



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/35/4
11 March 1980

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-fifth session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Item 93 of the preliminary list*

MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1980-1983

Draft calendar for the preparation of the proposed
medium-term plan 1984-1989

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	2
I. SCOPE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF REGIONAL, SECTORAL AND OTHER ORGANS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN	7 - 12	4
II. A DRAFT CALENDAR PROVIDING FOR A FULL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL PROGRAMME-REVIEWING INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANS	13 - 54	5
III. OBSTACLES FORESEEN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRAFT CALENDAR	55 - 69	13
IV. ALTERNATIVE SIMPLIFIED PREPARATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURE AND POTENTIAL FOR A SHORTER TIME SCHEDULE	70 - 89	16
CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS	90	19

* A/35/50.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its nineteenth session adopted a number of recommendations on the subject of the process of programme planning in the United Nations; 1/ those recommendations were endorsed by the Economic and Social Council by its decision 1979/66 and adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 34/224.

2. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination recommended inter alia that there should be full involvement of intergovernmental organs in the formulation, consideration, review and evaluation of the plan during the regular cycle of their meetings. 2/ The General Assembly decided that effective participation of the central and regional, sectoral and other bodies should be achieved by means of an appropriate preparation period and greater co-ordination of their calendar of meetings. 3/

3. The Committee also recommended that the plan should cover a period of six years and that the next medium-term plan should cover the period 1984-1989. 4/ From the debates that preceded these recommendations 5/ it was clear that the Committee's views were that a formulation and review period for the next plan extending over a period of 18 months to two years, ending by the General Assembly review of the draft plan at its thirty-seventh session in the fall of 1982 would be feasible. In order to examine the feasibility of this conception and to verify that such a period allows for the effective participation of the sectoral, regional and other bodies, the Committee requested the Secretariat to submit a draft calendar of preparation for the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 for consideration at its twentieth session. 6/

4. The present report has been prepared by the Secretary-General in accordance with that request and after consultations with the secretariats of the major organizational units involved in the formulation of the medium-term plan.

5. The first part of the report relates to the scope of the involvement of sectoral, regional and other organs. The second part contains a draft calendar of preparation for the medium-term plan which would fully respond to CPC's recommendations. The third part summarizes the practical difficulties foreseen by various units and organizations in complying with the time-table suggested in

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/34/38), chap. II, paras. 71-72.

2/ Ibid., para. 71 (g).

3/ General Assembly resolution 34/224, para. 2 (f).

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/34/38), chap. II, para. 72 (a) and (b).

5/ Ibid., para. 35.

6/ Ibid., para. 73.

part two. A fourth part examines whether, in order to minimize the difficulties, a shorter and simpler preparation procedure, while not providing for a full involvement of specialized programme-reviewing bodies, would still ensure an effective participation of sectoral, regional and other organs in the planning process.

6. The Economic and Social Council also requested the Secretariat to submit proposals setting out an improved procedure for the preparation and review of the proposed programme budget. 7/ This subject is dealt with in a separate report submitted to the twentieth session of the Committee. 8/

7/ A/34/3/Add.36, Economic and Social Council decision 1979/93, foot-note j.

8/ A/C.5/35.

I. SCOPE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF REGIONAL, SECTORAL AND OTHER
ORGANS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

7. The Committee felt 9/ that the most efficient procedure for a full involvement of all intergovernmental organs in the formulation of the medium-term plan was to ensure that all organs review a document in the same format, with the draft reviewed by the sectoral and regional organs being submitted to the central organs along with the comments made by those organs in the review process.

8. This has several important consequences. First, those organizational units which had developed medium-term programming documents, for submission to their competent intergovernmental organs, in a format and/or for periods different from those of the medium-term plan, would have to propose changes to the organs concerned so as to conform to the format and periodicity of the medium-term plan, even if, to answer the needs of those organs more detailed narratives have to be added to the core document reviewed by the central organs. Some steps have already been taken in this direction. For instance the Working Party of the Trade and Development Board on the medium-term plan and the programme budget already reviews, in addition to UNCTAD's own programming documents, the proposed medium-term plan submitted to the General Assembly. Second, at the sectoral, regional and other levels the preparation and review of the draft medium-term plan would in most instances take place earlier than was the case before for the individual medium-term programming documents. This however would require even more time to elapse between the first intergovernmental review of a programming document and the beginning of the planned period. However, this might not constitute too severe a defect since the current review and update of the 1980-1983 medium-term plan shows that between early 1978 when the proposed plan was formulated by the substantive units and early 1980 when it was updated by the same, rather few programme changes of significant magnitude occurred.

