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Financial Report.

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8 February 1956



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STAFF COUNCIL

and

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

February 1955 - February 1956

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STAFF COUNCIL

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Annual Financial Report

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STAFF COUNCIL
United Nations Headquarters, New York

February 1955 - February 1956

I. Introduction

1. During the past year the Staff Council was able to apply its attention increasingly to the basic problems of international civil servants. It pursued consistently its long-term policy with regard to the question of salaries and allowances, with results which, considering the many obstacles to be overcome, may be regarded as encouraging. The burning issue of promotion policies and procedures was taken up once more and resulted for the first time in the formulation of recommendations which were submitted to the Administration. The complexity of the issues involved and the close interest of most staff members require that most careful consideration be given to all implications of possible changes and the Staff Council was of the opinion that a joint working group might most appropriately study this question. It was encouraging that this suggestion was accepted, giving a concrete indication of the Secretary-General's wish to improve the existing situation and constituting a recognition of the contribution which the Staff Council can make through the consultative processes in this respect. The question of the retirement age required particular attention and the Staff Council's position reflects a reconciliation of the various interests involved.

2. The progress achieved was made possible by an atmosphere of cooperation and understanding between the Secretary-General and the Staff Council, with mutual respect for differing points of view. In this atmosphere the staff were able to make their views known to the Administration during the formative stages of the development of policies in the field of personnel administration, and thus make a more effective contribution than would have been possible in formal consultations at a later stage. Furthermore, as the international civil service has become a very complicated machinery and the process of introducing important changes is cumbersome, it has become increasingly important that on basic issues the Secretary-General and the Staff Council stand on common ground. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that the effectiveness of the actions of the Staff Council depends upon the soundness of its suggestions and the general respect it can command.

3. One important set-back was suffered in regard to the Judicial Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements. On this basic issue the Staff Council maintained unanimously and consistently, although without success, a position based on principles which, in its opinion, are essential for the international civil service.

4. Looking forward in the light of the first decade of the United Nations, it is evident that much still remains to be done in the development of a career international civil service. The achievements of the past, such as the arrangements introduced in 1952 and later extended to all categories, to make security of tenure a reality for the staff, and the efforts of the last two years to develop a system of financial remuneration which would attract and retain highly qualified staff, should not be overlooked. In the year ahead this latter question will have to be vigorously pursued. In addition, increasing attention will have to be given to the development and application of the concept of a career service, providing the staff with the necessary variety in assignments during the course of their careers and with adequate opportunities for assuming higher responsibilities.

5. The Staff Council, in making its contribution to a constructive handling of these and other matters, needs the full support and active cooperation of the whole staff. It is grateful for the help which it has received in so many forms during the past year and it would like to express in particular its appreciation to those colleagues who, as members of joint bodies, as legal advisers to appellants, as polling officers, scrutineers and members of the Auditing Committee, or in other capacities, have served so well the interests of the Organization and its staff.

II. Staff Council Machinery

6. The fifth Staff Council took office in March 1955 and elected its officers as follows:

Staff Council:	Presiding Officer: Clayton C. Timbrell Deputy Presiding Officer: Manuel López-Rey
Staff Committee:	Chairman: Hylke G. Halbertsma First Vice-Chairman: Roger Minne Second Vice-Chairman: Antony Gilpin Secretary: Kia-Kwei Tsien Assistant Secretary: Elsa Haim Treasurer: Lawrence Davidson Rapporteur: William Taylor

Following the resignation of Roger Minne in July, Antony Gilpin was elected First Vice-Chairman, Kia-Kwei Tsien Second Vice-Chairman, and David Miron Secretary.

7. The Staff Council met, on the average, about once a week and the Staff Committee twice weekly. It has been well served by the following sub-committees: Appeals, Economic, Education, Health and Welfare, Legal, Organization, Personnel Policies, and by a newly-established sub-committee on pension and retirement questions.

8. The Staff Council was concerned with an ever-widening field of problems, and an increasing number of contacts were established and maintained with representatives of the Administration. The relationship with the Secretary-General and his advisers, particularly the Director of Personnel and his staff, the Controller and his staff, and the Medical Director of the Health Service, continued to be very satisfactory.

