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ORGANIZATION OF A UNITED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. B. A. TWIRLE (Union of South Africa)

1. In accordance with instructions given by the General Assembly at its 285th plenary meeting, the Fifth Committee, at its 258th meeting held on 31 October 1950, considered the question of the organization of a United Nations postal administration.
2. The Committee had before it the report (A/1394/Rev.1) requested of the Secretary-General by General Assembly resolution 342 (IV) which instructed him to continue with the preparation of the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a United Nations postal administration in accordance with the terms of resolution 232 (III), and to submit a new report on the matter to the General Assembly not later than the beginning of the fifth regular session. In his report the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly that, pursuant to its instructions, he had prepared, in consultation with the Government of the United States of America, a draft agreement (see Annex) for the establishment of a United Nations postal administration which provided, inter alia:
 - (a) That the United States Post Office Department will provide, on behalf of the United Nations postal administration, "all the services offered by any United States Post Office having comparable operations," subject to the terms of compensation stipulated in the draft agreement (articles 1 (ii) and 3 (i));
 - (b) That the United Nations Post Office will use only United Nations postage stamps (article 1 (ii));
 - (c) That the

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(c) That the United Nations may operate a separate philatelic agency for the sale by mail of United Nations postage stamps for philatelic purposes, and that all revenue from such sales will be retained by the Organization, (article 3 (ii));

(d) That the United Nations will furnish the necessary postage stamps free of charge to the United Nations Post Office, together with postmarking stamps (articles 3 (i) and 4);

(e) That the United Nations will provide at its own expense the necessary premises, custodial services and utilities (article 5);

(f) That the United States Post Office Department will provide at its own expense all staff, equipment and other services and facilities necessary for the operation of the United Nations Post Office (article 6).

2. It was explained that, in view of the numerous administrative difficulties foreseeable under the plan which had originally been considered, (i.e., for the United Nations to assume full responsibility for operating its own postal administration) a more practical and workable arrangement, which would nevertheless be in conformity with paragraph (2) of General Assembly resolution 232 (III), had been negotiated.

3. The estimates submitted by the Secretary-General for the operation of a United Nations postal administration on the proposed basis indicated that expenditure would amount in the first full year to \$83,000 and to a somewhat lower figure in subsequent years. Offsetting revenue from the sale of stamps for philatelic purposes was tentatively estimated at \$300,000 for the first year. Postal expenses would, of course, still require to be provided for under section 16 of the budget estimates to the amount of approximately \$180,000.

4. In addition to the report of the Secretary-General, the Fifth Committee also had before it the eighth report of 1950 of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/1453), which expressed the view that the proposed plan was well conceived in that (a) it offered substantial advantages in terms of publicity for the United Nations; (b) was administratively simple since actual postal services would be entrusted to those most competent to carry them out, i.e. the officials of the United States Post Office Department and (c) some revenue would accrue to the Organization. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended for adoption the draft resolution submitted by the Secretary-General.

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5. In the course of discussion in the Fifth Committee it was stated by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and by the representative of the Secretary-General that the plan applied for the time being solely to the United Nations Headquarters, although it was hoped that in the course similar arrangements might be extended to other United Nations Offices and to the specialized agencies.

6. Several delegations urged that extreme care be exercised in connexion with the operations of the philatelic agency to avoid placing the United Nations in a situation which would be incompatible with its dignity and prestige. Attention was also called to the danger of flooding the market with United Nations stamps with a consequent depreciation of their face value and loss of revenue to the Organization. The Committee was assured on behalf of the Secretary-General that the position in this respect would be carefully watched.

7. A number of delegations, while generally approving the terms of the draft agreement, expressed regret that, under article 3 (ii), the activities of the separate agency to be maintained by the United Nations for the sale of stamps for philatelic purposes would be limited to fulfilling orders received by mail. In the opinion of these delegations, the revenue which should accrue to the United Nations would be substantially decreased if the Organization were to be precluded from participating in direct sales of United Nations stamps to the public. Other delegations, however, while sympathizing with this point of view, stressed that it was specifically recognized in the agreement itself that implementation of several of its provisions would require considerable administrative and operational adjustment. Without some experience, for example, it was difficult to arrive at an exact formula for the division of revenue as between postage stamps sold for philatelic purposes and for use on mail matter. Those stamps sold specifically for philatelic purposes (by the United Nations philatelic agency) might possibly be diverted for use on mail matter and, conversely, those sold specifically for mailing purposes (by the United Nations Post Office Station) might be diverted to philatelic use. Because of operational problems of this nature, article 8, paragraph (iii) of the draft agreement provided that one or both the parties concerned may request a review of some parts of the agreement after one year's experience of actual operation.

