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WORK PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES 1953-1954
Note by Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

In the course of this session the Executive Secretary will submit for the consideration of the Commission a statement on the Work Programme and Priorities 1953-1954, taking into account the recommendations contained in draft resolutions which may be presented.

This statement will be prepared in the light of the United Nations Priority Programmes adopted at the 14th Session of the Economic and Social Council.

The Commission in considering any recommendations which may be made by its members in the form of draft resolutions which involve further studies and activities, will undoubtedly wish to be fully aware of the Economic and Social Council policy regarding review of Work Programmes and Priorities. The Council's policy in this respect is herein summarized for the information of the Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL RESOLUTION 451 (XIV) REVIEW OF
WORK PROGRAMMES AND PRIORITIES

1. Under resolution 451 (XIV) the Economic and Social Council requested its functional and regional commissions

/to review

to review their future programmes

(a) in the light of the criteria for priorities established under Council resolution 324 (XI);

(b) in accordance with certain procedures outlined under Council resolution 402 B(XIII), insofar as they are applicable; and

(c) in the light of the United Nations priority programmes listed under Council resolution 451 (XIV).

2. Under A, B and C below, the relevant provisions of these three resolutions are set forth. Under A are indicated the criteria to which, in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Council suggests that particular reference should be made by its commissions.

A. Criteria for Priorities

Council resolution 324 (XI)

3. The criteria which the Council established under its resolution 324 (XI), were designed to "provide for the organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned a common approach to the evaluation of priorities between programmes within a particular field of work and between projects within those programmes". The criteria are as follows:

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

Feasibility:

(a) Can qualified personnel be made available?

/ (b) Are

- (b) Are local conditions likely to be favourable?
- (c) Will the Governments concerned participate?

Scope:

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

Preparation and Co-ordination:

- (a) Have the necessary preliminary studies and preparation been made?
- (b) Has full account been taken of work already carried out in this field by other organizations? 1/
- (c) Have the possibilities of action or financing from sources other than United Nations and the specialized agencies been fully explored? 1/
- (d) Is the organ or agency concerned best suited to undertake the proposed action? 1/
- (e) Can the proposed action be integrated into other projects in the same field?

Results:

- (a) Are results likely to be significant in relation to the outlay of effort and financial resources and are they likely to accrue within a reasonable time? 1/

1/ The Council, in accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, proposes that particular reference be made to these specific criteria by agencies and commissions in their reports.

- (b) Will those results be demonstrable?
- (c) Will the States concerned be in a position to carry on the proposed activities after they have ceased to be under international auspices?
- (d) Will the proposed action assist and stimulate national action so as to ensure that the international effort expended produces the maximum results at the national or regional level?
- (e) Will the proposed action assist a significant number of those Member States or those people whose needs for economic and social advancement are greatest?
- (f) Will the proposed action further significantly the total effort of the United Nations and the specialized agencies for the promotion of the economic and social objectives outlined in the Charter?^{1/}

4. The criteria should be taken as a whole, and the order in which they are listed in no way reflects their relative importance. They are all subject to two overriding principles: (a) that international action will be justified only in cases where the desired results cannot be achieved by unassisted national action with some degree of certainty and within a reasonable time; (b) that the proposed action must be technically sound and adapted to its purpose. No single criterion is intended to be applicable to every programme or project under consideration. Several of the criteria indeed relate primarily to operational programmes rather than to long-term studies which

^{1/} The Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, proposes that particular reference be made to these specific criteria by agencies and commissions in their reports.

may be necessary to provide a general framework for action.

B. Procedures of Establishment of Priorities

Council resolution 402 B (XIII)

5. The procedures which the Council recommended for application by all its Commissions in establishing programme priorities, as outlined under its resolution 402 B (XIII), are as follows:

(a) The Secretary-General should report to each commission session the action which he has taken to carry out the commission's programmes according to the priorities previously established, and submit suggestions of priorities for future work, including suggestions regarding projects which might be deferred or eliminated;

(b) The programme of work of each commission should be divided into broad subjects, a differentiation being made, where practicable, between those of higher and lower priority;

(c) The broad subjects should be subdivided into three groups, the first group consisting of continuing projects of high priority, the second group of ad hoc projects also of high priority, and the third group of projects of lower priority, which might be deferred or eliminated, or undertaken only insofar as resources permitted;

(d) It is not necessary to indicate the relative importance of individual projects in the first and second groups, respectively, mentioned in (c); but, within the group of projects of lower priority, individual projects should be listed, if possible, in their order of priority, or some indication of priority should be given;

(e) In the case of ad hoc projects, there should be an indication of probable duration;

(f) The Secretary-General, within his existing authority, should have discretion as to the scheduling of work in order that the best use may be made of existing staff and resources and to take account of unforeseen circumstances which may arise.