9. In addition to the continuing staff participation in various bodies, such as the Joint Appeals Board, the Joint Disciplinary Committee and the Review Board, a member nominated by the Staff Council took part in the work of the Medical Insurance Review Committee. Close and informal contact was maintained with the Headquarters representative and alternate representatives of the participants on the U.N. Staff Pension Committee and at the suggestion of the Board of Directors of the U.N. Cooperative a Staff Council member was appointed to ensure regular contact between the Board and the Staff Council on matters of mutual interest.

10. Close contact was maintained with the representatives of the United Nations staff in Geneva and Bangkok and, wherever feasible, assistance was given to staff assigned elsewhere overseas. Cooperation continued with the staff associations of the specialized agencies, partly through the channels of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and in part directly.

11. As in previous years the Staff Committee has been provided by the Administration with an excellent secretary. The Administration made available office accommodation and all necessary supplies and services.

12. Current developments concerning items under consideration by the Staff Council were reported fortnightly to the staff in the Staff Committee Circular, recently provided with a new masthead and on that occasion re-named Staff Committee Bulletin.

III. Salaries and Allowances

13. The Council has continued its efforts to secure improvements in salaries, allowances and benefits. It adopted a resolution noting that the salaries of United States Federal employees had been raised by 7.5 per cent as of 1 March 1955 and urging the Administration to re-examine the salary schedule of the General Service staff in the light of these new circumstances and also of any changes which might have taken place in the best local commercial and other rates since the last review of local salaries which had taken place in the autumn of 1954.

14. In May 1955, the Council submitted a statement to the Committee of Experts on Salary Differentials, Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Dependency Allowances which

had been appointed by the Secretary-General to report and make recommendations on these matters. Representatives of the Council, also representing the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations, subsequently met with the Committee.

15. The recommendations of the Committee of Experts included a number of the proposals advanced by the Council, notably in regard to (i) the establishment of a regular five-yearly review of base salaries, the first to take place in 1956; (ii) the application of cost-of-living adjustments to net, instead of gross, salaries; (iii) the abolition of the ceiling on the cost-of-living adjustments; (iv) the liberalisation of the amount of the education grant.

16. The Council considered the above report and submitted a statement to the Secretary-General. After talks with the Controller, the Staff Committee submitted a further statement in which it expressed full support for the Committee of Experts' recommendation that there be a review of basic salaries in 1956, which should take into account not only cost-of-living changes but also factors such as trends in productivity and real wages, changes in level of taxation, and changes in salaries in comparable occupations. Pending this review, it recommended as immediate stop-gap measures (a) an increase in the cost-of-living adjustment at Headquarters from the present 7.5 per cent to 12 per cent; (b) abolition of the present ceiling on the cost-of-living adjustment; (c) continuance of the current dependency credits for Headquarters staff; (d) an increase in the education grant to at least \$400. Representatives of the staff discussed these proposals with the Secretary-General, who subsequently submitted to the General Assembly proposals which largely embraced the suggestions of the staff, subject to the principal exception that the cost-of-living adjustment should be increased to 10 per cent, instead of the 12 per cent recommended by the staff. The Fifth Committee, after discussing the Secretary-General's proposals, decided to recommend to the General Assembly action as follows: (i) that a basic review of the system of salaries, allowances and benefits should be undertaken in 1956 by a Review Committee of eleven experts nominated by governments; (ii) to increase, as from 1 January 1956, the present cost-of-living adjustment at Headquarters and Washington, D.C. from 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent, and at the same time to raise the present minimum adjustment from \$300 gross to \$400 gross and the present maximum adjustment from \$750 gross to \$1,000 gross; (iii) to continue during 1956 the temporary additional dependency credits granted to Headquarters and Washington D.C. staff in 1955; (iv) as from 1 January 1956, to liberalise the conditions of eligibility for the education grant, as recommended by the Secretary-General, and to increase the existing grant of \$200 as follows: (a) \$400 per annum in the case of a child being

educated in the home country; (b) in the case of a recognized school outside the home country, where the cost of the school is \$200 or less, to continue the present arrangement and pay full costs, and where the cost of the school is more than \$200, to make a grant of either \$200 or one-half of the cost, whichever is greater, up to a maximum of \$400 per annum.