9. As indicated in the statement made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation at the 586th meeting of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, on 18 May 1979, 10/ it is envisaged that the Introduction to the medium-term plan to be prepared by the Director-General would be available at the time when the Secretary-General's planning instructions are circulated to the relevant units, so as to serve as programme directives in the shaping up of the objectives and strategies of the plan.

10. In the draft calendar below, the full involvement of regional, sectoral and other organs is conceived in two stages. In the first stage a preliminary draft medium-term plan would be considered and commented upon by the relevant specialized programme-reviewing bodies, subsidiaries of the regional and sectoral organs of the United Nations and by subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council.

9/ A/34/38, chap. II, para. 22.

10/ E/AC.51/101.

11. In the second stage the draft plan would be reviewed by the regional or sectoral organs themselves before it is finalized for consideration by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council and finally for adoption by the General Assembly. This report is limited to the consideration of the review of the economic and social sector of the medium-term plan. The Secretary-General understands that it is chiefly in those sectors that the need for a more effective participation of sectoral, regional and other organs is being felt.

12. It should be borne in mind that reviews by sectoral, regional or other intergovernmental organs would not give the proposed medium-term plan any legislative authority. The plan remains a proposal until adopted by the General Assembly; after adoption, it becomes a principal policy directive. 11/ Therefore involvement of the various intergovernmental organs in the formulation of the medium-term plan should not extend to having them formally approve their relevant portion of the plan, since only the General Assembly can approve the plan.

II. A DRAFT CALENDAR PROVIDING FOR A FULL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL PROGRAMME-REVIEWING INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANS

13. The over-all time span of the proposed calendar is determined by the following considerations:

(a) All regional commissions hold their annual session in the first quarter or first third of the year;

(b) The subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council hold their sessions during a period ranging from January to May;

(c) If the specialized programme-reviewing bodies subsidiary to sectoral and regional organs are called upon to review a preliminary draft of the relevant portion of the medium-term plan, time should be allowed between their review and that of the sectoral and regional organs for secretariat co-ordination and processing of documentation;

(d) It would be highly desirable to reduce the rescheduling of meetings, especially at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna to a minimum.

FIRST STAGE: Consideration by various specialized subsidiary bodies

Step 1

14. The first step would be the preparation of the preliminary draft of the proposed medium-term plan. This phase should take place from November 1980 to January 1981 inclusive. This would involve not only preparation by each substantive unit at the programme level of its relevant portion of the preliminary draft but also editing and translating the draft into the working languages of each technical

11/ General Assembly resolution 34/224, para. 2 (c).

body (for example, the draft medium-term plan for population activities in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs would have to be translated into the working languages of the Population Commission).

15. It should be borne in mind that the General Assembly, in its resolution 33/55, approved recommendation 12 (d) of the Committee on Conferences, which provided that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take measures to ensure that pre-session documents for meetings of intergovernmental bodies shall be distributed no less than six weeks before the meetings, in all languages, in so far as the subject dealt with, or the schedule of meetings, or the reporting system allows.

16. If the preparation of the preliminary draft starts, as it should, in November 1980, the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session up to December 1980 will of course have to be incorporated later in the draft immediately after the closure of the session. This could make it difficult in some cases to implement the six weeks rule.

Step 2

17. The second step would be the review of the preliminary draft of the proposed medium-term plan by the relevant subsidiary organs/bodies of the Economic and Social Council, the Trade and Development Board, the Industrial Development Board, the Governing Council of UNEP and the regional commissions. This phase should take place during February and March 1981. It would require that the bodies concerned meet during that period in order to express their views on the preliminary draft. It would therefore be advisable that those of the subsidiary organs concerned which are not scheduled to meet at that time be given the opportunity to consider the preliminary draft, either through a change in their calendar of meetings or through any other mechanism they might think appropriate.