C. United Nations Programme Priorities

Council resolution 451 (XIV)

6. The statement concerning United Nations priority programmes in the economic and social fields approved by the Council under

/resolution 451

resolution 451 (XIV), contains a tentative list of 6 major priority programmes, which in turn are divided into contributory programmes. The list was drawn up subject to the consideration that one overriding objective should be kept in view at all times, namely, the economic and social development of under-developed areas. Neither the 6 major priority programmes nor the several contributory programmes were listed in order of importance, but by subject matter. Although listed separately these programmes should be considered as inter-dependent and mutually complementary. The Council recognized "that the priorities listed will not apply to some urgent problems of particular regions which may call for special measures". It noted that the list is not comprehensive but rather "a list of major activities on which efforts should be further concentrated; indeed a great part of the activities of a continuing nature, including the services designed to organize on the international level collaboration between specialists and technicians, have necessarily not been mentioned. Nor does the list refer to methods and techniques which are essential in the implementation of most of these programmes; i.e. forms of technical assistance including advisory social welfare services and improvement of public administrations, as well as scientific exchanges, statistics, basic research on standards of living, etc.". The Council recognized that both the commissions and the specialized agencies are engaged in certain programmes not covered by its list and "that many of these programmes are of great importance and must be maintained". It requested the commissions, insofar

/as feasible,

as feasible, to give special emphasis to projects likely to contribute directly to the fulfillment of the recommended priority programmes both when reviewing existing projects and in particular when initiating any new projects; and to "include in their next reports to the Council information on the action they have taken in this direction".

7. The Council's list is as follows:

A. Increased food production and distribution

Increased food production:

(a) Better control, management and multiple utilization of land and water resources, including the development of arid zones;

(b) Improved economic incentives for agricultural producers and workers;

(c) Land reforms in connexion with general economic development plans;

(d) Campaigns against plant and animal diseases.

Improved utilization of food production:

(a) Improved distribution of food products;

(b) Promotion of better conservation methods, particularly in regard to storage;

(c) Processing of food products within the countries of origin and dissemination of technical advances in such processing.

B. Increased production in fields other than food

(a) Promotion of industrial development and of the improvement of production techniques;

/(b) The

(b) The training of management and workers, including vocational education and guidance;

(c) With a view to the utilization of the natural resources of a country, the expediting of the establishment of plans and development projects in heavy and light industry, transport, power and related fields;

(d) Expediting of the planning and exploration of means of financing such projects;

(e) Development of incentives, institutions and attitudes favourable to increased productivity.

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

(a) Action designed to achieve and maintain full employment;

(b) Promotion of measures for the control of inflation or deflation;

(c) Promotion of a steady growth of international trade, with due regard to achieving an equilibrium in international accounts;

(d) Adoption of measures to increase the export by the economically developed countries of industrial equipment and other capital goods essential to the development of the under-developed countries.

D. Acceleration of welfare, social security and basic public health programmes

(a) Promotion of welfare and social security programmes:

/Social insurance

Social insurance and related measures; extension of social insurance and provision of assistance in old age, disablement and sickness;

Improved labour standards;

Strengthening of national programmes for family and child welfare;

Extension of housing programmes and assistance in the provision of housing for people in lower income brackets;

(b) Promotion of basic public health programmes:

Strengthening of public health programmes;

Prevention and control of the major communicable diseases;

(c) Assistance in community development and organization, with special emphasis on the problems of adaptation of under-developed or transplanted communities to the conditions of modern life.

E. Development of education and science

(a) Free and compulsory elementary education;

(b) Fundamental education for those without formal schooling;

(c) Education for a better understanding of the principles, purposes and methods of international co-operation;

(d) Accessibility of education and cultural life to all sections of the population;

(e) Scientific education and research;

F. Formulation and wider observance of human rights

/(a) Fuller

(a) Fuller dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and completion of the covenants on human rights:

(b) Promotion of human rights and their observance, including elimination of forced labour, of restrictions on freedom of association, and of all discriminatory measures referred to in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(c) Promotion of freedom of information of the Press.