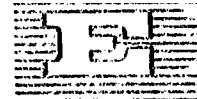


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CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Note by the Executive Secretary

At the sixth session of the Committee of the Whole, the Commission was informed of the steps taken by the Executive Secretary to limit the number and length of documents, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 789 (VIII) and 1203 (XII). Further measures have since been taken and the result is a significant reduction in the volume of documentation. The summary records of meetings of the Commission and its committees have been condensed. The summary records of sub-committees and other subsidiary bodies have been either dispensed with completely or used only as an element in preparing accounts of the proceedings of these bodies. The reports of the Commission and its committees have been reduced in size by presenting, wherever possible, substantive matters more concisely and by eliminating the texts of opening addresses. Although the number, length and quality of the secretariat's studies and reports have been subject as far as possible to control, it is expected that further improvements will result when the Editorial Section is reinforced. Mimeographed versions of documents which are eventually to be printed have been avoided whenever possible. Nevertheless, it was necessary to produce such versions in the case of studies of a provisional nature whose contents required comments and criticisms from a wide range of sources.

The length of certain secretariat documents is justified by the amount of statistical material and economic information that is contained therein. A considerable part of this material was collected and tabulated in some countries for the first time and is of great interest to the Governments concerned.

The Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation, established under General Assembly resolution 1203 (XII), in reviewing the action taken by the United Nations Secretariat to give effect to this resolution, took note of the steps taken by the Commission and its secretariat as summarized above. The Committee was established to consult with and advise the Secretary-General on the most effective means of meeting the target figure of 25 per cent below the 1957 level of documentation.

The Committee's report (A/3888) is being circulated at the Commission's present session, together with the Secretary-General's report (A/3921) on the steps taken and the nature and extent of the reduction achieved.

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At its thirteenth session the General Assembly considered the subject of documentation again and adopted resolution 1272 (XIII), which is annexed hereto.

The resolution draws the attention of all organs and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations to the Committee's report, particularly to the recommendations contained in paragraph 27 (e), and requests those organs and bodies to include in the agenda of their next session the question of the control and limitation of their documentation.

Annex

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[On the report of the Fifth Committee (A/3982)]
1272 (XIII). Control and limitation of documentation

The General Assembly,

Noting the report of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation ^{1/} set up under General Assembly resolution 1203 (XII) of 13 December 1957 to consult with and advise the Secretary-General on the most effective means of implementing that resolution,

Noting further the Secretary-General's report ^{2/} on the steps taken and on the nature and extent of the reductions achieved,

1. Commends the Secretary-General for the appreciable results achieved so far during 1958;

2. Endorses the report of the Committee on the Control and Limitation of Documentation, particularly the basic approaches enunciated in paragraph 10 and the proposals set out in paragraph 27, except those contained in sub-paragraph (c); in regard to the maintenance of verbatim and summary records, the existing practice shall continue unaltered in all respects;

3. Draws the attention of all organs and subsidiary bodies in particular to the recommendations contained in paragraph 27 (e) of the Committee's report, requesting those organs and bodies to include in the agenda of their next session the question of the control and limitation of their documentation;

4. Emphasizes in this connexion the importance of strict adherence to financial regulation 13.1 and the relevant rules of procedure of the organs concerned, with the object of ensuring that no organ or subsidiary body takes decisions on any measure until it has been informed in advance of the financial and administrative considerations involved;

^{1/} A/3888.

^{2/} A/3921.

5. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that no effort is spared within the Secretariat to maintain the progress achieved and to extend it in all ways possible, taking into account the guiding principles set forth in paragraph 10 of the report of the Committee;

6. Further requests the Secretary-General, within the existing establishment, to extend the editorial control services;

7. Urges the representatives of Member States as well as all other members of commissions, committees and similar bodies to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in carrying out the policy laid down by the General Assembly, particularly in resolutions 593 (VI) of 4 February 1952, 789 (VIII) of 9 December 1953 and 1203 (XII) of 13 December 1957;

8. Requests the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to report on the operation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session or earlier.

781st plenary meeting,

14 November 1958