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UNITED NATIONS PRIORITY PROGRAMMES AND
CONCENTRATION OF EFFORT AND RESOURCES

Note by the Secretary-General

At its fifth session, the attention of the Transport and Communications Commission was drawn to resolution 362 B (XII) adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its twelfth session, concerning Concentration of Effort and Resources, in which the Council requested its commissions:

- "(a) To review during 1951 their 1952 programmes, using the criteria* set forth in Council resolution 324 (XI); and
- (b) To indicate, when new projects are recommended, which current projects might be deferred, modified or eliminated to ensure that the economic and social work of the United Nations will be carried on most effectively."

As the twelfth session of the Council preceded by a few days only the fifth session of the Commission, it was towards the very end of its session that the Commission was informed of the Council's resolution and was therefore able merely to take note of it - a fact which was mentioned in the Commission's report to the Council.

At the subsequent (thirteenth) session, the Council's Co-ordination Committee noted in its report to the Council that there had been a good response to the above resolution and that several of the Commissions had brought out in their reports the good use which they had been able to make of the Council's criteria for priorities, when examining their programmes of work. The Committee recognized at the same time that the establishment of priorities presented problems of very different magnitude for different commissions, depending on the scope and character of the

* The text of these "Criteria for Priorities" is reproduced in Annex I.

work and the terms of reference under which they operated.

As far as the Transport and Communications Commission in particular is concerned, the Co-ordination Committee of the Council was informed on this occasion that the time factor had prevented the Commission from following the procedure called for by the Council resolution 362 B (XII). The hope was therefore expressed that the Commission would take it into account at its next session.

It might be mentioned, in this connexion, that the reports submitted to the thirteenth session of the Council by the two other functional commissions in the economic field (the Fiscal Commission and the Statistical Commission) both indicated an order of priorities for their activities.

The Council, in its resolution 402 B II (XIII) noted the report of its Co-ordination Committee (document E/2121 and E/2121/Corr.1) and gave its approval to specific recommendations and suggestions contained therein. It transmitted the report to, inter alia, its functional commissions with a request that they should take into account the recommendations contained in that report when reviewing their 1953 programmes and when communicating information thereon to the Council; and decided to put the following item on the provisional agenda of its fourteenth session: "Adoption of United Nations priority programmes in the economic and social fields."

After having examined the report of its Co-ordination Committee (document E/2306), which included recommendations and suggestions on United Nations priority programmes, the Council, at its fourteenth session (resolution 451 (XIV), adopted the statement contained therein on United Nations priority programmes (paragraphs 9 and 10 of the above-mentioned report as amended by the Council and annexed to its resolution); approved the recommendations concerning the review of programmes (paragraphs 11 to 15 of the same report); expressed its appreciation to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (page 13 of the same report E/2306) for the valuable observations it submitted in response to the Council's request; and, finally, requested the Secretary-General to bring these observations to the attention of the specialized agencies and the organs of the United Nations concerned for appropriate action.

In the above-mentioned paragraph 9 containing Recommendations and Suggestions, as amended by the Council, the following points refer directly to the functional commissions:

- "(j) The Council requests the functional and regional commissions to appraise their programmes in the light of the priority programmes outlined below*, and in so far as feasible, to give special emphasis to projects likely to contribute directly to the fulfilment of these priority programmes. The Council invites the specialized agencies to keep the priorities suggested below in mind, when reviewing and formulating their programmes. It invites their comments with regard to these priorities.
- (k) The Council recognizes that both the commissions and the specialized agencies are engaged in certain programmes that are not listed herein. The Council realizes that many of these programmes are of great importance and must be maintained.
- (l) The Council, bearing in mind its resolution 402 B III (XIII), urges its subsidiary bodies and the specialized agencies to take into account the suggested priorities, both in reviewing existing projects and in particular when initiating any new projects.
- (m) The Council requests commissions and specialized agencies to include in their next reports to the Council information on the action they have taken in this direction, so that the Council may review the situation at its next summer session."

With respect to point (k) above, additional guidance is provided in the same report, under point (i) which reads as follows:

- "(i) The Council recognizes that the priorities listed will not apply to some urgent problems of particular regions which may call for special measures. It is further to be noted that this list is not a comprehensive list which attempts to cover all the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, but is rather a list of major activities on which efforts should be further concentrated; indeed, a great part of the activities of a continuing nature, including the services designed to organize on the international level collaboration between specialists and technicians, have necessarily not been mentioned. Nor does the list refer to methods and techniques which are essential in the implementation of most of these programmes, i.e. forms of technical assistance including advisory social welfare services and improvement of public administration, as well as scientific exchanges, statistics, basic research on standards of living, etc."

