



COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION

REPORT ON THE FIFTEENTH SESSION

(17-24 March 1975)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 7

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1975

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

E/5632
E/AC.51/77

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I. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE ACTION BY, OR ARE BROUGHT TO
THE ATTENTION OF, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

1. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination recommends that the Economic and Social Council in examining the work programme and budget for 1976-1977 and the medium-term plan for 1976-1979 in the economic, social and human rights fields, take into account the comments by the members of the Committee at its fifteenth session as well as the following conclusions:

Social development and humanitarian affairs

The Committee decided to request the Secretary-General to delete project 11.3 from the 1976-1977 programme budget which it considers is not in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 11 (LVI) of 16 May 1974, and to draw the attention of the Council to this request.

Science and technology

There was consensus in the Committee that it was not satisfied with the programme presented and it recommended that the Secretary-General should reformulate the programme taking into account the views expressed in the Committee to reflect more precisely existing legislative directives in this field and to present the reformulated programme to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-eighth session.

Consideration of the Committee's role and method of work

While the Committee as a whole felt that it had the potential to do the important and necessary task of reviewing and analysing the programmes of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields, the circumstances under which it was forced to operate at its fifteenth session did not enable it to carry out its functions as fully as it should have. Among the most serious constraints was the very short time available to review the documentation which prevented most Committee members from consulting with the appropriate ministries in their Governments on substantive positions. An equally serious limitation was the very short time allowed for the meeting of the Committee itself. To review the extensive and detailed documentation presented to it would require a much longer period than the five days allowed to this session. It was noted that other reviewing bodies in the United Nations system take from two to seven weeks to do comparable work on smaller and more homogeneous programmes. While the Committee was not able to determine the precise period necessary for this task, five days was grossly inadequate.

The Committee felt that the planning and programme budgeting approach as it was being developed was a useful tool. In this connexion, the Secretariat was commended for the quality of most of the documents prepared, particularly the

medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (E/5614) 1/ and the draft programme budget for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the biennium 1976-1977. 2/ It was, however, recognized that these documents could and should be improved and the Committee made suggestions towards this end.

Some specific observations and suggestions for improving the document presented were:

(a) One of the most serious short-comings is the lack of a sufficiently comprehensive approach to the many issues and subjects contained in the programmes. There is a need to present a more balanced programme budget which shows the relationship of the various programmes within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the linkages between these programmes and those of other organizations in the system.

(b) The legislative authority for the proposed objectives and activities should be clearer and more accurate and the work to be undertaken in carrying out these mandates should faithfully reflect legislative decisions.

The Committee felt that the views expressed on its role and functions should be made available to the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery created by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session.

1/ Preliminary version of document A/10006/Add.1 (Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 6A), to be issued later.

2/ A/10006, sect. A, chap. 5 (Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 6), to be issued later.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

2. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination held its fifteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 17 to 24 March 1975. The summary records of the Committee's meetings during the session are contained in documents E/AC.51/SR.401-410.

3. At its 401st meeting, on 17 March 1975, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation: Chairman: Miles Stoby (Guyana); Vice-Chairman: Peter Hansen (Denmark); Rapporteur: Yasushi Akashi (Japan). At its 402nd meeting, on 18 March 1975, the Committee elected Reszõ Bányász (Hungary) Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

4. The following members of the Committee were represented: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Denmark, France, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Japan, Pakistan, Togo, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The following member was not represented: Zaire.

5. Observers from the Federal Republic of Germany, Fiji, Kenya and Turkey attended the session.

6. Also present at the session were the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller; Director of the Budget Division, Office of Financial Services; Director of the Resources and Programme Planning Office, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and other senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat. A representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) attended the session.

7. The following specialized agencies were represented: the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Health Organization (WHO). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was also represented.

8. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 41 (LVII) of 1 August 1974, the provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Committee was limited to one substantive item, namely the item entitled "Work programme and budget for 1976-1977 and the medium-term plan for 1976-1979 relating to economic, social and human rights activities". The agenda for the session (E/AC.51/76), adopted by the Committee at its 401st meeting, is reproduced in the annex to the present report.

9. In organizing its work, the Committee decided first to have a general debate on the item as a whole, including the format and presentation of the two basic documents and the methodology used in their preparation. Further, in view of the insufficient time available, and taking into account the fact that such organs as UNIDO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Environment Programme have their own governing bodies, the Committee decided to concentrate its attention on the in-depth consideration of the programme areas covered by

the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, both in respect of the medium-term plan and the draft programme budget, with the understanding that representatives might comment on those sections of the programme budget which cover the same or related areas, particularly those of the regional commissions. Thereafter, the Committee decided to take up the consideration of the programmes of the Information and Research Centre on Transnational Corporations, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, narcotics control and human rights, as well as the sections relating to policy-making organs and special meetings and conferences, economic and social activities and the regular programme of technical assistance.

10. In the end, however, due to the constraints of time the Committee could not complete even the limited objectives it had set for itself for the consideration of the item as set out in paragraph 9 above, and could only complete its consideration of the programme areas covered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

III. WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 1976-1977 AND MEDIUM-TERM
PLAN FOR 1976-1979 RELATING TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

11. The basic documents before the Committee for its consideration were the medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 (E/5614) and the draft programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 3/ relating to economic, social and human rights activities, in addition to other supporting documentation. At its 1937th meeting, on 15 January 1975, the Economic and Social Council decided that the report on the medium-term planning in the United Nations system, prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit 4/ be drawn to the attention of the Committee (decision 69 (ORG-75)). The Committee also had before it the comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. 5/

12. In introducing the two basic documents, the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, said that in preparing the medium-term plan and budget, all possible efforts had been made to reflect the various observations and recommendations received, particularly with respect to the first medium-term plan. However, he noted that any suggested improvement could not stand on its own but must find its proper time and place in the development of planning techniques. He expressed his deep regret that the documentation had not been made available as far in advance as was considered necessary and desirable and that, in respect of some of the budgetary statistics, it was still incomplete. This was because detailed calculations and final determinations could not be made until the essential decisions on revised budget and programme proposals for the current biennium were known at the end of the last twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Under these circumstances, it would have been reasonable to allow a period of at least three months for the preparation of the material and its reproduction in all languages. The Secretariat had, however, been faced with a much more demanding deadline and had therefore been compelled to give priority to one part of the programme budget at the expense of the other and had been unable to include in the preliminary texts such information as the apportionment to programmes of related costs to be incurred in the area of common services, since those particulars could only be worked out after the rest of the budget had been completed. One solution would be to arrange in future for the submission of medium-term plans to all concerned in the course of one calendar year and of programme budgets to a more limited number of bodies, in the next.

