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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

First session

10-14 January 1977

Item 3 of the provisional agenda.

Preparations for the United Nations
Conference on Technical Co-operation
Among Developing Countries

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

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INTRODUCTION

1. It should be recalled that a recommendation for holding an international symposium on technical co-operation among developing countries was first made by the Working Group on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in paragraph 7 E (35) of its final report (DP/69).
2. The final report of the Working Group was considered by the Governing Council at its eighteenth session and, following the recommendations of the Council, the General Assembly in resolution 3251 (XXIX) of 4 December 1974 requested the Governing Council to consider the scope of the symposium and the financial and other measures required for convening this intergovernmental meeting sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the aegis of the United Nations. In paragraph 9 of resolution 3461 (XXX) of 11 December 1975 the General Assembly requested the Governing Council to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-first session, through the Economic and Social Council, recommendations on the organization of the conference on technical co-operation among developing countries.
3. The Governing Council, at its twenty-first session, decided inter alia to request the Administrator to prepare a report on the organizational and financial aspects of the conference on technical co-operation among developing countries. This report was intended to facilitate the discussion of this item at its twenty-second session with a view to making recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session through the Economic and Social Council. 1/
4. At its twenty-second session, the Governing Council took note of the report of the Administrator prepared in pursuance to the above-mentioned decision (DP/202 and Add.1) and decided inter alia to recommend to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, through the Economic and Social Council, that it convene the conference as the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. 2/
5. The Economic and Social Council at its sixty-first session adopted resolution 2023 (LXI) of 4 August 1976, in which it endorsed the decision of the Governing Council on the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and requested the Secretary-General and the Administrator of UNDP to consult as to the best means of ensuring the adequate servicing of the Conference, taking into account the experience gained by the United Nations, and especially by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council, in the organization of world conferences.
6. The General Assembly at its thirty-first session adopted resolution 31/179 of 21 December 1976, in which it decided to convene the United Nations Conference on

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5779), para. 302.

2/ Ibid., Supplement No. 2A (E/5846/Rev.1), para. 512, decision I.

Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries at Buenos Aires from 27 March to 7 April 1978 and requested the Administrator of UNDP to act as the Secretary-General of the Conference.

7. On the recommendation of the Governing Council of UNDP and the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly also decided that the Sessional Committee on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of the Governing Council should function as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, that for that purpose it should be open to the participation of all Member States as full members and that it should hold three meetings. In accordance with the above decision, the Secretary-General has made arrangements to convene the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 14 January 1977. The Preparatory Committee will decide on the dates it wishes to set for its next session, which in principle would be of one week's duration and would take place before the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of UNDP.

8. The present report of the Secretary-General of the Conference revises and updates the report of the Administrator of UNDP (DP/202 and Add.1), taking into account the comments and suggestions made at the twenty-second session of the Governing Council of UNDP, at the regional intergovernmental meetings held in preparation for the Conference, and General Assembly resolution 31/179. This report will also be available to the Governing Council at its twenty-third session.

PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

9. In response to the decision of the Governing Council of UNDP taken at its twentieth session 3/ the Administrator completed arrangements for holding four regional meetings on technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) preparatory to the Conference.

10. The first of these regional meetings, organized by UNDP in co-operation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), was held at Bangkok from 25 February to 2 March 1976. Representatives of 33 Governments, including representatives of Governments from other regions, representatives of 14 specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and six other international and regional organizations attended.

11. At the Bangkok meeting, the participating Asian Governments identified problems of direct concern to them that were particularly amenable to solutions through TCDC. Another contribution of the Bangkok meeting was the identification of specific areas considered suitable for TCDC at the interregional and global levels. Finally, the meeting provided a stimulus to Governments to mount new efforts to promote TCDC in the region, based on each others' development experience and needs.

3/ Ibid., Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 2A (E/5703/Rev.1), para. 332 (g).