In the above-mentioned paragraphs 11 to 15 of the Co-ordination Committee's report containing recommendations on the review of programmes of the United Nations

* The priority programmes in the economic field, as included in the list annexed to Council resolution 451 (XIV), are reproduced in Annex II.

and the specialized agencies, the Council requested its commissions, inter alia, to review annually their future programmes in accordance with the procedures outlined under Council resolution 402 B II (XIII) in so far as these procedures are applicable. (The relevant part of this resolution is reproduced in Annex III.)

The Commission will wish to take the foregoing into consideration during the deliberations of its sixth session and to have particularly in mind point (m) above, when preparing its report to the Council.

It might finally be added, in this connexion, that the General Assembly's resolution 533 (VI) C, on "Co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies: Concentration of effort and resources", included the following passages of direct interest for the Commission's task:

"The General Assembly,

.....

1. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare as an annex to his annual budget estimates an analysis, by fields of activity and by budget sections, of the estimated cost during that year of the economic and social activities of the United Nations; and to circulate this analysis to the Economic and Social Council at the beginning of its regular session immediately preceding the next regular session of the General Assembly;
2. Invites the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to review its procedures for examining the relative priorities and financial implications of new projects under consideration, in such a way that the Council may consider such projects not only in their substance but also in their relationship to existing activities in the field concerned, thereby promoting establishment of a balanced and realistic work programme for the future and facilitating subsequent consideration by the General Assembly of the related budgetary appropriations;

....."

The Secretary-General consequently submitted to the fourteenth session of the Economic and Social Council the information requested under point (1) above (document E/2315: "Work Programmes and Costs of the Economic and Social Activities of the United Nations") which the Council considered at its 669th meeting on 1 August 1952. This document contained a list of activities in, inter alia, the transport and communications field relating both to projects dealt with at present by the Transport and Communications Commission, with the assistance of the Secretariat, and such activities as the Secretariat itself has to perform

in this field which are not of direct concern to the Commission, e.g. collaboration in technical assistance activities and research matters.

Annex IV sets out, on the basis of the above list submitted to the Council by the Secretary-General the projects which come directly within the Commission's purview, grouped according to the same categories as in the list: (1) continuing projects, and (2) ad hoc projects of first priority.

The Commission might wish to take this listing of projects into account when preparing its report to the Council in accordance with the Council's resolutions mentioned in this paper.

ANNEX I

CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIES
AS SET FORTH IN RESOLUTION 324 (XI) OF THE COUNCIL

URGENCY: Is there a pressing need for action of the kind proposed?

FEASIBILITY:

- (a) Can qualified personnel be made available?
- (b) Are local conditions likely to be favourable?
- (c) Will the Governments concerned participate?

SCOPE:

- (a) Will the proposed action benefit directly or indirectly a significant number of Member States?
- (b) Will the proposed action benefit directly or indirectly a significant number of people?

PREPARATION AND CO-ORDINATION:

- (a) Have the necessary preliminary studies and preparations been made?
- (b) Has full account been taken of work already carried out in this field by other organizations?
- (c) Have the possibilities of action or financing from sources other than United Nations and the specialized agencies been fully explored?
- (d) Is the organ or agency concerned best suited to undertake the proposed action?
- (e) Can the proposed action be integrated into other projects in the same field?

RESULTS:

- (a) Are results likely to be significant in relation to the outlay of effort and financial resources and are they likely to accrue within a reasonable time?
- (b) Will those results be demonstrable?
- (c) Will the States concerned be in a position to carry on the proposed activities after they have ceased to be under international auspices?
- (d) Will the proposed action assist and stimulate national action so as to ensure that the international effort expended produces the maximum results at the national or regional level?
- (e) Will the proposed action assist a significant number of those Member States or those people whose needs for economic and social advancement are greatest?
- (f) Will the proposed action further significantly the total effort of the United Nations and the specialized agencies for the promotion of the economic and social objectives outlined in the Charter?