13. The Assistant Secretary-General then commented briefly on the nature and content of the medium-term plan. In preparing the plan the Secretariat had been guided by the terms of General Assembly resolution 3199 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973 to the effect that the plan should (a) be presented by programme rather than organizational unit so as to give a clear and integrated picture of each programme and (b) that it should provide the framework of the biennial

3/ See foot-note 2.

4/ A/9646.

5/ A/9646/Add.1.

programme budget. The plan document consisted of a foreword and three main parts. Part I contained a broad quantitative review of the patterns of past United Nations activities, going back to the 1950s in programme terms, and showed the relative growth and changing priorities in United Nations programmes over the past decade or two, as well as the increasingly important role that extrabudgetary allocations had played in determining such priorities. In part II, the total activities of the United Nations had been presented in the form of 25 main programmes for the medium-term future. The presentation of each of those programmes conformed to a standard layout, consisting of five subdivisions. He then provided some details of the layout and the intentions behind it. Part III was for special analyses that cut across, or differed from, programmes. He then turned to the proposed new budget and cited several detailed figures. The figures included the appropriations necessary to meet, in full, additional costs due to inflation and currency fluctuations. The real programme growth of activities in the economic, social and human rights fields was estimated at \$7.3 million, or 3.19 per cent, by dividing the costs of additional activities proposed for 1976-1977 by the costs of maintaining 1974-1975 levels of activities at 1975 rates. Non-recurring expenses in both the biennia being compared had been excluded for the purposes of these calculations. Other detailed figures were cited. The Assistant Secretary-General warned, however, that caution had to be exercised in respect of statistics of this nature, since continuing inflation and constant variations in rates of currency exchange weakened the reliability of any financial forecasts. The estimates had been presented in a manner which attempted to reflect those considerations. He then summarized the main features of that presentation.

14. The Committee welcomed the improvement in the quality of information and analysis apparent in the medium-term plan and considered that it contained innovative concepts and represented a major contribution towards a proper system of planning in the United Nations. The efforts to take account of the observations made by CPC, and to reflect the spirit as well as the letter of the decisions of the United Nations bodies, were noticed and praised. The general discussion focused on the following issues:

- (a) The time-table for consideration of the budget and the plan;
- (b) The definition of objectives and programme analysis;
- (c) The method of priority setting presented in chapter 4 of the plan;
- (d) Co-ordination;
- (e) Evaluation of programmes;
- (f) Impact of extrabudgetary resources on over-all United Nations programme composition.

15. Some delegations noted the importance of the historical context of the work of the Committee, particularly of the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations as a result of the victory over fascism. In this connexion, they stressed the necessity for programmes of work in economic and social fields and in the field of human rights to correspond with the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and, first of all, to strengthen international peace and security, to attain economic and social progress and to respect human rights.

The time-table for the consideration of the budget and the plan

16. Many delegations expressed support for the proposal, presented in the foreword of the plan in paragraphs 61 and 62 and the accompanying chart, that the plan and the budget be considered in alternate years. One delegation favoured alternation because: (a) it led to separate consideration of programme and budgetary issues; and (b) it implied that programmes would be examined in their entirety rather than in terms of increments. One delegation observed that though the proposal was simple it might be of fundamental importance as a means of making the existing programme and co-ordinated machinery more effective. The representative went on to say that, in particular, the Committee, which had been implicitly criticized by the decision taken by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session to set up the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery, might be perfectly capable of doing a good job if it were given adequate time to consider the documents placed before it and if the Secretariat were given a more manageable time-table for its work. Several delegations suggested that this was an important issue for the Working Group to consider. One delegation stated that a staggered time-table for the preparation and consideration of the medium-term plan and the biennial budget would be justified, provided that the plan was not considered in the abstract, that is, that the Secretariat first quantified the resources needed for the execution of the programmes.

The definition of objectives and programme analysis

17. Several delegations commented on this issue. There was general agreement that objectives should not be couched in terms of instruments of policy but, where possible, in terms of ends. As one representative pointed out, if the objective is to prepare a working manual then the completion of the manual constitutes success, whereas a true objective would require, for the evaluation of success, an examination of the impact of that action. Another representative suggested that this was often difficult since objectives at the international level were often elusive and the means very limited in relation to the desired impact, so that the effects of any given planned action are often indirect and difficult to trace. Another delegation expressed the hope that the objectives for each programme could be kept as precise as possible. The Director of the Budget Division responded to these remarks by saying that he was aware that the separation of means and ends was sometimes not as clear as might be desired, but that there was an intrinsic difficulty in addition to those mentioned by some delegations. This was that short-term objectives were usually instruments of long-term objectives so that the distinction between means and ends often depended on the time perspective involved.

18. In further discussion one delegation expressed the view that the confusion of ends and means in the medium-term plan was general throughout the document and that, moreover, it did not accept that there was any intrinsic difficulty in avoiding this confusion. The analysis of each programme in the plan should contain a clear statement of the fundamental, ultimate objectives. The medium-term objectives should be expressed in terms of progress towards the ultimate objectives. The statement of medium-term instruments should then follow. Evaluation should be in terms of progress towards objectives and the effectiveness of instruments.

19. One delegation observed that the programmes, as presented in the programme

analysis part of the plan, appeared to be organized too much along vertical lines which correspond to the Divisions and Departments of the Secretariat. The plan did not present programme information in terms of the horizontal directions indicated by the General Assembly, such as assistance to land-locked countries, assistance to arid zone countries and the promotion of economic and technical co-operation between developing countries. Another delegation observed that many programmes contained planned outputs that did not seem to be of high priority. One delegation stressed the vague manner in which several programmes were formulated. In other programmes the long-term general objectives were well formulated and even impressive but the corresponding activities could hardly be considered capable of achieving such ambitious objectives. While it was true that all programmes originated from resolutions or decisions by legislative organs, nevertheless it was debatable whether the relevance of actions undertaken were periodically questioned. The programme analyses in the plan document did not provide answers to this. One delegation stated that the United Nations programmes suffered from a lack of symmetry in that the Secretariat, in studying measures to contribute to the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV)) of 24 October 1970 and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (General Assembly resolution 3202 (S-VI)) of 1 May 1974, oriented its activities towards what the developing countries should do and not enough towards what the developed countries should. Also, the numerical targets set for the Second United Nations Development Decade seemed to be considered as maxima whereas the developing countries considered them as minima.