17. The above action was approved by the General Assembly. The Staff Council unanimously adopted a resolution expressing warm appreciation to the Secretary-General and his advisers of the vigorous efforts which they had made in the interest of the staff.

18. The Staff Council is confident that, following the introduction of these stop-gap measures, the basic review in 1956 will demonstrate the need for a substantial improvement in the material conditions of the staff. The Council's Economic Sub-Committee is preparing papers for submission to the Review Committee.

IV. Education Grant

19. In addition to the action of the Staff Council reported above in regard to the amount of the education grant, the Council's Education Sub-Committee, in March 1955, prepared a report on educational facilities for the children of international civil servants. The Council endorsed the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, the main points of which were as follows: (a) the United Nations should give official recognition to the following principles: (i) adequate and appropriate schooling must be available, free of charge, for the children of international civil servants, (ii) as far as academic requirements are concerned, staff members should benefit by the above principle at least until their children reach the level of entrance to institutions of higher learning, (iii) such education should not necessarily be that provided by the country of duty station; (b) the United Nations should assure the responsibility for covering all the extra expenses incurred by staff members for the education of their children as a result of their serving the Organization outside their home country; (c) in large centres where the number of international civil servants warrants it and where a sufficient variety of national school systems are not easily accessible, the United Nations should assist substantially in the development and maintenance of international schools; and (d) in the case of parents who prefer to send their children to a school of their own national or cultural system of education, eligibility to the education grant should be extended and its amount increased to cover the entire cost of normally required education in such a school, at least up to the level of entrance to institutions of higher learning.

20. Representatives of the staff discussed these recommendations with the Secretary-General prior to the submission by the latter of a paper to the International Civil Service Advisory Board (ICSAB), which had been requested to study the question. The recommendations of the Staff Council were also submitted to the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and were largely incorporated in the latter's paper submitted to ICSAB.

21. Although the recommendations contained in ICSAB's report fell considerably short of those put forward by the staff, they nevertheless represented a substantial advance in regard to the conditions under which staff members should be eligible for the education grant. The proposals which the Secretary-General submitted to the tenth session of the General Assembly took into account the recommendations of ICSAB, as well as the staff recommendations regarding the amount of the grant. As a result of these developments and of the General Assembly's action, the conditions of eligibility of United Nations staff for the education grant have been considerably liberalised as of 1 January 1956.

V. Administrative Tribunal

22. The General Assembly, at its ninth session, decided to accept the principle of a judicial review of judgements of the Administrative Tribunal and appointed a Special Committee to study the institution of a procedure for judicial review in all its aspects. The Special Committee, at the beginning of its session held in April 1955, recognized the direct interest of the Staff Council in the subject and extended an invitation to the Chairman of the Staff Council or his representative to attend the meetings of the Special Committee as observers. The observers availed themselves of this opportunity to supplement the statement of the Staff Council, which had been transmitted to the Special Committee by the Secretary-General. The Staff Council took the position that it was not convinced of the necessity of establishing a procedure for reviewing judgements of the Administrative Tribunal. If, however, a review procedure were to be introduced, it should follow the generally recognized principles for judicial appeals, and the review should be made by a strictly judicial body. The right to institute the review should be limited to the two parties.

23. The Special Committee, by majority decision, recommended a review procedure which in several respects did not meet the requirements considered essential by the Staff Council. The Staff Council prepared therefore a further statement, commenting on the recommendations made by the Special Committee. This statement was transmitted to the Fifth Committee by the Secretary-General at the beginning

of the tenth session of the General Assembly. Although the apprehensions of the Staff Council with regard to the non-judicial character of the review procedure were shared by many delegations, the General Assembly finally adopted a resolution establishing a review procedure in line with the recommendations of the Special Committee (see SCC/197 of 29 April 1955 and SCC/211 of 16 November 1955).

24. The Staff Council has for a long time been convinced that the position of the individual staff member should be strengthened by the provision of adequate legal aid in cases of appeal. An informal panel of staff members with legal training, who are willing to assist colleagues in Appeals Board cases, continued to render its valuable services under Staff Council auspices. The question of providing legal aid to applicants before the Administrative Tribunal was further discussed with the Administration and it is hoped that agreement will be reached in the near future on the necessary arrangements.