18. Changes in the calendar of meetings should be kept to a minimum since the clustering of meetings during the first quarter of 1981 might conflict with other requirements and also raises problems of physical capabilities of conference services and availability of experts or representatives of Member States.

19. From the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1980-1981 as adopted by the General Assembly 12/ at its thirty-fourth session, it appears that the following bodies would be affected:

(a) Subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council

20. The subsidiary bodies which are scheduled to meet in 1981 but before the preliminary draft is ready would have to hold their session later in the year. This is the case for the Population Commission which is scheduled to meet from 26 January to 4 February 1981. Of course, there is still a possibility that the preliminary draft relating to the population activities of DIESA might be ready by that date.

12/ A/AC.172/26.

21. The bodies which are scheduled to meet in 1981 but after March would have to reschedule their session earlier in the year. This is the case for the Commission on Human Settlements, scheduled to meet in April 1981 and the Commission on Transnational Corporations and the Committee on Natural Resources, which are both scheduled to meet from 18 to 28 May 1981.

22. The bodies meeting biennially on even years, i.e. 1982, would have to schedule a session in February or March 1981. This is the case of the Commission on the Status of Women.

23. No change would be necessary in the calendar of meetings for the Commission for Social Development (9-19 February 1981) or the Statistical Commission (17-26 February).

(b) Specialized subsidiary bodies of the Trade and Development Board

24. At the time of the preparation of the present report, UNCTAD had not yet decided on the dates of meetings of its specialized subsidiary bodies for 1981. 13/

25. The Working Party of the Board on the Programme and Medium-term Plan meets annually in March. It is felt that the decision to have the preliminary draft reviewed by the specialized bodies of UNCTAD or to leave it to the Working Party should be left to the Trade and Development Board; if the latter is acceptable, there might be no need to convene the specialized bodies to review the plan.

(c) United Nations Industrial Development Board

26. The permanent Committee of the Industrial Development Board will meet in April/May 1981 and could reschedule its session to March. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that, according to General Assembly resolution 34/96 adopting the Constitution of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization establishing UNIDO as a specialized agency, the Industrial Development Board shall

13/ The specialized bodies which might be involved in the consideration of the preliminary draft if so decided would be the following:

Ad hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Integrated Programme for
Commodities; and/or
Committee on Commodities;
Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries;
Committee on Invisibles and Financing related to Trade;
Committee on Manufactures;
Committee on Shipping;
Committee on Transfer of Technology;
Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries;
Sessional Committee on the problems of trade among countries having
different economic and social systems;
Special Committee on Preferences.

/...

cease to exist as soon as the members of the Board of the new agency have been elected.

(d) United Nations Environment Programme

27. The Governing Council will meet in April/May 1981 and could either reschedule its session or decide to establish an ad hoc body to which the task of reviewing the preliminary draft of the medium-term plan could be entrusted. The decision should be left to the Governing Council.

(e) Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development

28. The Committee is to meet annually and is scheduled to hold its first regular session in the second quarter of 1980. Although the General Assembly resolution establishing the Committee does not indicate the date of subsequent sessions of the Committee, it can be assumed that the second regular session of the Committee would take place during the same period of the year, that is in the second quarter of 1981. The Committee would thus have to reschedule its session to March 1981.

(f) Economic Commission for Africa

29. The Conference of Ministers of the Commission adopted at its fifth session in March 1979 a resolution on the restructuring of its machinery. By that resolution the Conference decided that the Executive Committee and the Technical Committee of Experts would be abolished and that the Conference of Ministers would meet on an annual basis to review the programme of work and priorities of the Commission.

30. The Conference also decided to establish a Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole which would meet annually immediately before the Conference of Ministers and report to it. The Conference of African Statisticians, the Conference of African Planners and the Conference of African Demographers were merged into a single organ to be known as the Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers meeting on a biennial basis. The other specialized subsidiary bodies which would be involved in the review of the preliminary draft are the Conference of African Ministers of Industry which meets biennially on odd years in November, the Conference of African Ministers of Trade which meets biennially on odd years, the Conference of African Ministers of Trade which meets on an ad hoc basis, the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development which meets every three years and is scheduled to meet in 1983, the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements which meets annually, and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology which meets on an ad hoc basis.