20. One delegation stressed the need for legislative bodies to go beyond the launching of programmes through resolutions or decisions and to take an active role in the formulation and evaluation of the programmes. There was a need for some machinery to link legislation on programmes with their formulation, as was indicated in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the medium-term plan in the United Nations system.

The method of priority setting

21. It was generally felt that the methodology proposed in chapter 4 of the medium-term plan (E/5614) for planning growth and priorities would help in the rationalization of the decision-making on programmes within the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and that the incremental approach was the more practical method for setting priorities. Thus, despite the acknowledged difficulty of objectively assessing programmes under certain criteria and especially the effectiveness criterion, the Secretariat was encouraged to go ahead with the priority-setting exercise. One delegation gave a list of the programmes to which it would attach the highest priority. Another delegation stated that the fundamental premise on which the Secretariat should base its efforts to comply with the resolutions which required implementation was that the requisite measures should first be carried out and only afterwards should the question of establishing priorities be considered.

22. Several delegations made detailed comments on the criteria proposed in paragraph 29 of chapter 4 of the plan. With the exception of the fifth criterion (staff/workload ratio), about which some delegations had reservations, the proposed criteria were judged workable. Several delegations indicated that the most important of them for the evaluation of programmes and the setting of

priorities was the first (effectiveness). One delegation observed that the third (opportunity) could be viewed as short-term effectiveness as opposed to long-term, as envisaged in the first criterion; both of them were important. One delegation stated that the only solution to overstaffing, as represented by a low staff/workload ratio, was redeployment. On the same subject, another suggested that under the staff/workload criterion, the marking scheme should be extended from +10 to -10 rather than from 10 to 0. It was suggested that in the priority-setting method, a criterion should be introduced to take into account the relative importance of extrabudgetary resources available to the programmes, as was suggested in paragraph 30 of chapter 4 of the plan. One delegation noted that there was a conceptual problem in the approach suggested, since there was no necessary relation between the importance of a programme and its need for resources. A programme that all agreed was of high priority may not, in fact, require a large amount of funds or any large increase in real resources over a plan or budget period. One delegation stressed that the proposed methodology for the setting of priorities should be examined not only by the Secretariat but also by policy-making organs. In this respect, a careful scrutiny of the weighing of criteria was of primary importance and more important criteria might have to be added. The same delegation indicated that regarding the criterion on effectiveness, the elements to be taken into account when evaluating a programme in this respect would not necessarily be identical, especially since the gestation period varies widely from one programme to another.

Co-ordination

23. One delegation observed that the way in which tasks were shared when it was stated that a United Nations programme was co-ordinated with the work of some other body was not explained clearly enough. Another delegation commented that in the United Nations system it was often the policy-making organs that were themselves responsible for overlapping and duplication in programmes. The plan document did not present evidence that effective co-ordination takes place. Why, for example, was the United Nations dealing with rural development and education when those areas should be left to the Food and Agriculture Organization and UNESCO, respectively? Several delegations expressed concern that better programme co-ordination be established between the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

24. One delegation, while recognizing that it might be unwise to put mechanical restraints either on the conference activities or on the orderly emergence of essential institutions to deal with new global problems, felt that these trends when carried to extremes negate the principles of proper planning and co-ordination within the United Nations system.

Evaluation

25. One delegation stated that the programme budget should be used as a means of evaluation. Another delegation indicated that it would propose in the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery an evaluation process by a group external to the Secretariat. A third delegation suggested that the legislative bodies should conduct evaluations of the programmes. The Director of the Budget Division said that studies were under way in the Secretariat to clarify the concept of evaluation in the context of the plan and budget processes. The proposed pilot study on evaluation, mentioned in paragraph 41 of the foreword, was welcomed by one delegation.

Impact of extrabudgetary resources on over-all United Nations programme composition

26. There was general agreement that the Committee should be given more information on the origin and purposes of extrabudgetary resources. The origin of extrabudgetary resources should be indicated for each programme. Regarding the impact on regular budget programme structure, it was generally felt that separate studies should be made of the effect of three categories of expenditures on extrabudgetary funds, namely: (a) operational activities; (b) overheads; (c) voluntary contributions in the form of trust funds and the like. Several delegations observed that country programmes cannot be revised in order to better fit broad synthetic programmes such as the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade or the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. It was generally felt that the changes in the regular budget's programme structure induced by operational activities, and the correlative overhead funds, were not a distortion but a welcome reflection of the developing countries' own priorities. On the other hand, one delegation felt that those changes induced by extrabudgetary funds, the use of which was not determined by the recipient countries, were actual distortions of priorities. One delegation observed that the programme structure of overhead funds should serve as an indication for the United Nations of the relative importance that developing countries attach to the various programmes. Another delegation said that the juxtaposition of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources posed a serious problem for any rational planning and programming in the United Nations. Despite the institutional difficulties, the possibility should be considered of harmonizing these two kinds of priorities, particularly since half of the resources for United Nations programmes were based on extrabudgetary funds. In stressing a better harmonization of the two kinds of resources some balance must be maintained between the more conservative characteristics of the regular budget and the more dynamic characteristics of the extrabudgetary funds.

Budgeting techniques

27. One delegation expressed the view that the exclusion of non-recurring items from the line of figures in the tables showing the biennium appropriations for 1974-1975 revalued at 1975 rates was misleading for a number of reasons. The comparable line relating to the estimates for the future biennium included non-recurring items, and in the case of section 4 the cost of non-recurrent items was categorized as programme growth for 1976-1977. To achieve clarity, non-recurrent items should either be included or separately identified for both biennia.