The final report of the regional TCDC meeting at Bangkok, including its conclusions and recommendations, which has already received general distribution (DP/TCDC/RAP/6), will be available to the Preparatory Committee and will be transmitted to the United Nations Conference on TCDC, as will the reports of the other regional TCDC meetings.

12. The second regional meeting, organized by UNDP in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Latin America, was held at Lima from 10 to 15 May 1976 at the invitation of the Peruvian Government. Thirty-eight Member States participated, of which 21 were from Latin America and the Caribbean and the rest from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. In addition, 13 specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and 20 other international and regional organizations were represented.

13. The recommendations of the Lima meeting (see DP/TCDC/RBLA/10 and Corr.1) reaffirmed the importance of national organizational efforts for TCDC based on national focal points and recommended the integration of these national focal points in a regional network for TCDC, which should be linked with the UNDP Information Referral System (TCDC/INRES) which deals with the capacities available for TCDC in developing countries. For the purpose of further promoting TCDC, the meeting recommended strengthening the capacity of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the offices of the resident representatives in the region to undertake additional responsibilities involving TCDC. An important recommendation of the meeting was the decision to organize a regional project with UNDP support, designed to identify new methods and procedures to promote TCDC in the region and with developing countries in other regions.

14. UNDP, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa, organized the third regional meeting in Addis Ababa from 4 to 8 October 1976. Forty-one Member States participated, of which 27 were from Africa and 14 from Europe, North America, South America and Asia. Representatives of 16 specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and three international and regional organizations attended.

15. The recommendations of the regional meeting for Africa (see DP/TCDC/RAF/12) recognized the importance of political will in promoting mutual self-assistance for development through TCDC. The existence of this will in the region was underscored by the growing number of bilateral and subregional activities for development being undertaken in Africa and the willingness of the African countries to overcome financial and other constraints to increase their mutual co-operation. It was agreed that one of the objectives of TCDC was to reduce the cost and improve the effectiveness of international technical co-operation as an instrument for development. The meeting also agreed on specific measures designed to promote TCDC in the region, such as the need to establish and strengthen professional and technical associations and consultancy services at the regional and subregional levels, which should be encouraged to co-operate with related institutions and services in other developing regions; to twin and share research and training institutions in order to reduce costs and avoid duplication; and to evaluate the expert services available. At this meeting UNDP was requested to undertake a survey of existing facilities for financing TCDC activities, including bilateral

and multilateral agencies, global, regional and subregional organizations and sources within the developing countries themselves, to be submitted to the United Nations Conference on TCDC.

16. The fourth regional meeting, for developing countries in the West Asian region, is now being organized in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA). It is expected that this meeting will be held at Kuwait from 24 to 29 May 1977.

ROLE OF THE PARTICIPATING AND EXECUTING AGENCIES AND THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

17. On the recommendation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly in resolution 31/179 requested the participating and executing agencies and the regional commissions, in close co-operation and consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference, to continue to give priority to activities to promote technical co-operation among developing countries and to contribute fully to the development by the Conference of an effective and practical plan of action to intensify such co-operation on a continuing basis.

18. In the same resolution the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to enlist the fullest co-operation of the participating and executing agencies, including the regional commissions, in the substantive preparations for the Conference, and to this end, to establish an interagency task force within the framework of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board, which would report through the Secretary-General of the Conference to the meetings of the Preparatory Committee.

19. In pursuance of these requests the Secretary-General of the Conference invited the participating and executing agencies and the regional commissions to meet initially at United Nations Headquarters on 10 January 1977. The Inter-Agency Task Force will make the necessary arrangements to ensure the co-operation and participation of the participating and executing agencies and the regional commissions in the preparations for the Conference.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

20. The Governing Council at its twenty-second session took note of the provisional agenda for the Conference (DP/202, para. 9) and decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the agenda should be finalized by the Preparatory Committee at its first session in the light of comments and suggestions made at the twenty-second session of the Governing Council and of the results of the regional intergovernmental meetings held in preparation for the Conference. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 31/179, the Secretary-General of the Conference has prepared an annotated draft provisional agenda for the Conference, which will be before the Preparatory Committee as document A/CONF.79/PC/2.

