States. As an example, there is an automatic increase in narcotics documentation because more Governments are reporting year by year and reporting more fully on an increased volume of activity, while the adoption of the Single Convention may result in a further increase in documentation which has been

/estimated at

estimated at 3-5 per cent. It must also be remembered that authors of United Nations documents frequently do not have enough time to produce a manuscript reduced to its simplest terms, a problem which the Economic and Social Council tacitly recognized at its thirtieth session by expressing the view that "when reports are requested from the Secretariats of the United Nations or the related agencies, sufficient time should be allowed for their completion".

23. It is certainly not without significance that a slight increase in documentation has been required for the work of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions themselves. There was, for example, a small increase in the size of the printed Budget Estimates for 1960 and requests by Member States for more information may tend towards further increases, although an attempt is being made to offset these increases by compression of the narrative text in the various sections.

24. Discontinuance of a body such as the Transport and Communications Commission may offset increases in other fields in a given year. Such occasions are, however, rare, and even in the case of that Commission it has been found necessary from time to time to give elsewhere information on activities previously covered in the Commission's report. There is also a continuing decrease in the documentation relating to Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories as more and more of these Territories attain independence, but this decrease may to some extent be offset by documentation concerning the increased provision of economic and social assistance to the Territories.

25. The responsibilities of the United Nations are in fact expanding and the general trend is consequently for the number of the Organization's subsidiary bodies and their activities to increase, and for the volume of documentation to increase with them.

II

Eleventh report of the Advisory Committee on
Administrative and Budgetary Questions
(A/4524)

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report (A/C.5/822) which the Secretary-General has submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) of 14 November 1958 on control and limitation of United Nations documentation.
2. Under operative paragraph 8 of the above resolution, the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee were requested to report on the operation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session or earlier. In this regard, the Advisory Committee gave the matter its special attention in conjunction with its consideration of the budget estimates for 1960 as well as those for 1961. The Committee's comments on these two occasions are to be found in paragraph 200 of its tenth report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session (A/4170)^{1/} and paragraphs 216 to 219 of its first report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session (A/4408).^{2/} In connexion with the latter comments, the Committee had the benefit of studying the preliminary text of the Secretary-General's present report. The observations referred to above related to such aspects of the subject as the efforts within the Secretariat for the curtailment of documentation and the improvement of its quality, including the contribution which could be made to this end by appropriate editorial control, the need for a strict adherence to article 13.1 of the Financial Regulations and the relevant rules of United Nations bodies concerning the presentation of the financial implications of decisions involving documentation, and the extent to which United Nations bodies have followed the recommendation in

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Supplement No. 7.

2/ Ibid., Fifteenth Session, Supplement No. 7

resolution 1272 (XIII) to give special consideration to the documentation question.

3. The report now submitted by the Secretary-General sets out the progress made along the lines indicated by the 1958 Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation (A/3888)^{3/} and approved by the General Assembly in resolution 1272 (XIII). The report distinguishes between action taken by delegations and that taken by the Secretariat, pointing out at the same time that, in practice, these actions, to be effective, must be co-ordinated.

4. The Advisory Committee notes that there has been general compliance with the two recommendations in resolution 1272 (XIII) addressed to United Nations organs and subsidiary bodies, namely (a) that they should include the question of control and limitation of documentation in the agenda of their next session, and (b) that full use should be made of regulation 13.1 of the Financial Regulations, which provides that no Council, commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving expenditure unless it has before it a report from the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the proposal. While the specific actions taken by the different bodies have been of varying effectiveness, the general awareness of the problem has in itself probably acted as a brake to further expansion. The Committee would stress the importance of a continuous review of the problem and of making periodic assessments of procedures for keeping documentation within reasonable limits.

5. As regards the application of financial regulation 13.1, the Advisory Committee notes that there is still room for improvement, in spite of an expansion of the form in which statements of financial implications are being submitted by the Secretariat. In particular, the Committee understands that there is a tendency to be less strict in the application of the regulation in cases where, although administrative and financial implications arise, no specific additional budgetary credits are likely to be requested. The Committee would observe that the total volume of

^{3/} Ibid., Thirteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 51.

documentation is as much at issue as the related costs, even apart from the fact that any unused portions of the available credits for documentation might find better use in other needy areas of activity.

6. In regard to action within the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee notes that continuing improvements are sought in respect of the economical drafting of documents. The statistics provided in paragraphs 12 to 14 (A/C.5/822) indicate reductions which have been effected in the total volume of documentation in certain sectors, by comparison with previous years. The Committee attaches particular importance to the contribution which could be made by the editorial control machinery within the Secretariat. Drafting is a skill not shared in equal measure by all, and may be especially difficult where conciseness must be sought without eliminating essential elements of information. It follows that the widest possible use of editorial control facilities should be encouraged. The Advisory Committee would therefore reiterate its long-held view that such facilities should be extended to all the main offices of the United Nations.^{4/}

7. There are indications that, as a result of the special attention given to the question of documentation in the light of resolution 1272 (XIII), some progress has been made towards a rational control of the volume and quality of documentation. Obviously the amount of documentation produced in the Organization would, of necessity, depend on the level of its activities. While this level is on the increase, the Committee trusts that the need for an intensification of present measures and the importance of continued vigilance, both on the part of the Secretariat as well as of the competent organs requesting documentation, will not be overlooked.

^{4/} See, in particular, Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/4170), paragraph 201; Ibid., Fifteenth Session Supplement No. 7 (A/4408), paragraph 219.