VI. Promotion Policies and Procedures

25. The Staff Council has been seized of the question of promotion policies and procedures for a number of years. It undertook a study of this question for the dual purpose of working out an agreed position in respect of the present system in the Secretariat and of providing a frame for discussion by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations. During the current term, the Council brought its study of the problem to a conclusion by adopting a series of recommendations which were intended to afford a basis for a comprehensive scheme to be prepared through joint consultations between the Secretary-General and the Staff Committee.

26. The Staff Council aimed at correcting four basic deficiencies which, in its opinion, mark the present promotion system. These deficiencies are: (a) the subordination of promotion to a rigid manning table; (b) the dependence of promotion upon an unrealistic classification of posts; (c) the failure to establish promotion lists for all categories of the staff; and (d) the absence of staff participation in the promotion machinery.

27. Accordingly, the Council recommended:

- (a) That the Secretary-General should have authority to regrade and transfer posts and staff between the various administrative units in order to adjust the manning table to the changing requirements of the service and to meet the recognized needs of promotion;
- (b) That the number of grades be reduced to correspond more nearly to the actual distinctions in the levels of qualifications and responsibility, with a widening of the salary range of each grade;

- (c) That promotion lists should be established for both the professional and general service categories in order to facilitate the advancement of staff members on an equitable basis, due account being taken of merit and seniority in United Nations service.
- (d) That, in conformity with the established principle of advisory administrative machinery with staff participation, the Appointment and Promotion Board should comprise representatives of the staff.

28. In submitting the recommendations adopted by the Staff Council to the Secretary-General, the Staff Committee suggested that a joint working group be set up to study and report upon the best means of improving the existing promotion system. This suggestion has now been accepted by the Administration and the joint working group is being established.

29. The Secretary-General has already given expression to his awareness of weaknesses in the current systems, when he addressed the Fifth Committee during the tenth session of the General Assembly. He proposed to alter the present form of the budget on the ground, among other things, that it precluded him from transferring posts and staff between departments and offices. He also mentioned the difficulty of adjusting the establishment to the changing needs of the Organization because of the less than satisfactory age balance in the Secretariat. Finally, he indicated that the present imperfections in the manning table would have to be progressively removed in order to attain a better distribution of posts by grades.

30. Having received a considerable number of inquiries from staff members concerning certain specific instances of promotion which appeared to deviate from the provisions covering the posting of vacancies, laid down in Staff Rule 104.11, the Staff Committee has brought the more significant cases to the attention of the Director of Personnel, taking the position that pending the outcome of a study of this question by the joint working group on promotion policies and procedures, the existing rule should be applied uniformly.

VII. Revision of the System of Periodic Reporting

31. Periodic reports have long been a problem, not only for many of the staff members reported upon but also for the reporting supervisors and for the Administration. Their usefulness has often proved doubtful, as evaluations of staff members have tended to be far from comprehensive, and to be based on different standards. While the question of correct rating of staff members from many countries by supervisors from as many different backgrounds will remain a

basic problem of any international secretariat, any improvement is important, as it may help to prevent possible friction between the supervisor and the supervised on this delicate point and assist in providing data relevant to sound personnel administration. The recommendations for the revision of the existing system of periodic reporting, prepared by a working group with staff participation during 1954 and early in 1955, received considerable attention on the part of the Staff Council. While the necessity of maintaining a system of periodic reporting was recognized, and the recommendation for requesting the supervisor to indicate his views with regard to a number of specific questions concerning the performance of the staff member was considered an improvement, the Staff Council favoured simplifying the system by normally requiring a detailed periodic report only twice after the granting of a permanent appointment. The final form of the new system has not yet been announced.