DOCUMENTATION

21. In order to ensure the success of the Conference, the Secretary-General of the Conference proposes that five main documents should be prepared and submitted under agenda items 6, 7, 8 and 9. These documents will be prepared on the basis of the documents submitted to the regional meetings on TCDC, updated in the light of the discussions and recommendations made during those meetings.

22. The document proposed for item 6 of the provisional agenda will give an account of the current status of TCDC activities, indicate the progress achieved, analyse the main opportunities for TCDC, examine the principal obstacles and advance ideas and approaches that could be the basis for future action. This document will also contain a synthesis of such new ideas and innovative approaches as may be advanced during the meeting of distinguished consultants which will be convened in April and May 1977 by the Secretary-General of the Conference.

23. In addition to this basic paper, a survey will be prepared to cover item 6 (f). This survey will be concerned with the need to identify, catalogue and analyse existing facilities for financing TCDC activities, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, global, regional and subregional organizations and sources within the developing countries themselves. This survey was recommended by the regional meetings, and it was suggested that it be as comprehensive as possible, so as to (a) promote the concept of and information about TCDC and (b) provide the possibility of rationalizing financial resources with the objective of reducing the cost and increasing the effectiveness of international technical co-operation.

24. The paper on item 7 will update and revise the report on institutional arrangements for TCDC at the national level which was submitted to the four regional preparatory meetings. It will include recommendations and suggestions made at these meetings and will propose specific recommendations to facilitate TCDC activities between Governments and between pertinent institutions in developing countries concerned with TCDC, such as universities, research institutes, technical and professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, associations of consultancy firms and foundations directly concerned with TCDC.

25. Item 8 refers to institutional arrangements at the international level. Here too the paper submitted to the regional preparatory meetings will be updated, revised, documented and completed by a report on international institutions, their facilities and the procedures for their utilization. This report will cover not only arrangements made through Governments and international organizations, but also through appropriate regional and subregional organizations.

26. On item 9 a draft plan of action for consideration and adoption by the Conference will be prepared. This document will focus on the forms and mechanisms as well as the substance of TCDC and present a consolidated strategy for initiating, designing, organizing and promoting co-operation among developing countries in all fields, with the objective of making TCDC an important instrument for the achievement of wide and active co-operation among developing countries for accelerated development based on mutual self-reliance.

STRUCTURE

27. Should the Preparatory Committee decide to finalize the provisional agenda for the Conference on the basis of the draft contained in document A/CONF.79/PC/2, the structure of the Conference can consist of a plenary, a committee and a working group. The plenary would consider items 1 through 6 of the provisional agenda and the committee items 7 and 8. The working group would consider item 9 (plan of action for promoting TCDC). The Conference would hold two simultaneous meetings in the mornings and two in the afternoons.

INFORMATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME

28. An information support programme has now been designed by UNDP with the United Nations Secretariat's Office of Public Information to promote understanding and support of TCDC concepts and practices, and particularly to generate interest in the objectives of the Conference. In the same spirit of co-operative development among developing countries that is the essence of TCDC, the information programme will seek to mobilize the maximum of conceptual involvement and skilled participation by information specialists of the developing countries themselves.

29. The proposed programme is designed to reach audiences and participants at three levels: specialist groups with key roles in the very process of technical co-operation and development; information disseminators, including the press, radio, television, media associations, technical periodicals and documentalists; and selected public groups whose increased consciousness of self-reliance objectives can provide support for TCDC endeavours.

30. In the pre-Conference period, emphasis will be placed on national efforts organized by TCDC national "focal points" and national information services, with some assistance from information specialists in the Conference secretariat. The international assistance will focus on helping to realize or redisseminate national productions - such as exhibit materials or audio-visual programmes - that would be available in other countries and at the Conference itself. Some basic print and audio-visual materials will also be prepared at the international level for distribution and use at country levels during the build-up to the Conference, including a special slide-sound briefing programme.