8. Subject to these comments, the Fifth Committee unanimously approved the provisions of a draft resolution taking note of the draft agreement between the United States of America and the United Nations for the establishment of a United Nations postal administration; requesting the Secretary-General to proceed with the conclusion of this agreement and with the necessary arrangements for establishing such an administration; authorizing him to appoint a committee to give final approval to designs for United Nations postage stamps; and requesting him to submit a comprehensive report on the actions taken not later than the beginning of the seventh regular session of the General Assembly.
9. The Fifth Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

ORGANIZATION OF A UNITED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION

The General Assembly,

Referring to resolutions 232 (III) of 8 October 1948 and 342 (IV) of 20 October 1949, adopted at its third and fourth regular sessions respectively, and in particular to paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 342 (1

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the organization of a United Nations postal administration and the observations thereon submitted by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

1. Takes note of the annexed draft agreement between the United States of America and the United Nations for the establishment of a United Nations postal administration in conformity with the Headquarters Agreement;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to proceed with the conclusion of the aforesaid agreement and with the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a United Nations postal administration at the earliest possible date consistent with sound administrative arrangements;

3. Authorizes the Secretary-General to appoint a committee which shall be empowered to give final approval to designs for United Nations postage stamps;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, not later than the beginning of its seventh regular session, a comprehensive report on the establishment and operations of the United Nations postal administration.

ANNEX

UNITED STATES - UNITED NATIONS POSTAL AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____, 1950, between the United States of America and the United Nations.

WHEREAS, a certain Agreement between the United States of America and the United Nations, dated the 26th day of June, 1947, regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations (said Agreement being hereinafter referred to as the "Headquarters Agreement") provides that in the event that the United Nations should propose to organize its own postal service, the conditions under which such service shall be set up shall be the subject of a Supplemental Agreement;

WHEREAS, the United Nations desires to establish a postal service in conformity with the Headquarters Agreement,

NOW THEREFORE, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, there shall be established a United Nations Post Office Station in the Headquarters District of the United Nations, as defined in the Headquarters Agreement, which shall be operated by the United States Post Office Department.
- (11) The United Nations Post Office Station shall provide at the prevailing rates all the services offered by any United States Post Office having comparable operations except that the United Nations Post Office Station shall use only United Nations postage stamps.

2. SUPPLY OF UNITED NATIONS POSTAGE STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER

- (1) The United Nations shall at its own expense furnish all United Nations postage stamps required under the terms of this Agreement.
- (11) In the event the United Nations shall produce or authorize production of stamped envelopes and post cards, such envelopes or post cards shall conform to the specifications of the United

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States Post Office Department as to size and as to quality of paper used.

- (111) No United Nations postage stamps shall be distributed except in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

3. SALE OF UNITED NATIONS POSTAGE STAMPS

- (1) The United Nations Post Office Station shall sell only United Nations postage stamps which shall be provided by the United Nations free of charge in such quantities as may be necessary to fulfill all reasonable needs of the United Nations Post Office Station. All revenue derived from such sales of United Nations postage stamps and for other services rendered by the United Nations Post Office Station shall be retained by the United States Post Office Department as full and complete compensation for performance of its obligations under terms of this Agreement, except, however, that the United States Post Office Department shall be reimbursed for performance of any postal services resulting from use of United Nations postage stamps sold for philatelic purposes under the provisions of paragraph (11) of this section which are used as postage on mail matter posted at the United Nations Post Office Station by being paid an amount equal to the face value of any such stamps so used as postage.
- (11) The United Nations may maintain a separate agency for the sale of United Nations postage stamps for philatelic purposes in response to orders received by mail. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this section all revenue derived from such philatelic sales of United Nations postage stamps shall be retained by the United Nations for its own use.

4. UNITED NATIONS POSTMARKS

The United Nations shall furnish all postmarking stamps to be applied to mail posted for mailing in the Headquarters District and shall furnish all such postmarking stamps to the United Nations Post Office Station free of charge. All postmarks shall be designated as United Nations postmarks.

5. UNITED NATIONS POST OFFICE STATION PREMISES

The United Nations shall provide the United States Post Office Department at the expense of the United Nations with the quarters, custodial services and utilities necessary to enable the United States Post Office Department to operate the United Nations Post Office Station in the Headquarters District.

6. STAFF AND EQUIPMENT

Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement the United States Post Office Department will provide at its own expense all staff, equipment and other services and facilities necessary to enable the United States Post Office Department to operate the United Nations Post Office Station under the terms of this Agreement.

7. POSTAL ADDRESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The postal address of the Headquarters District of the United Nations shall be "United Nations, New York".

8. DURATION OF THE AGREEMENT

- (i) This Agreement shall take effect on a date to be agreed upon between the United Nations and the United States Post Office Department.
- (ii) This Agreement shall be subject to revision, on the written proposal of either contracting party, after one year from the date of commencement of operations.
- (iii) This Agreement may be terminated by either party giving the other written notice of its intention to terminate such Agreement at least twelve (12) months in advance of the termination date fixed in such notice.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the respective representatives have signed this Agreement and have affixed their seals hereto.

DONE in duplicate this _____ day of _____, 19____.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

President (Seal)

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS:

Secretary-General (Seal)