28. The representative of the Budget Division pointed out that in the summary tables showing the calculation of growth in real terms, non-recurring items were excluded from the figures for both the current and future biennia. He explained that the major aim of the new presentation was to show clearly the real programme growth by stating both the increase and the continuing level of activity in constant dollar terms. The comparison would have understated real growth if non-recurrent items were not excluded from the 1974-1975 base, while real growth would have been overstated if these items were not similarly excluded for 1976-1977 in the analysis of real growth at the beginning of each budget section. He acknowledged that the presentation would gain clarity and comprehensiveness if the appropriations for non-recurrent items were separately identified and said that the Secretariat would include such information in future budget presentations.

The Secretariat would welcome any suggestions for improving the presentation and any opportunity to discuss them with interested delegations.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (section 5A)

29. Apart from section 5A of the draft programme budget and the relevant parts of the medium-term plan, the Committee also had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/5613 and Corr.1-3) providing supplementary information in respect of specific activities within programmes and programme components. Following an introductory statement by the Director of the Resources and Programme Planning Office, the Committee took up the consideration of the individual programmes discussed below.

Development planning, projections and policies

30. The key role of the work on development planning, projections and policies carried out within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was stressed. A much clearer picture of the activities involved had been obtained from the information provided in section 5A on the medium-term objectives and the tasks to be carried out. It was also pointed out that it would be appropriate, when the next budget programme was being drawn up, to include in it the titles of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to indicate the measures of co-ordination that the Organization was taking on its own account and those taken in co-operation with other United Nations bodies.

31. Nevertheless, certain short-comings in the presentation of the programme were noted: in particular that it should have contained references to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixth special session as well as to the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States (General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX)) of 12 December 1974 since they obviously had an impact on the objectives set out in the Secretary-General's medium-term plan and draft programme budget.

32. Exceptional importance was attached to the monitoring and evaluation of economic development and to the biennial review and appraisal of progress and performance in accordance with the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade as well as to the Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. The importance of information on the world social situation in relation to social policies and the interrelationships of the economic and social aspects of development were also emphasized in the discussion.

33. Several representatives observed that the definition of medium-term plan objective 3, i.e. "Provide comprehensive and up-to-date information regarding the changing interrelations within an input-output framework between sectors and industries in the process of economic development and assess the impact of these changes on the physical environment with a view to improving the factual and theoretical basis on which development strategies are formulated", did not bring out clearly what kind of activities were to be carried out under that objective and, in particular, it was difficult to see the link between that objective and project 3.1, "Reports on the implications of environmental action and measures on world development targets". Also, its link to General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV) was not apparent.

34. Some members felt that the nature of the comparative study on policies and procedures for deploying foreign investment in the development process, listed under medium-term objective 4, needed to be clarified. It should be ensured that there would not be a duplication with work carried out by UNCTAD and UNIDO.

35. Reference was also made to General Assembly resolution 3177 (XXVIII) of 17 December 1973 on economic co-operation among developing countries, in particular to the request to the Committee on Development Planning that it give high priority to the evaluation of the subject. In that connexion, more information was requested on the steps taken by the United Nations in implementing this and related resolutions. Reference was also made to General Assembly resolution 3251 (XXIX) of 4 December 1974 on technical co-operation among developing countries.

36. In response to the statements made and the questions raised in the Committee, the Director of the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies agreed that those comments would be used to define in a clearer manner some of the medium-term objectives which had caused several members certain difficulties. In that connexion, the Committee was assisted by a fuller description of project 3.1. The project, carried out with the assistance of the United Nations Trust Fund for Development Planning and Projections (UNTFDPP) under the direction of a consultant, was particularly concerned with the impact of environmental policies on the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy. The study would also be closely linked to General Assembly resolution 3345 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 on the interrelations between population, resources, environment and development. The methodology applied was based on input/output analysis. It was expected that the results would significantly contribute to the increase of knowledge on the interrelationships between the different sectors and elements of the economy. A brief paper on the preliminary results of the study would be submitted to the Committee for Development Planning at its eleventh session. The study dealt with cross-sectoral aspects and hence did not duplicate the work on specific industrial problems carried out by UNIDO.

37. The Director also explained that the work in the field of foreign investment carried out at the present time under that programme in no way duplicated that of UNCTAD or UNIDO.

38. He further stated that, in the activities carried out under that programme, great emphasis was being put on making contributions to economic co-operation among developing countries. The response of the Committee on Development Planning to General Assembly resolution 3177 (XXVIII) on the subject was contained in the report of the Committee on its tenth session. 6/ In the work of the Secretariat, also, a great deal of importance was attached to the subject and a number of studies had been prepared. Substantial assistance had been provided to the Andean Project financed from UNTFDPP. The group of countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations had received similar assistance. More recently, the Government of Guyana had asked for assistance on behalf of the non-aligned countries for a major project on economic co-operation among developing countries. Substantive services were being provided to that project by the programme. Under the leadership of the Centre, multinational interdisciplinary development advisory teams (UNDAT), composed of specialists in a number of economic and social sectors,

6/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 4.

had been established for groups of countries in the Caribbean, Central America and Africa and in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. It was planned to establish several other UNDAT if financing could be obtained.

Human settlements

39. In reviewing the human settlements programme, a number of delegations expressed satisfaction with the programme as a whole and emphasized the importance of medium-term objectives dealing with (a) growth strategies for human settlements and (b) guidelines for policy formulation in slums and squatter settlements. These were felt to be the priority concerns of Governments, particularly in developing countries, in their attempts to deal with the problem of continuing urbanization and the related growth of slums and squatter settlements. It was pointed out in this context that the issues to be dealt with under these objectives were very closely related to the concerns of the forthcoming Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements to be held at Vancouver in 1976, and it was urged that appropriate adjustments be made in the human settlements programme for 1976-1977 as the agenda items for the Conference became clarified and in the light of the decisions taken by the Conference.

40. Several representatives also stressed that within these objectives priority should be given to activities which produce results of direct utility to developing countries and that a correspondingly lower priority should be given to less action-oriented research and data-gathering activities. To clarify this principle, project 2.1, which emphasized the collection and analysis of information on slums and squatter settlements, was compared to project 2.3, which is to provide guidelines on specific measures to improve slums and squatter settlements; similarly, project 4.1, a comparative study on legal and institutional structures in human settlements, was compared to project 4.2, which is to provide simplified administrative structures for implementing housing policies and programmes. In each case, the latter type of project was considered preferable and should have a higher priority in terms of resources applied.