31. Since the Commission has not communicated a calendar of meetings for its specialized subsidiary organs, it is difficult to indicate the magnitude of the changes in the calendar which would be required, were those organs to be entrusted with the review of the preliminary draft.

32. The Commission might wish to reschedule the meetings of the subsidiary organs in order to allow them to meet in time to consider the preliminary draft; another alternative would be to delegate this task to the Preparatory Committee of the Whole which is scheduled to meet in February 1981 or to an ad hoc committee established for that purpose.

(g) Economic Commission for Europe

33. The Commission has several specialized subsidiary bodies which all meet annually. If the Commission decides to entrust them with the task of reviewing the preliminary draft, most of them would have to reschedule their meetings since they will meet either too early as it is the case for the Committee on Gas (January) or too late as it is the case for the Government officials responsible for Standardization Policies (June), the Conference of European Statisticians (June), the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning (September), the Coal Committee (September), the Chemical Industry Committee (October), the Timber Committee (October), the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology (October), the Steel Committee (October), the Committee on Water Problems (November), the Committee on Electric Power (November) and the Committee on the Development of Trade (November).

34. No change would be necessary in the date of meeting of the Inland Transport Committee (February), the Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments (February), the Senior Advisers to ECE on Environmental Problems (March), the Working Party on Automation (March) and the Committee on Agricultural Problems (March).

35. The decision to (a) have the preliminary draft reviewed by the specialized subsidiary bodies and thus reschedule their meeting when necessary or (b) to create an ad hoc body which would be entrusted with the review should be left to the commission.

(h) Economic Commission for Latin America

36. The Commission does not have subsidiary specialized bodies. However, its Committee of High Level Government Experts meets on an ad hoc basis and the Commission may wish to entrust that Committee with the task of reviewing the preliminary draft; the Committee could thus schedule a session in February or March 1981. As an alternative, the Commission might wish to delegate that task to an ad hoc body established specifically for that purpose.

(i) Economic Commission for Western Asia

37. The Commission is currently considering the establishment of subsidiary bodies but has not as of this date taken any decision in that respect. If the Commission decides in the near future to establish subsidiary bodies, it might wish to entrust them with the review of the preliminary draft; should this be the case, the Commission should take into account the necessity to enable them to meet in February or March 1981 when drawing up its calendar of meetings.

38. As an alternative, the Commission might prefer to entrust the review of the preliminary draft to an ad hoc body established for that purpose.

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(j) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

39. The Commission has nine specialized subsidiary bodies. The Committee on Industry, Housing and Technology, the Committee on Trade, the Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on Shipping, Transport and Communications meet annually. The Committee on Agriculture Development, the Committee on Development and Planning and the Committee on Statistics meet biennially. The Committee on Population and the Committee on Social Development meet every three years.

40. In accordance with the conference structure of the Commission, seven out of the nine committees are convened in a given year. They normally meet from May to December and have to be accommodated in the calendar of conferences. A decision by the Commission to entrust the review of the preliminary draft to those specialized bodies would involve extensive changes in its calendar of conferences and meetings since all committees would have to be rescheduled. The Commission might therefore wish to establish an ad hoc body for the purpose of reviewing the preliminary draft.

Step 3

41. The third step would be the preliminary co-ordination of the initial drafts by the Secretariat and should take place between April and August 1981 inclusive.

42. The views and comments of the technical subsidiary organs would have to be summed up in papers destined for the regional and sectoral programme reviewing organs. Then the preliminary drafts would be reviewed at Headquarters for the purpose of co-ordination at the major programme level through exchanges with and between sectoral and regional secretariats. It should be borne in mind here that an exchange of information going both ways between Headquarters and a given regional commission normally takes at least one month.

43. The last two months of this step, July and August, would be devoted to the redrafting, editing, translation and reproduction by each sectoral and regional entity of its relevant portion of the preliminary draft.