31. Special briefing programmes, in the form of "Encounters" between TCDC specialists and information disseminators, will be organized on a regional or subregional basis, and will be commissioned to prepare information material on instances of TCDC actions and potentials. The resulting "network" of information disseminators on TCDC will also be tapped for some coverage of the Conference itself, and for a follow-up workshop on the results of the Conference. At the Conference site, a parallel exhibition will be mounted, including displays and audio-visual presentations of traditional and modern technologies developed and adapted for particular needs and using available resources and skills within developing countries.

PLAN OF ACTION

32. The Governing Council, at its twenty-second session, in taking note of the draft provisional agenda for the Conference, envisaged that the Preparatory Committee might wish to consider accordingly the preparation of a draft plan of action for adoption by the Conference. In this connexion the Committee may wish to request the secretariat to prepare a draft for consideration at its second session.

33. The draft plan of action would take into account the recommendations of the working group on TCDC, those made by the regional TCDC meetings, the suggestions and recommendations of the participating and executing agencies and the regional commissions which have been requested by the General Assembly in resolution 31/179 "to contribute fully to the development by the Conference of an effective and practical plan of action to further intensify TCDC on a continuing basis". The suggestions and recommendations of participating and executing agencies and regional economic commissions so far received are contained in addenda to the report of the Administrator of UNDP on TCDC to the twenty-third session of the Governing Council (DP/222 and Add.1-6).

34. In regard to the recommendations of the regional TCDC meetings regarding the plan of action, it should be noted that only three of these meetings have taken place so far. As indicated in paragraphs 10 to 15 above, the final reports of these meetings are available to the Preparatory Committee. After the fourth regional meeting, which will be held in May 1977, for developing countries in the West Asian region (see para. 16 above), an analytical summary of the recommendations of the four regional meetings will be prepared and will be submitted to the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE

35. The General Assembly decided to establish a small secretariat to assist the Secretary-General of the Conference in discharging his functions, composed of the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries for substantive purposes and of the concerned services of the Economic and Social Council secretariat for organizational preparations, taking fully into account the need to maintain close interrelationship between these two aspects of the preparatory work for the Conference.

36. The Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, in accordance with operative paragraph 5 in resolution 31/179, will be the substantive office within UNDP for the preparation for the Conference. The Special Unit for TCDC will be responsible for the preparation of documents required for the Conference, the Preparatory Committee, the Inter-Agency Task Force and the Panel of qualified Consultants. For this purpose the Special Unit for TCDC, suitably reinforced as indicated in paragraph 6 above, will engage and supervise consultants, enlist the support and co-operation of all UNDP Bureaux and Divisions, and draw on the talent and technical expertise available in the UNDP secretariat. The Special Unit for TCDC will also provide substantive backstopping to the Secretary-General of the Conference and his staff for preparation of the Conference.

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37. The secretariat of the Economic and Social Council will be concerned with all the organizational arrangements relating to the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and of the Conference itself and will edit all the documents destined for the Preparatory Committee, the Inter-Agency Task Force and the Conference itself. The secretariat will also be responsible for planning and working out the arrangements for a conference away from Headquarters, including negotiations with the host Government on the physical arrangements for the Conference in accordance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV), on the review and appraisal of conference and other facilities, on security requirements, and on the privileges and immunities of the participants and of the Conference secretariat.

38. The General Assembly at its thirty-first session, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, appropriated \$352,000 for the Secretary-General of the Conference to enter into the necessary commitments to commence work connected with the Conference and authorized the Secretary-General of the Conference to commit funds for additional requirements in 1977 under the standing procedure for meeting unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures.

39. Detailed proposals by the Secretary-General of the Conference relating to the budget of the Conference and reflecting the above arrangements will be circulated shortly.