41. There was considerable discussion on the appropriateness of medium-term objective 6, to develop guidelines for tourism planning in developing countries. A number of delegations had reservations on the desirability of continuing tourism activities in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, since the newly established World Tourism Organization should be the main focus of international activities in this field. Representatives of other delegations expressed interest in continuing to have such work undertaken in the context of human settlements since tourism has an important impact on the structure and organization of settlements in their countries. In reply to the questions raised, the Director of the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning emphasized that the work proposed to be carried out by the Centre in this field during the 1976-1977 biennium would be limited to the physical aspects of planning and construction in human settlements with respect to tourism and the impact of tourism itself on settlements. However, any future work in tourism to be done by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would depend on the relationship established between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization and the work programme ultimately adopted by the new organization. The views of the Committee would be an important consideration in the formulation of further activities in this field.

42. A question was raised regarding the work to be carried out under technical co-operation activities in the field of planning for the prevention of disaster and post-disaster reconstruction. In view of the establishment of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO), the question was raised whether it was appropriate for this activity to be carried out by the Centre. In response, the Director of the Centre and the representative of the Budget Division indicated that the technical assistance work to be done by the Centre in this field, which was always at the specific request of Governments, would be limited to long-term physical planning, the development of appropriate building codes and other projects designed to limit the impact of natural disasters; it would not duplicate the work of UNDRO in prevention or disaster relief. The rationalization of these functions had been worked out between the United Nations and UNDRO.

Natural resources, energy and transport

43. The programme received general support, though comments were made regarding the priority attached to specific programme activities. In this context, some representatives, while welcoming the reference in the programme to the establishment of a new international economic order, questioned the value of proposed studies in the areas of water changes and soil reclamation. The view was expressed that the programme did not appear to accord sufficient emphasis to the principles of permanent sovereignty over natural resources and to the obstacles impeding the implementation of those principles.

44. Concern was expressed regarding the need to co-ordinate proposed activities in the fields of transport and mineral resources with related work being carried out in UNCTAD and the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization and regarding the role of the regional commissions in relation to the programme generally.

45. Specific questions were also raised regarding the source, proportion and allocation of extrabudgetary resources under the programme and the calculation of rates of inflation. The view was expressed that under each programme there should be an indication of the source of extrabudgetary funds.

46. In response to questions raised by members of the Committee, the Director of the Natural Resources, Energy and Transport Division stated that all the objectives under the programme were designed to assist developing countries in developing their natural resources. There was no intention of neglecting the concept of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, which was an underlying premise of the programme and which was inscribed on the agenda of the Committee for Natural Resources at its fourth session.

47. In reference to the question of priority assigned to certain activities, the Director pointed out that the study on strip mining and soil reclamation would in the first instance focus on only one country but that the problem itself was of wider significance. The proposed study on water charges as a means for determining the allocation of water pertained to an important policy question and formed part of the preparations for the forthcoming United Nations Water Conference.

48. On the question of co-ordination, the Director stated that decentralization of activities under the programme was desirable and that, in this connexion, the

programmes of the regional commissions would have to be strengthened considerably. In the field of transport, an understanding had been reached with UNCTAD regarding a division of work and close co-operation was maintained with that organization in the field of mineral resources.

Ocean economics and technology

49. Members of the Committee did not raise any questions on the programme.

Population

50. The Committee agreed with the main thrust of the programme which was to assist individual countries and the international community to obtain the necessary information and technical knowledge required for population policy formulation and programme implementation. Certain delegations believed that the objectives of the programme should conform with and take account of the decisions and recommendations of the World Population Conference held in Bucharest from 19 to 30 August 1974, particularly the World Population Plan of Action, 7/ and should also take into account the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order stressed in General Assembly resolution 3344 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974.

51. Some representatives felt that too much emphasis had been placed on certain areas. The project relating to the projections of number of households and families in certain countries did not seem important to some representatives. Some felt the studies on demographic, social and economic aspects of population resources and environment should not receive such high priority. It was also felt that certain activities lacked universal appeal and were a matter of national rather than international concern. These included the demographic aspects of the youth population and of aging, the methodology for studying demographic processes within the family cycle and the response of the family to its economic, social and demographic experience. Criticism was also expressed on the value of conducting a study on the causes of non-acceptance of family planning programmes. Similarly, the studies on the methods of measuring the impact of family planning programmes and on the ways to increase their effectiveness were regarded as being of doubtful priority.

52. It was felt that it was important to make a distinction between regular and extrabudgetary resources in population programmes and in this context one representative inquired which resources came from operational activities and which from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). The same representative also wished to know the criteria used to classify programmes as continuing or temporary. It was felt that one of the positive aspects of the World Population Conference was that attention had been drawn to the importance of the economic and social aspects in dealing with population problems. It had therefore been suggested that the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs attach more importance to economic aspects in its programmes, particularly those involving analysis of the relationship between demographic factors and development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3345 (XXIX).

7/ E/CONF.60/19, chap. I.

53. In response to the questions raised, the Director of the Population Division stated that, even before the Bucharest Conference, the Division had already begun work in the area of the interrelationship between population and development, and a special section had been created to deal with the subject. Given the emphasis placed on this interrelationship by the Conference, the Division planned to expand its activity in this area in collaboration with other units of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, particularly the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies. As regards the study on the causes of the non-acceptance of family planning programmes, the Director agreed that the description of the activity was badly worded. He explained that the study would deal with the broader relationships involved in family formation and development as pertaining to fertility and not only with the causes of non-acceptance of family planning. The households projections were required in order to forecast many economic aspects, particularly consumption requirements, and to assess requirements for housing. He pointed out that the studies on demographic aspects of the youth population and of aging had received considerable attention at the Conference and were formulated on the basis of its recommendations. Another important function based on the decision of the Conference was the monitoring of population policies and trends and the review and appraisal of the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action. Several projects in the work programme would provide the basis for this major function, which the Division planned to strengthen during the plan period. As regards research on the interrelationships between population, research, environment and development called for in General Assembly resolution 3345 (XXIX), the Director stated that there would be close collaboration between the Division and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, necessary to carry out this task.