VIII. Retirement Age and Pension Questions

32. The Staff Council, with the able assistance of the newly-established Pension and Retirement Sub-Committee, devoted considerable attention to pension questions and the problem of the retirement age. The general question of the normal retirement age has acquired particular importance as it will form the subject of a study by the International Civil Service Advisory Board during 1956. In view of the common interest of the staff of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, a thorough review of the problem took place at the sixth session of FICSA's Council. The U.N. representative was instructed to favour an arrangement providing for retirement between the ages of sixty and sixty-five at the option of the staff member concerned. In the light of a resolution on this question, adopted without opposing votes by FICSA, and after further study, the Council decided to recommend retaining for the time being the age of sixty as the normal retirement age. It favoured simultaneously an arrangement by which "pioneer" staff members, who had joined the United Nations during its formative period, i.e. before 1 January 1951, would normally be allowed to continue in service - up to the age of sixty-five - until their pension entitlement would amount to one-third of their final average remuneration. It was furthermore proposed that if in the latter case the entitlement would not amount to one-quarter of the final average remuneration, provision should be made to bring it up to that level, if necessary by a joint additional contribution to the Pension Fund. The Staff Council early in 1955 made suggestions for the elimination of certain inadequacies in Pension Fund Regulations, which would result in a fairer treatment of this group. The position on this question was reiterated in connexion with the above-mentioned

recommendation made with regard to the question of the retirement age. The Council submitted also a proposal for the payment of a termination indemnity to staff members whose retirement benefits amount to less than one-third of their final average remuneration. The Administration was unable to accept such an arrangement, which it was felt came more appropriately within the scope of the pension scheme. All these proposals reflect the growing concern of the Staff Council with the financial difficulties not infrequently encountered by the "older age entrants" upon reaching the retirement age.

33. The Staff Committee has also followed a few cases in which individual staff members requested an extension of the retirement age. It noted with concern that the existing procedures for the handling of such requests were not always adequately known and that the application of the standards established in 1953 seemed to lead to results which had not been intended. Adoption of the Staff Council's proposals concerning the retirement age would lead, from the staff point of view, to a desirable reduction of the area of uncertainty.

IX. Review Board

34. The Staff Council completed its study of certain aspects of the work of the Review Board, such as the evaluation of the staff members' professional ability, the granting of a second hearing to a staff member if he so desires, the timely acquainting of a staff member with all adverse evidence, the conduct of the hearing in the working language preferred by the staff member, the composition of the Board and the abolition of second and subsequent five-yearly reviews. In discussions with the Director of Personnel, the Staff Council's recommendations were sympathetically received and the procedures now followed by the Board are largely in line with the Staff Council's suggestions. The Secretary-General informed the General Assembly, at its tenth session, of his intention to remove the requirement of a five-year review after the first five years of permanent service.

35. With regard to its representation on the Board, the staff was fortunate in having a team with outstanding qualifications, representative of various cultures in the world. The contribution made by the staff-nominated member and his alternates to the work of the Board is perhaps not always adequately realized. The Staff Council would like to express its appreciation for their work in the interest of the staff and the United Nations.

X. Staff Rules

36. In connexion with the issuance of a new booklet, containing an up-to-date text of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, the Joint Advisory Committee considered a number of amendments, partly aimed at clarifying existing provisions and mostly emanating from a study undertaken by an informal working group with

staff participation set up previously. Several proposals submitted by the staff side, such as sick leave entitlement during leave after three consecutive days of certified sick leave instead of ten, were adopted. No further progress was made with the revision of the rules on travel, pending the outcome of a comparative study to be made under the auspices of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions. Another review of the Staff Rules might take place in connexion with a report on the application of the Staff Regulations, which the Secretary-General envisages to submit to the twelfth session of the General Assembly.

37. Several cases in which the Staff Regulations and Rules or administrative arrangements appeared to discriminate against women staff members were brought to the attention of the Staff Council. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the problems the Staff Council established an ad hoc working party to study this question.

XI. Summary Dismissal Case

38. Considerable apprehension was felt among the staff as a result of the summary dismissal of a staff member of the General Service category, who for family reasons had felt compelled to decline a mission assignment. The Staff Council was particularly concerned about the by-passing of the disciplinary machinery, which in its opinion had been established to examine situations of this kind, where disciplinary action might be deemed necessary. It was strengthened in this opinion by the previously stated view of the Administrative Tribunal that "the disciplinary procedures should be dispensed with only in those cases where the misconduct is patent and where the interest of the service requires immediate and final dismissal". The Staff Council regretted that the Appeals Board, in rejecting this point of view, did not elaborate on the legal aspects of this fundamental point. Although in the opinion of the Staff Council, the Administrative Tribunal might well have upheld the staff's position, it was decided that, in the best interests of both the staff member concerned and the United Nations, it would be preferable to reach an understanding with the Administration on the procedural aspects involved. The resulting exchange of correspondence, in which the Administration expressed its willingness normally to use the disciplinary machinery in cases of this kind, subject to a broadening of the terms of reference of the Joint Disciplinary Committee - to which the Staff Council agreed - was published in SCC/213 of 22 December 1955.

