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OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Revised proposal for the establishment of a
United Nations staff college

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

The annexed additional information has been received from the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and is transmitted herewith to the General Assembly.

ANNEX

UNITED NATIONS STAFF COLLEGE

BLUEPRINT OF A PROGRAMME

Memorandum by the Executive Director

I. Blueprint of a programme of the courses

1. The blueprint of a programme of the staff college presented below was established following an interagency meeting held in Geneva on 9-10 October 1972, which was attended by the representatives of the following organizations: United Nations, (Division of Personnel Administration and Office for Interagency Affairs), FAO, the ILO, IMCO, ITU, UNESCO, WFP, WHO, WMO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO and UNITAR.

2. It was understood that the field of activity of the staff college must be confined to courses which are of a common interest for the various organizations constituting the United Nations system and are not available in existing institutions in or outside this system.

3. During the first few years, the college should concentrate its activity on a limited number of subjects which deserve first priority and where the college could attain a high standard of expertise and excellence from the outset.

4. The following subjects were considered suitable for the purpose and as a basis upon which the curriculum of the college might be developed:

(a) Country programming

To induce a comprehensive understanding of the country programming system as a co-operative effort with a common objective and of the practical difficulties connected with its implementation, in order to achieve a more efficient and harmonious operation of all its components;

(b) Project selection, planning and evaluation

To identify the major managerial principles that should govern selection, planning and evaluation of projects and to acquaint participants with analytical methods which can be used in order to improve management and execution of individual projects;

(c) Management of financial resources and programme budgeting

To provide participants with a more thorough knowledge of budgeting procedures and techniques and of issues germane to "performance control", in order to stimulate a more uniform and effective management and planning of financial resources in international administrations;

(d) Human resources

To familiarize participants with personnel management, planning and training techniques and methods in order to promote a more effective utilization of human resources within the United Nations system;

(e) Transfer of technical knowledge and skills

To refine and enlarge the proficiency required in the processes of transferring technical knowledge and skills, in order to maximize the results obtained by the organizations in this field, with due regard to the psychological, sociological, political, legal and administrative obstacles to be overcome.

5. Each of these themes would be dealt with in specific courses the contents of which would be defined according to the specific needs of the participants. Several of these themes could also, if useful, be combined in the framework of more comprehensive courses.

6. Courses should be addressed primarily to senior officials at the policy-making level at Headquarters, resident representatives and deputy resident representatives of UNDP, and representatives of the agencies having equivalent responsibilities in the field or at regional offices. After initial trials, the courses should also be open to officials of other ranks, on condition that the level of prerequisite background would be the same for all the participants and thereby maintain a common denominator among them.

7. The courses should be performance-oriented and the methods of teaching selected accordingly. In principle, courses should last generally from one to five weeks, their exact duration being determined in accordance with the specific learning objectives assigned to each course, with due account being given to the positions held by participants in their respective organizations.

8. The ideal number of participants should be in the neighbourhood of 15, but it could be somewhat increased, as necessary, to accommodate requests and to broaden the interagency character of the courses. The number could attain 30 for the courses of two or more weeks' duration, with the understanding that the participants would be split in several working groups for a part of the exercises.

9. The courses should be held on a recurring basis and organized either in Geneva, or in other main centres depending on convenience and the financial economies to be achieved. They should be constantly improved in the light of acquired experience. Periodic assessment of their continuing need should also be made through consultations with the organizations concerned.

10. Courses should be organized in such a way as to permit the participants to express themselves to the greatest extent possible in the working language to which they are accustomed. It was agreed that a too frequent recourse to interpretation facilities should be avoided. Moreover, since the courses will be organized on a recurring basis, they could be held successively in different working languages.

11. Courses should be the object of a thorough evaluation, and an over-all plan for this purpose should be prepared for each course. This would include both an evaluation by the participants themselves and the organizations to which they have returned.

12. After the first years, the activity of the college should be broadened, according to recognized needs, to cover other fields of common interest. Among these, "information systems and management" and "intercultural communication" were deemed to merit early attention.

13. In addition to its regular courses, the staff college should organize short seminars on specific topics in which there might be room for training, but the exact content of which remains to be more precisely elaborated. The organizing and servicing of international conferences and meetings was suggested as an example.

II. Procedures for the selection of participants as trainees in the seminars and courses

14. It was agreed that the criteria for the selection of participants should be defined for each course in precise terms by the Director of the college. The organizations concerned would then decide which of their officials were qualified to enrol in a particular course or seminar.

15. It was also agreed that the organizations should make this selection with the primary aim of ensuring that the training received would benefit not only the individual, but the organization itself.

16. To ensure a careful selection of the most qualified candidates, the college should communicate to the agencies as far in advance as possible the calendar of courses to be held, and announcement of each course should be made in good time before its opening date.

17. It was felt desirable that this information be sent simultaneously to the heads of the agencies and to the officers responsible for personnel or training since they will have to take the practical steps in the internal selection process.

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III. Procedures for allowing officials of organizations to take part in courses as members of the teaching staff

18. It was recognized that these procedures would have to be discussed by the Director of the staff college bilaterally with each organization. The organizations would communicate a list of staff members who could take part in the various exercises organized by the college, indicating their qualifications and experience, in order to permit the Director to draw up a network of officials who would be available to the college as teaching staff. These officials should be placed at the disposal of the college free of charge, during the courses in which their participation would be requested, to the extent that they could be detached from their duties for the required time.

19. The possibility that staff members of the organizations might spend study leaves at the college should also be explored.

20. The choice of members of the teaching staff of the college, even for very short exercises, should be made taking into account an individual's ability to communicate easily. If necessary, the college should endeavour to help them improve their facility.

IV. Other questions

21. As mentioned in paragraph 29 of the memorandum of the Executive Director of UNITAR (A/8829 and Corr.1 and 2), each organization should have the right to enrol participants in the courses free of charge, the number being proportionate to the financial contribution. However, the agency should be entitled to enrol a minimum number of participants and that role of proportionality should apply only above this minimum.

22. The desirability of organizing as often as possible residential courses was recognized, but it must be underlined that this does not necessarily imply capital investment. Arrangements with hotels or other existing institutions could as well serve the purpose and achieve the same result. In any event, it would be necessary for participants, when attending courses either at Geneva or in New York, to be free from any direct link with their professional activities at their headquarters during that period.