54. The Director pointed out that changes in demographic factors and variables, such as birth rates and rural-urban composition, were the criteria used for selecting countries for the study on the impact of social and economic change on demographic trends.

55. As regards the criteria used to classify programmes, the Committee was informed by the Director that the World Population Conference itself had provided guidelines on the basis of which programmes would be classified as either continuing or temporary.

56. One delegation expressed objections of principle to statements made by members of the Committee on the substance of the problem of population as in its view, the Committee should concentrate on the programmes which are formulated on the basis of decisions taken in legislative bodies.

Science and technology

57. Members of the Committee expressed concern over the high-projected growth rate of the programme, the lack of precision and clarity which characterized its programme objectives and activities and the programme's very broad scope and consequent possible overlap with other sector-oriented programmes within the United Nations system. Several members stressed that programme objective 2, on the development and evolution of effective scientific and technological programmes in the United Nations system, duplicated activities that already were, or should appropriately be, carried out on a sectoral basis by other United Nations organizations. The Office for Science and Technology should direct its programme

in this field to the general aspects of planning and administration; sectoral studies regarding the practical applications of science and technology came within the areas of concern of other organizations and units.

58. Members also drew attention to the omission from the programme of reference to decisions taken by the General Assembly at its sixth special session and to the United Nations University which, it was pointed out, would be concerned with science and technology.

59. Concern was also expressed that a number of activities appeared to envisage the creation of new bodies. Some members observed that the thrust of the programme appeared to be directed towards co-ordination through compilation of the results of activities carried out by other organizations and units. In this context, they questioned whether the expenditure was justified.

60. Several members referred to programme objective 1 regarding the formulation of a unified United Nations science and technology policy and raised queries on the legislative basis of this objective, the manner in which it was formulated and the means proposed for its implementation.

61. In reply to several of the points raised the Associate Director of the Office for Science and Technology stated that the programme reflected a new concept which was to supplement the macro-level view of planning and development in this field with closer examination of the "real", hitherto improperly attended, elements which affect scientific and technological development. The objective regarding the development of a unified science and technology policy was included, it was pointed out, because it was felt that it was crucial to develop such a policy before the Third United Nations Development Strategy was put into effect.

62. With reference to another question raised, the Associate Director noted that there was no intention in the programme to duplicate work which was being done sectorally; rather the purpose of the activities in question was to implement a broad independent review of these sectoral endeavours in order to provide the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development (ACAST) with the detailed information on which it could base these recommendations. Such a review was not intended to investigate the agencies. Further, on the matter of additional bodies, the objective regarding a unified United Nations Science and Technology policy envisaged only a small ad hoc group of experts to review the first study on this question and to prepare a report for ACAST. The consultative groups envisaged under this objective were intended to ensure an input from the regions concerned. Therefore, unless the resources made available to the programme were increased, such inputs would have to be produced by consultants.

63. Members of the Committee expressed the view that the Office should have recourse to other organizations within the system rather than engage independent consultants and queried also the need for certain of the ad hoc groups of experts envisaged in the programme. The Associate Director agreed that parts of the programme would require revision and provided further clarification regarding the purpose of consultants and expert group inputs. Many members continued to express reservations about the programme and, in particular, the use of consultants and expert groups.

64. There was consensus in the Committee that it was not satisfied with the

programme presented and it recommended that the Secretary-General should reformulate the programme, taking into account the views expressed in the Committee, to reflect more precisely existing legislative directives in this field and to present the reformulated programme to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-eighth session.

Social development and humanitarian affairs

65. There was general agreement on the importance of the programme. It was recognized that it responded well to the methodological guidelines as laid down by the Committee in its report of its fourteenth session 8/ calling for clearer indication of the relationship between objectives and the means of action for accomplishing them and for the time-phasing of specific activities. In this respect, the programme reflected innovativeness and dynamism.

66. There was, however, a general feeling that some programme objectives could be more clearly formulated and that there should be closer co-ordination with other closely related programmes in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular with the development planning, projections and policies programme. It was also felt that there should be better co-ordination with other bodies of the United Nations whose major substantive responsibilities related to areas of activity of the programme. One member was of the opinion that the programme did not seem to deal with the major concerns of social development but instead was concerned with social welfare services. Another had the impression that the programme did not reflect an adequately integrated approach.

67. The Director of the Social Development Division, in reply to these latter comments, stated that the programme necessarily covered a wide spectrum of activities as a consequence of the wide range of interests within the legislative bodies that issued the mandates. The orientation was not directed mainly toward fostering the development of a narrow segment of specialized welfare services but instead to bringing to bear a variety of programme strategies in the social field. It stressed that the broad legislative framework for the programme was provided by the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (General Assembly resolution 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969), the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, Economic and Social Council resolutions 1139 (XLI) of 29 July 1966 on the reappraisal of the role of the Social Commission, and 1746 (LIV) of 16 May 1973 on national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress, and General Assembly resolutions 3176 (XXVIII) and 3178 (XXVIII) of 17 December 1973 on review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy.

68. The Director suggested that some of the apparent short-comings could be attributed to the need to reduce explanatory texts to minimum length which in many cases did not convey an adequate presentation. He undertook to provide the additional essential information in the supplementary documentation that would be issued to the Council.

8/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 12.

69. In response to the observation of one member that activities implementing certain important mandates were lacking, the Director identified the activities corresponding to those mandates mentioned that fell within the scope of this programme. The other mandates referred to fell within the purview of the development planning, projections and policies programme.

70. One member observed that several activities had no legislative basis and, therefore, had no justification. In reply the Director indicated that project 2.1 on guidelines on measures to deal with the social consequences of the green revolution had been carried over from the current biennial programme; and that the mandates for objective 3 on appraising the effectiveness of socio-economic development programmes in reaching intended beneficiaries were General Assembly resolution 3178 (XXVIII) and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1582 (L) of 21 May 1971 and 1670 (LII) of 1 June 1972, which were inadvertently omitted in printing. In response to the observation of two members that objective 5 on the utilization of social welfare personnel to support family planning programmes in rural areas should be transferred to the Population Programme, the Director pointed out that the objective dealt with the role of social welfare personnel in population programmes and could be implemented most efficiently by utilizing the expertise of the Social Development Division which has wide contacts and experience in this field.