XII. Indexing of Personnel Files

39. At the last Annual General Meeting of the Staff Association, a resolution was adopted expressing the wish that the contents of personnel files be

indexed. Accordingly, the Staff Committee raised the matter in the Joint Advisory Committee and a joint working party was set up to determine the feasibility of indexing at least the Official Status and Confidential Non-Privileged sections of the files. The results of an experimental time testing entrusted to experienced Registry staff indicated that to index the contents of approximately 7,700 files (the average number of items per file being 110), the Registry would require the help of one person for 17 years or that of four persons for 4 1/2 years; similarly, the indexing of current monthly interfiles would require 83 hours of additional work, viz. the help of one person working steadily for half a day. It was felt that under these circumstances it would be unrealistic to insist at this stage upon the introduction of a system of indexing personnel files. In practice the strict application of the jointly agreed personnel files system might be reasonably ensured by taking up relevant individual complaints with the Administration.

XIII. Guide Service

40. The transfer, as of 1 June 1955, of the activities of the American Association for the United Nations with regard to visitors to the U.N. Headquarters, principally the "Guide Service", to the United Nations required the formulation of new Staff Rules for this special category of staff members. Representatives of the Guide Service and the Staff Committee met frequently with representatives of the Administration for this purpose, inter alia presenting factual information covering existing employment conditions. In discussing a great variety of aspects, the staff representatives were guided by the wish to follow on one hand as much as possible the prevailing pattern of the United Nations employment conditions, while preserving the rights relating to special working conditions for guides which had been established under the American Association for the United Nations. With regard to certain aspects, difference of opinion prevailed. It was therefore agreed to review employment conditions in the light of the experience gained in the course of six months. The necessary steps for the preparation of this review have recently been taken by the staff side.

41. The Staff Committee requested the Secretary-General, earlier in 1955, to intervene with the American Association for the United Nations in connexion with the sudden termination of eighteen guides by the latter. The action taken by the AAUN was subsequently modified.

XIV. Health Questions and Medical Insurance

42. The development of policies governing the operation of the Health Service has been based on principles in accord with those advanced by the Staff Council, emphasizing service to the staff and eliminating all disciplinary

functions. During the year, close contact has been maintained between the Staff Council and the Health Service through constant consultation on the needs and problems of the staff in this regard.

43. The Medical Insurance Review Committee, set up by the Administration with staff participation, has been engaged in a comprehensive study of the medical expense problems of the staff. On the basis of an analysis of the replies to the Medical Expense Questionnaire, which met with a good response from the staff, the Committee is considering various aspects of medical insurance and related arrangements, including possible coverage for catastrophic expenses and the problem of the high cost of dental care. It decided to complete its comprehensive review before making recommendations regarding any major changes in the present arrangements. In the meantime, a number of improvements in benefits were put into effect under the United Medical Services and Associated Hospital Service plans, including new allowances under the ^{JMS} contract for laboratory tests and radiological services, with the Organization bearing the additional costs for over two-thirds of the staff. Other problems, such as arrangements for dependents not covered under current plans and the question of subsidy equalization for female staff members, have also been taken up with the Administration.

XV. Cafeteria Questions

44. During the year, the Staff Council continued its consideration of various questions related to the Cafeteria. In doing so the Staff Council has sought to represent the interest of the staff as consumers by exploring the possibility of obtaining lower prices in the Cafeteria without any sacrifice of quality or quantity and without any deterioration of service. In April, an ad hoc committee was set up by the Council to inquire into the operation of the Cafeteria in all its aspects. On the basis of this inquiry, the Council made a number of recommendations to the Administration, including lower prices for small items and the installation of a soda bar. From time to time various other suggestions were put forward in the Joint Cafeteria Committee and many led to improvements being introduced. The existing management contract expires in July 1956 and the Administration has indicated that concrete proposals from the staff would be welcome.

XVI. Financing of the Staff Benevolent Fund

45. Pursuant to a resolution adopted at the last Annual General Meeting, the Staff Council asked the Administration early in 1955 to accept joint responsibility in maintaining the Staff Benevolent Fund by matching the contributions of the staff. The Administration found this proposal unacceptable but indicated that possible contributions by the Organization could be considered after a staff collection had been carried out.