SECOND STAGE: Consideration of the draft medium-term plan by sectoral and regional organs

Step 4

44. The fourth step would be the review of the draft thus produced by the regional and sectoral organs themselves such as the regional commissions, the Trade and Development Board, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Industrial Development Board. This review should take place from September to November 1981 inclusive.

45. It appears from the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980-1981 as adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session that this would involve rescheduling the meetings of all the organs concerned except the Trade and Development Board which will hold a session from 14 to 25 September 1981.

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46. The Industrial Development Board will meet in May 1981; however the Permanent Committee of the Board meets twice a year in April and November. The Board could therefore consider delegating the Permanent Committee to act on its behalf at its November session. As it has been noted before, the Board might have ceased to exist at that time.

47. The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme will meet in April/May 1981. As noted before, the Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development will presumably hold its 1981 regular session in the second quarter of that year, that is between April and June 1981. The Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa is scheduled to meet in February 1981. The Economic Commission for Europe will meet in March/April 1981. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Western Asia both plan to meet in April 1981. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is scheduled to meet in March 1981.

48. Therefore if no session of those organs can be scheduled during September to November, it would become necessary that they establish an ad hoc body to review the draft medium-term plan on behalf of that organ unless that ad hoc body already exists.

Step 5

49. The fifth step which should take place between December 1981 and February 1982 inclusive, would be the drawing up of the final text by the Secretariat at the central level, taking into account the views and comments expressed by the various bodies concerned and in consultation with the Secretariat units concerned, and the preparation by those units of attachments summing up the views and comments of the various bodies consulted, for the consideration of the central organs when the intergovernmental body involved could not agree on definite recommendations.

50. The final text would then be transmitted to the specialized agencies under the prior consultation procedure.

51. It is imperative that the phases described above must be completed by February 1982 so as to leave sufficient time for editing, translation and reproduction of the document by the Department of Conference Services.

52. The processing of the document by the Department of Conference Services would take place in March 1982.

THIRD STAGE: Review of draft medium-term plan by central organs and adoption by the General Assembly

Steps 6 and 7

53. The sixth step would be the review of the draft medium-term plan and the comments thereon of the organs concerned by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and by the Economic and Social Council. The draft medium-term plan,

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together with the views of CPC would then be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session.

54. The last step would be the consideration and adoption of the draft medium-term plan by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session in the fall of 1982.

SUMMARY

I. Consideration by various subsidiary bodies

- (i) Preliminary text drafted by
the Secretariat November 1980-January 1981
- (ii) Review by specialized bodies February-April 1981
- (iii) Preliminary co-ordination in
the Secretariat April-August 1981

II. Consideration by sectoral and regional organs

- (iv) Review by sectoral and
regional organs September-November 1981
- (v) Drawing up of final text in
the Secretariat December 1981-February 1982

III. Review by central organs

- (vi) CPC and the Economic and
Social Council May-July 1982
- (vii) ACABQ and General Assembly July-December 1982

III. OBSTACLES FORESEEN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRAFT CALENDAR

55. The above draft calendar of preparation of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 was communicated for comments and suggestions to the heads of the Secretariats of all organs potentially involved in the preparation and review of the medium-term plan. From the replies summarized below, it appears that some of those organs might encounter practical difficulties in complying with the timetable proposed in the draft calendar.

Subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council

56. As noted in the draft calendar, five subsidiary bodies are not scheduled to meet during the period of review of the preliminary draft of the plan, that is in February/March 1981. However, in the case of the Population Commission scheduled to meet from 26 January to 4 February 1981 and of the Commission on Human Settlements scheduled to meet in April 1981, a slight extension of the period of review of the preliminary draft would be acceptable.

57. Changes in the calendar of meetings would therefore be required in the case of the following three bodies:

Commission on Transnational Corporations and Committee on Natural Resources both scheduled to meet from 18 to 28 May 1981.

Commission on the Status of Women is scheduled to meet in 1982; if its session was rescheduled in 1981 to allow it to review the preliminary draft, it would be on the understanding that it would not meet in 1982 so that compliance with decision 1979/81 of the Economic and Social Council would be ensured and the biennial cycle of meetings would not be disrupted.