71. One member observed that under objective 7 on the organization of the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, two regional preparatory meetings would suffice, rather than the five contemplated. The Director pointed out that the five projected meetings were being convened in response to the strong desire of Governments and professional organizations concerned to ensure the consideration of the Congress' agenda items in the context of the problems and needs of each of the regions.

72. Reservations were expressed on the advisability of the activity proposed under project 8.3 of conducting a survey of police practices at the national level. This was felt by some members to be essentially a national concern. It was made clear in response that the country surveys would no longer be required since the relevant information had already been gathered on a regional basis in the current biennial programme as part of the preparations for the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders and in conformity with General Assembly resolution 3218 (XXIX) of 6 November 1974. The task of drafting an international code of police ethics had been requested of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1794 (LIV) of 18 May 1973.

73. With regard to that part of the programme dealing with equality between men and women, it was noted that the activities proposed may have to be adjusted to reflect adequately the decisions taken at the World Conference of the International Women's Year to be held in 1975.

74. Queries were also raised on the legislative authority for objective 12 under which the Secretariat would prepare recommendations on the legal status of women in family relationships and on the sharing of family responsibilities. It was felt that the resolution cited did not provide adequate legislative authority. In reply the Deputy Director-in-Charge, Promotion of Equality of Men and Women Branch referred to the legislative history of these projects, pointing out that 12.1 was approved by the twenty-first session of the Commission on the Status of

Women and by the Economic and Social Council and, similarly, 12.2 had been approved by the twenty-third session of the Commission and by the Council. However, the implementation of these projects had been delayed for several years and it was now hoped to complete them by 1977.

75. A number of questions were raised regarding the programmes dealing with the status of women. A number of delegations in particular questioned the legislative authority for undertaking project 11.3 dealing with communications received from member States on the Status of Women. These delegations pointed out that the Commission on the Status of Women had decided that it was not necessary to continue processing such communications and that therefore the project should be deleted from the work programme. Another interpretation held that the Economic and Social Council had asked the Secretariat to prepare a report on the legislative background and procedures for compiling this information.

76. After considerable discussion on this point, the Committee decided to request the Secretary-General to delete project 11.3 from the 1976-1977 programme budget, considering it not in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 11 (LVI) of 16 May 1974, and to draw the attention of the Council to this request.

77. As a general comment, the Committee felt that notwithstanding the diverse nature of the demands for the several objectives in the programme in the future it could benefit from a more comprehensive focus and consolidation of the many projects and objectives.

Statistics

78. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the main orientation of the programme and noted with appreciation the services provided by the Statistical Office to Member States.

79. While commending the programme as a whole, one member observed that the studies on reconciliation based on reviews of discrepancies of international trade statistics were of direct interest only to a very limited number of countries. Doubt was also expressed on the possible advantage of studies on a system of social and demographic statistics and social indicators as well as on the methodological publications and statistical compendia on social, housing and related statistics. Some of the activities of the programme, according to the same member, seemed to overlap with other activities within the programme. This included the development of the System of National Accounts and its linkages with the Material Products Balances System, guidelines and handbook on the collection and compilation of statistics and the classifications and methodologies for measuring tourism which, in particular, seemed to fall within the scope of the activities of the newly created World Tourism Organization. The usefulness of the separate statistics on youth and children was also questioned as it was felt that such data were likely to duplicate those provided as part of a system of social and demographic system. It was also inquired whether the project on the development of a data base system for integrated storage of the Statistical Office's stock of data did not overlap with the activities of the International Computer Centre.

80. In response to the comments made, the Director of the Statistical Office stated that, while some activities of the programme appeared to duplicate others,

they were in fact complementary and were based on requests received from member countries and on the wishes of the Statistical Commission. The Committee was informed that the project on the methods of reconciliation of discrepancies of international trade statistics, although initiated by Canada and the United States of America, subsequently generated a wide interest because of the methodology used and the Statistical Commission at its eighteenth session therefore recommended the pursuit of similar studies for the benefit of interested countries.

81. On the system of social and demographic statistics and social indicators it was pointed out that this was a major undertaking of great interest to the regional commissions as well as a number of statistical bodies at the national and the international levels. The Statistical Commission, at its eighteenth session, requested that this study be undertaken and submitted to it at its nineteenth session.

82. As regards the guidelines of statistics on children and youth, the Committee was informed by the Director that this project was being wholly financed by the United Nations Children's Fund. Its purpose was to assess the various conditions of children in the developing countries in such areas as health and education. Many countries and regions have expressed great interest in this project.

83. The Director also noted that the work on the linkage between the System of National Accounts and the Material Product Balances System did not duplicate other work in the field of National Accounts and Balances and complemented each other.

84. As regards the classifications and methodologies for measuring tourism, the Director stated that this in no way duplicated the activities of the World Tourism Organization in this area. This project would concentrate on the development of uniform concepts, classifications and methodologies for measuring tourism rather than on the collection of data which would be the responsibility of the World Tourism Organization. This activity was being undertaken at the recommendation of the Statistical Commission as well as of the Economic and Social Council and of UNCTAD.

85. The Director further stated that there was no duplication between the development of a data base system and the function of the International Computer Centre. The latter only provided the Statistical Office with much needed computer facilities.

86. The Director also said that in view of the great demand from the developing countries there was need to expand the activities of the social and demographic branch of the Statistical Office, and that it was, therefore, essential to provide for the post of an assistant director to take this responsibility in conformity with the arrangements for other branches of the Statistical Office, each of which is headed by an assistant director.

Public administration and finance

87. The Committee reviewed the public administration and finance programme and general support was expressed for this work as formulated in the light of the recent integration of public finance administration with public administration. The redefined programme should further enhance the capabilities of the Organization to deliver better services to Member States and strengthen their capacities for plan implementation.

88. Several members expressed concern that, prima facie, there was overlap between the public administration and finance project 4.3, involving the preparation of a manual on administration of population programmes (with financial support from UNFPA) and the work covered by the population programme, in particular project 3.7 on criteria for demographic services in public administration. Several speakers also felt strongly that all work on demographic questions should be concentrated in the Population Division. The Directors of the Public Administration and Finance Division and the Population Division pointed out that projects 4.3 and 3.7 are being carried out in close collaboration. The Population Division was relying heavily on the expertise in the field of administration available in the other Division. The required experience and skills were simply not available in the Population Division.