46. In order to meet the urgent need for replenishing the resources of the Fund, the Staff Council voted a contribution of \$1,500 from the funds of the Staff Association and subsequently sponsored a Secretariat-wide fund-raising drive. This drive met with an encouraging response from staff members and resulted in individual contributions totalling \$4,339.63. The Administration has subsequently been requested to give further support to the Fund by making a financial contribution.

XVII. Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA)

47. The past year gave further evidence of the value of coordinating the policies of the various staff associations in the United Nations family with regard to questions of common interest. Points of great importance to the international civil service, such as salaries and allowances, including educational facilities for staff members' children, retirement age, travel rules etc. are increasingly being taken up at the inter-agency level by the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, the International Civil Service Advisory Board, and various ad hoc committees. The views submitted to these bodies by the staff side are likely to be more effective if they are comprehensive and non-contradictory. FICSA, comprising thirteen member associations with a total membership of almost 9,000 international civil servants, provides the necessary machinery for this purpose. FICSA's Council met in February and September 1955, when it discussed inter alia the question of salaries and allowances, the retirement age, modes and standards of travel, recruitment, promotion and transfer, legal aid to staff members and a comparative study of Staff Regulations and Rules. The retirement age question and a statement to be submitted to the Salary Review Committee will be considered at the seventh session of FICSA's Council, scheduled for March 1956 at Geneva.

XVIII. Other Items

Questions under Consideration of the Staff Council

Assistance for financing down-payments on housing
Coordination between Headquarters and Geneva Staff Councils
Implications of the principle of Geographical Distribution
Group Life Insurance Company Contract
Language classes at lunch time
Linguistic standards in the Secretariat
Pedestrian crossing at 42nd Street and 1st avenue
Red Cross Blood Bank
Staff Consultation
Staff Discounts in the Gift Shop
Conditions of service on mission assignments.

Questions raised during the past year
on which no further action now is required

Adequacy of elevator service
Advance payment of education grant
Arrangements for parking in the garage
Entitlement to allowances for foster children
prior to adoption
Investigation of international civil servants
Polio inoculations
Prices in the barbershop
Red Cross and other contributions
Staff consultation on alterations in the building
Summer working hours
Transitional arrangements for first home leave entitlement
Travel arrangements for San Francisco Commemorative Meeting
Travel subsistence allowance.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Introduction

Contributions to the Staff Association continued at the same level as in the preceding years.

The Council adopted a set of Financial Rules (reproduced as Section D of the Statute of the Staff Association) for the purpose of facilitating the management and control of the finances of the Association.

The Council also established a Reserve Fund and, on 22 June 1955, transferred to it the sum of \$4,419.94. This sum is reflected in the amount of the Association's savings account.

Statement of Income and Disbursements

1 February 1955 to 31 January 1956

Income:

Contributions	\$ 5,906.87	
Less refunds of over-payments	8.00	
	<hr/>	\$ 5,898.87
Interest earned on Savings Accounts		<hr/> 150.71
Total Income		<hr/> \$ 6,049.58

Disbursements:

Benevolent Fund	\$ 1,500.00	
Staff Day	500.00	
FICSA dues	1,260.00	
Council and Committee hospitality	128.39	
Postage, cables, etc.	41.91	
Travel expense	390.57	
Office Equipment	17.85	
	<hr/>	\$ 3,838.72
Total Disbursements		<hr/> \$ 3,838.72
Excess of Income over Disbursements		<hr/> \$ 2,210.86

Statement of Assets and Liabilities
as at 31 January 1956

Assets:

Cash in checking account		\$ 724.21
Cash in savings accounts and interest earned	\$ 5,614.94 <u>150.71</u>	\$ 5,765.65*
Petty Cash		<u>10.00</u>
Total Assets		<u>\$ 6,499.86</u>

Liabilities:

	None	
Cash balance 1 February 1955		\$ 4,289.00
Add excess of Income over Expenditures 1955		<u>2,210.86</u>
		<u>\$ 6,499.86</u>

(*) \$4,419.94 this sum is the reserve fund established by the Council on 22 June 1955.