58. The feasibility of these changes was still under review at the time that this report was being prepared.

Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development

59. No comments or objections were formulated by the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Committee.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

60. No comments or objections were formulated by the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

United Nations Environment Programme

61. The Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme indicated that the Governing Council would consider at its session in April 1981 a first draft of UNEP's activities for the period 1984-1989 and would consider the final draft at its April 1982 session. A slight extension of the review period of the preliminary draft to April 1981 appears to be acceptable. However, if the review of the final

draft by the Governing Council takes place in April 1982, this would be too late for the finalized draft as endorsed by the Governing Council to be made available to CPC six weeks before its session, that is by mid-April.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

62. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization indicated agreement with the draft calendar.

Regional commissions

Economic Commission for Africa

63. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa indicated that, as suggested in the draft calendar, the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole, which is scheduled to meet in February 1981 would review the preliminary draft of the medium-term plan; however, it would not be possible to schedule a meeting of the Conference of Ministers during September/November 1981 to review the second draft of the plan.

Economic Commission for Europe

64. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe indicated that the timing of ECE meetings, including the annual session of the Commission, was set according to a phased schedule of work of the Commission which could not be altered; it also stated that it would not be necessary in any event for the subsidiary bodies of the Commission to review the medium-term plan since it derived directly from the work programme which they recommend to the Commission. The Commission will approve at its thirty-sixth session in March/April 1981 a work programme for the period 1981-1985 and will also, if necessary, take note of a projection of its work to 1989 in very general terms.

Economic Commission for Latin America

65. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America indicated that it was not possible to entrust the review of the draft medium-term plan to the Committee of High Level Government Experts, as suggested in the draft calendar, in view of the limited membership of that body and of its terms of reference which did not include programme matters.

Economic Commission for Western Asia

66. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Western Asia indicated that the Commission at its seventh session in March 1980 will consider the question of establishing an Ad Hoc Technical Committee of Experts. It is expected that the Committee, composed of the whole membership of the Commission, will be entrusted with, inter alia, the review of the draft medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 and will be directed to meet in February/March 1981 to review the preliminary draft of the plan as well as in September/November 1981 to review the second draft of the plan.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

67. The secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific indicated that the rescheduling of the meetings of all nine committees would present insurmountable practical problems; however the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives (ACPR) of the Commission which is composed of all the members of the Commission will be entrusted with the review of the preliminary draft of the plan in February/March 1981 as well as with the review of the second draft in September/November 1981. The Commission will consider the matter at its thirty-sixth session in March 1980 and will most likely adopt a resolution entrusting ACPR with the review of the medium-term plan.

68. It thus appears from the replies that obstacles regarding the review of the preliminary draft of the proposed medium-term plan by various subsidiary organs can be foreseen with respect to three of the subsidiaries of the Economic and Social Council, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Latin America. Obstacles regarding the review of the second draft of the plan will exist with respect to the Governing Council of UNEP, ECA, ECE and ECLA and possibly ECWA. Those obstacles however might not be insurmountable. The most important goal pursued by the Committee and the Council and the General Assembly when recommending a full involvement of all competent intergovernmental organs in the plan formulation is to ensure a twofold coherence and consistency in the programming of activities. On the one hand a consistency between the short-term work programmes and the medium-term plan: by having the same intergovernmental bodies to review the medium-term plan and the programmes of work corresponding to the programme budget, to build in the programming procedures the role of programme framework that the medium-term plan should play vis-à-vis the programme budget. On the other hand by organizing an exchange between the central and the regional levels when formulating the medium-term plan to ensure a global coherence between activities planned in the same programme area by different entities.

69. If it is considered desirable that all programme reviewing intergovernmental organs, including the specialized organs, subsidiary to the sectoral and regional bodies, should be involved in the planning process, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination might wish to make appropriate recommendations to that effect to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly. These recommendations would involve:

(a) That the sectoral and regional organs consider making arrangements to allow their subsidiary bodies to review the relevant portions of the draft medium-term plan at an appropriate time;

(b) That those sectoral, regional and other organs which are not planning to meet at the time suggested in the calendar, consider possible rearrangements in the calendar of their meetings so that they may proceed with the review of the medium-term plan. The Committee might wish to emphasize in that respect that changes in the calendar of meetings would be required only in plan-formulation year and not every year.