89. After these explanations, several members still had some reservations whether the present arrangement was the most desirable solution but they did not object to work on this project continuing along the present lines. Future activity in the field of population should again be carefully reviewed to determine optimum arrangements for their implementation.

90. One delegation expressed the view that the objection to the inclusion in this chapter of the Manual on Population was in contradiction with the principles of horizontal planning according to which programmes are not confined to single departments. Another delegation, while supporting this view, gave its firm support to the present arrangements as contained in medium-term plan objective 4.3 of the programme on public administration and finance.

Administration and common services

91. The view was expressed that the activity planned under the medium-term objective 2 on the preparation of biennial reports on United Nations export promotion efforts did not seem to fall within the scope of activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and that it could be more appropriately performed by UNCTAD. The Director of the Resources and Programme Planning Office explained that this report was being prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1620 (LI) of 27 July 1971.

92. On the medium-term objective 6, regarding the review and evaluation of the implementation of the approved work programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, one representative felt that it was essential that such review and evaluation activity be undertaken at an intergovernmental level also, rather than solely at the Secretariat level.

Management of technical co-operation activities

93. The Committee requested the Secretary-General to incorporate in paragraph 5.43 of the draft programme budget reference to General Assembly resolutions 3177 (XXVIII) and 3259 (XXIX), on economic co-operation among developing countries, and 3251 (XXIX), on technical co-operation among developing countries, as legislative instructions for implementing the programme support. Reference to these resolutions should also be made in the narrative.

94. Some representatives expressed apprehension over the apparent duplication of resources for support of technical co-operation activities under this programme

support function and the substantive programmes of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It was also noted that the information on support of technical co-operation activities contained in section 5A only provided a partial picture of the total resources devoted to this purpose, as it did not cover information on other related services like the recruitment of experts and purchase of equipment.

95. The Committee was informed by the Director of the Resources and Programme Planning Office of the concern of the Secretary-General to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the delivery of technical assistance by the United Nations. Recently, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, had established a task force made up of concerned Secretariat units to make recommendations on all aspects dealing with the improvement of the delivery of technical assistance. Certain delegations expressed an interest in receiving additional information concerning this matter.

Consideration of the Committee's role and method of work

96. The Committee considered its role and method of work, the over-all review of the documentation submitted to it and the implications for its future work in the light of its experience at its current session. While, as a whole, it felt that it had the potential to do the important and necessary task of reviewing and analysing the programmes of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields, the circumstances under which it was forced to operate at its fifteenth session did not enable it to carry out its functions as fully as it should have. Among the most serious constraints was the very short time available to review the documentation which prevented most members of the Committee from consulting with the appropriate ministries in their Governments on substantive positions. An equally serious limitation was the very short time allowed for the meeting of the Committee itself. To review the extensive and detailed documentation presented to it would require a much longer period than the five days allowed to the current session. It was noted that other reviewing bodies in the United Nations system took from two to seven weeks to do comparable work on smaller and more homogeneous programmes. While the Committee was not able to determine the precise period necessary for this task, five days was grossly inadequate.

97. The Committee felt that the planning and programme budgeting approach as it was being developed was a useful tool. In this connexion, the Secretariat was commended for the quality of most of the documents prepared, particularly the medium-term plan document and the 1976-1977 draft programme budget for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It was, however, recognized that these documents could and should be improved and the Committee made several suggestions towards this end.

98. Some specific observations and suggestions for improving the document presented were:

(a) One of the most serious short-comings is the lack of a sufficiently comprehensive approach to the many issues and subjects contained in the programmes. There is a need to present a more balanced programme budget which shows the relationship of the various programmes within the Department of Economic and

Social Affairs and the linkages between these programmes and those of other organizations in the system.

(b) The legislative authority for the proposed objectives and activities should be clearer and more accurate and the work to be undertaken in carrying out these mandates should faithfully reflect legislative decisions.

99. One delegation said that it would be useful for the Secretariat to have detailed programmes of other bodies and institutions within the United Nations family and an appraisal of the resources committed by each institution for their implementation.

100. With regard to the time and duration and possible alternative organization of the Committee, the following suggestions were offered by one or more delegations:

(a) As suggested by the Secretary-General, the Committee should meet in the off-budget years and should concentrate on the medium-term plan. More specific programming and budget issues might then be handled by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ);

(b) The Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee of the Economic and Social Council might meet intersessionally to review the documentation on medium-term planning and programme budgeting prior to the meeting of the Council itself;

(c) The Committee could be reconstituted as an advisory committee composed of experts to carry out functions for the Economic and Social Council similar to those which ACABQ now carries out for the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly;

(d) The Committee should continue to retain its intergovernmental character as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council;

(e) The Committee would retain an intergovernmental character. It would consider the medium-term plan in the year in which the budget was not submitted. The Secretariat would quantify, in advance, the objectives of the programmes and assess the resources needed to achieve them. In the year in which the medium-term plan was not submitted, the Committee would consider the programme budget. The Committee would attempt to determine whether the programme budget was in conformity with the decisions of the policy-making bodies and the objectives which had been established and it would, in general, indicate whether the resources proposed seemed, in its view, to be adequate.

101. It was generally agreed that the Committee itself should take a bolder approach in its review and analysis and in its recommendations to the Economic and Social Council. Some members thought that the Committee should be prepared to consider such fundamental questions as: Why, if the activity is already being conducted elsewhere (e.g., by a specialized agency), is the United Nations also conducting it? Is the activity having any impact? Is the activity one which is best undertaken by the United Nations as opposed to some other agency?

102. The Committee felt that the views expressed on its role and functions should be made available to the Working Group on United Nations Programme and Budget Machinery established by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session.

ANNEX

Agenda of the fifteenth session a/

1. Election of officers for 1975
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Work programme and budget for 1976-1977 and medium-term plan for 1976-1979 relating to economic, social and human rights activities
4. Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its fifteenth session to the Economic and Social Council

a/ The provisional agenda circulated under the symbol E/AC.51/73 for the fifteenth session scheduled to be held in May 1974 was withdrawn when the session was postponed. (See Economic and Social Council decision 20 (LVI) of 17 May 1974.)

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