ANNEX II

Priority programmes in the economic field as included
in the list annexed to Council resolution 451 (XIV)

A. Increased food production and distribution

Increased food production:

- (a) Better control, management and multiple utilization of land and water resources, including the development of arid zones;
- (b) Improved economic incentives for agricultural producers and workers;
- (c) Land reforms in connexion with general economic development plans;
- (d) Campaigns against plant and animal diseases.

Improved utilization of food production:

- (a) Improved distribution of food products;
- (b) Promotion of better conservation methods, particularly in regard to storage;
- (c) Processing of food products within the countries of origin and dissemination of technical advances in such processing.

B. Increased production in fields other than food

- (a) Promotion of industrial development and of the improvement of production techniques;
- (b) The training of management and workers, including vocational education and guidance;
- (c) With a view to the utilization of the natural resources of a country, the expediting of the establishment of plans and development projects in heavy and light industry, transport, power and related fields;
- (d) Expediting of the planning and exploration of means of financing such projects;
- (e) Development of incentives, institutions and attitudes favourable to increased productivity.

C. Measures for promoting domestic full employment and economic stability within an expanding economy

- (a) Action designed to achieve and maintain full employment;
- (b) Promotion of measures for the control of inflation or deflation;
- (c) Promotion of a steady growth of international trade, with due regard to achieving an equilibrium in international accounts;
- (d) Adoption of measures to increase the export by the economically developed countries of industrial equipment and other capital goods essential to the development of the under-developed countries.

ANNEX III

RESOLUTION 402 (XIII OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
ON CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES ADOPTED ON 17 SEPTEMBER 1951

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II

The Economic and Social Council

1. Notes the endeavours of the functional and regional commissions to comply with the recommendations contained in Council resolution 324 (XI) and 362 B (XII) and General Assembly resolution 413 (V);
2. Notes the action so far taken by the specialized agencies to comply with the recommendations contained in Council resolution 324 (XI) and General Assembly resolution 413 (V);
3. Transmits the report* of its Co-ordination Committee on the review of 1952 programmes of the United Nations and the specialized agencies to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their information and appropriate action, and to its regional and functional commissions, to the specialized agencies and to all the other United Nations bodies whose activities fall within the sphere of interest of the Council, with the request that they should take into account the recommendations contained in that report when reviewing their 1953 programmes and when communicating information thereon to the Council;

.....

* Documents E/2121 and E/2121/Corr.1.

ANNEX IV

LIST OF PROJECTS DEALT WITH AT PRESENT BY THE
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Continuing projects

1. Study on co-ordination of inland transport (ECOSOC resolution 298 H (XI));
2. Review of developments in the field of international road transport with particular reference to international action required at the worldwide level to supplement the Convention on Road Traffic (ECOSOC resolution 272 (X));
3. International developments in the field of travel and tourism (ECOSOC resolution 35 (IV));
4. Progress in implementation of recommendations of the Meeting of Experts on Passports and Frontier Formalities (ECOSOC resolution 227 F (IX));
5. Contact with and reporting upon the activities of regional economic commissions and other regional bodies in this field, ensuring where appropriate that regional action is co-ordinated on a worldwide basis (ECOSOC resolution 7 (II));
6. Review of progress of work of those specialized agencies, other inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations as are wholly or partly in the field of transport and communications with particular reference to the co-ordination of their activities (ECOSOC resolution 7 (II));
7. Pending the coming into being of the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, review of problems which will ultimately fall to that organization:
 - (a) question of inter-governmental action on the unification of tonnage measurement (ECOSOC resolution 298 B (XI));
 - (b) pollution of sea water (ECOSOC resolution 379 F (XIII));
8. Collaboration with the Statistical Commission in the consideration of the problem of unification of transport statistics (ECOSOC resolution 7 (II)).

Ad hoc projects of first priority

1. Uniform system of road signs and signals (ECOSOC resolution 272 (X));
2. Uniform regulations for the licensing of motor vehicle drivers (ECOSOC resolution 379 B (XIII));

3. Study of the various aspects of the problem of the transport of dangerous goods with a view to determining which of these aspects are appropriate for uniform or approximately uniform regulation with respect to the various means of transport (ECOSOC resolution 379 E (XIII));
4. Study on discrimination in transport insurance (ECOSOC resolution 379 G (XIII));
5. Study of problems connected with the possible conclusion on a worldwide basis of two conventions relating to customs formalities:
 - (a) for the temporary importation of private vehicles and their equipment (ECOSOC resolution 379 D (XIII));
 - (b) for tourism (ECOSOC resolution 379 D (XIII)).