IV. ALTERNATIVE SIMPLIFIED PREPARATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURE AND POTENTIAL FOR A SHORTER TIME SCHEDULE

70. The draft calendar described in chapter II provides for the fullest involvement of all intergovernmental bodies in the planning process. However, it has several drawbacks. First, the formulation procedure becomes quite heavy involving a sequence of three review cycles. Second, it requires a sizeable rescheduling of meetings and/or establishment of ad hoc planning subsidiary bodies, which might involve some costs. Third, it extends over a period of 24 months, in addition to the one year needed to allow the plan to serve as a framework for the programme budget. Thus the plan would have to be formulated three years prior to the commencement of the planned period or nine years prior to its end. Fourth, during its first four months, the preparation period of the 1984-1989 medium-term plan would overlap with that of the 1982-1983 programme budget; this means that the work of drafting the medium-term plan and the work of drafting the programme budget, which involve in good part the same substantive staff, would coincide.

71. In view of the above, one is tempted to look whether a simpler preparation and review process, where the first planning cycle with the specialized programme reviewing organs would be omitted, would also allow for a considerably shorter calendar of work.

72. Under such conception of the review process, there would be no involvement of the specialized programme reviewing bodies. Thus the draft medium-term plan would be reviewed only twice, in the first instance by the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and by the regional and sectoral organs themselves, then finally by the central organs.

73. The co-ordination at the major programme level through exchanges between sectoral, regional and central secretariats would take place after the first review and before submission of the draft medium-term plan to CPC.

74. The over-all calendar would thus involve the following stages:

Stage one: Consideration of the draft medium-term plan by sectoral
 and regional organs

Step (i) Drafting by the Secretariat;

Step (ii) Review by sectoral, regional and other organs:

Step (iii) Co-ordination and redrafting in the Secretariat.

Stage two: Review by central organs

Step (iv) CPC and the Economic and Social Council, May-July 1982;

Step (v) ACABQ and General Assembly, July-December 1982.

75. The second stage comprising review by central organs would remain essentially the same as in the more elaborate conception described in part II of this report.

Step 1

76. The first step would be the preparation by the Secretariat of the draft of the proposed medium-term plan. This would involve not only preparation by each substantive unit at the programme level of its relevant portion of the draft but also editing and translating the draft into the working languages of each organ. This step would require approximately three and half months.

Step 2: Review of the draft medium-term plan by the various organs concerned.

77. The six-week rule would also continue to apply and the draft should thus be ready six weeks before the review by the organs involved could start. The six-week period included and depending upon the schedule of regular meetings of these organs and the possibilities for rescheduling this step should in principle require a period of three to four months.

Step 3: Co-ordination, drawing up and reproduction of the final text.

78. Allowing at the end of the step one month for the processing of the documentation, and taking into account that this would become the only co-ordination stage, step 3 would require five months, with the deadline around 25 March 1982.

79. The following calendar is thus conceivable for the first stage:

Drafting by the Secretariat	March-May 1981
Processing of documentation	June 1981
Six-week period	July-mid-August 1981
Review by sectoral, regional and other organs	mid-August-October 1981
Co-ordination and redrafting	November 1981-February 1982

80. Such a calendar would mean that the review of the draft medium-term plan by the sectoral, regional and other organs should take place from mid-August to mid-October 1981. It would therefore become necessary that those organs which are not scheduled to meet during that period either reschedule their meetings or establish an ad hoc subsidiary body which would be entrusted with the review of the draft on their behalf.

81. It appears from the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1981-1982 as adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session that this would involve either rescheduling the meetings of all the organs concerned (except for the Trade and Development Board which will hold a session from 14 to 25 September 1981) or establishing ad hoc planning subsidiary bodies.

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Subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council

82. The following subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council would have to reschedule their session since all are scheduled to meet between January and May 1981:

Population Commission	26 January-4 February 1981
Commission for Social Development	9-19 February 1981
Statistical Commission	17-26 February 1981
Commission on Human Settlements	April 1981
Commission on Transnational Corporations	18-28 May 1981
Committee on Natural Resources	18-28 May 1981

Sectoral organs

83. The Industrial Development Board is scheduled to meet in May 1981; however the Permanent Committee of the Board meets twice a year in April and November. The Board could consider a slight rescheduling of the November session of its Permanent Committee and entrust it with the review of the plan. The Environment Governing Council is scheduled to meet in April/May 1981. The Intergovernmental Committee for Science and Technology for Development will presumably hold its 1981 regular session during the second quarter of that year, i.e. between April and June 1981.

Regional economic commissions

84. ECA's Conference of Ministers is scheduled to meet in February 1981. (ECA's secretariat has already indicated it would not be possible to schedule a meeting of the Conference of Ministers later in 1981). ECE will meet in March/April 1981. The Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe has already indicated that the timing of ECE meetings, including the annual session of the Commission, was set according to a phased schedule of work of the Commission which could not be altered. ECLA will meet in April 1981. ECWA will meet in April 1981. However, ECWA's secretariat indicated that the contemplated Ad Hoc Committee of Technical Experts, if established, would be directed to meet in September/November 1981. Thus, it could be suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee be directed to meet not later than October 1981 in order to be in a position to review the plan. ESCAP will meet in March 1981. The Secretariat indicated that its Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives (ACPR) of the Commission, which is composed of all the members of the Commission, might be entrusted with the review of the plan and directed to meet in September/November 1981.

85. It seems that while limiting the number of review cycles to two has advantages, this would not allow for a substantial reduction of the over-all preparation and review period, unless a considerable rescheduling of meetings, plus the establishment of several ad hoc planning subsidiary bodies is acceptable.

86. Should this not be the case, a viable and slightly different alternative might then consist of the following:

- (i) All sectoral, regional and other organs would meet as currently scheduled.
- (ii) Sectoral or regional organs which already have or intend to establish subsidiary organs with planning competence might delegate the review of the medium-term plan, if they wish.
- (iii) Programme managers would be instructed to prepare the first draft of their portion of the 1984-1989 medium-term plan on time to be submitted to the normal session of the competent intergovernmental organ or to the session of its ad hoc subsidiary body as the case may be.
- (ix) Those organs which are scheduled to meet early in 1981 might be requested to consider an exceptional curtailment of the six-week period, for instance to three weeks.
- (v) Starting in October 1981, approximately one month earlier than in the theoretical calendar above, all parts of the draft medium-term plan, duly considered by the competent regional sectoral or other intergovernmental organ, would be available for work towards programme co-ordination and final drafting.

87. Such arrangements for the first preparation and review cycle would have drawbacks as well as advantages.

88. The drawbacks are: (1) the first draft of the proposed medium-term plan would be prepared by different parts of the Secretariat at staggered periods, some as early as November 1980 others as late as May 1981, and (2) the over-all preparation and review period would still cover a two-year period.

89. The advantages are: (1) no rescheduling of meetings would be needed, (2) the complete overlap with the budget preparation period in terms of Secretariat work would be limited to certain programmes or sectors, and (3) the programme managers who would be in a position to start their preliminary drafts late in the drafting period would already have received the draft plans for programme areas related to theirs.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

90. The following preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the above considerations:

- (a) If it is considered essential that sectoral, regional and other intergovernmental organs effectively participate in the formulation of the medium-term plan, keeping the over-all length of the preparation and review period much below two years would necessitate a considerable amount of rescheduling of meetings,

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while the relevant secretariats have indicated that such reschedulings would in cases raise serious difficulties;

(b) A full involvement of all specialized programme reviewing organs, subsidiary to sectoral and regional organs in the process would result in a very heavy procedure probably involving extra costs;

(c) If it is considered acceptable that the earliest preparations start as early as 24 months before the General Assembly review of the medium-term plan, then the effective participation of regional, sectoral and other organs would be feasible under the current calendar of meetings, at the expense of a certain amount of staggering of Secretariat work on the initial drafts and a partial overlapping with programme budget preparations.
