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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

Implementation of section VI of the annex to General Assembly  
resolution 32/197 on planning, programming, budgeting and  
evaluation

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted decision 34/451 on the implementation of section VI of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, Under that decision, the General Assembly, "having considered the relevant section of the progress report of the Secretary-General for 1979 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, decided to review the implementation of section VI of the annex to its resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 at its thirty-fifth session, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report in that regard".
2. The present document has been prepared pursuant to the decision quoted above, and updates the information contained in section A.VI of the first progress report on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system for 1979 (E/1979/81) on planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation. It should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of section VIII of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on Secretariat support services and section IV of General Assembly resolution 33/202 of 29 January 1979 which will also be before the current session of the General Assembly.
3. The purpose of this document is to draw attention specifically to those actions taken by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) at its twentieth session which relate to the relevant provisions of section VI of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197. As the report of CPC is before the Assembly, 1/ the note limits itself to providing cross references to that report and such additional information as might be necessary.

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session,  
Supplement No. 38 (A/35/38).

4. With regard to paragraphs 37, 38 and 39 of the annex to resolution 32/197 concerning methodologies for, and approaches to, programme planning and evaluation and the responsibilities of CPC in these areas, the conclusions of CPC at its twentieth session will be found in chapter X A of its report.

5. With particular reference to the issues raised in paragraphs 39 and 43 of the annex to resolution 32/197 concerning the harmonization of medium-term plans and programmes, CPC at its nineteenth session considered that the best tool for achieving programme co-ordination within the United Nations system would be the development of joint planning techniques. Further consideration of these issues is contained in the report of the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) in July 1979 (E/1980/75). In this connexion it will be recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph 2 (k) of resolution 34/224, decided that:

"The planning process should take into account the needs of interagency co-ordination; this co-ordination does not necessarily require system-wide synchronization of planning periods."

6. With respect to paragraphs 39 and 42 of the annex to resolution 32/197 regarding evaluation procedures, the recommendations of CPC are contained in chapter X B of its report. 1/

7. With regard to paragraph 40 of the annex relating to procedures for priority setting, as the Committee could not immediately agree on the nature of the priority-setting mechanism or on the criteria or methods to be employed in setting priorities for the medium-term plan 1984-89, it will continue its discussion of these issues at its twenty-first session in 1981. 2/

8. As provided for in paragraphs 44 and 45 of the annex, prior consultations with the specialized agencies were undertaken in respect of the United Nations programme budget for 1980-81. The Committee made a number of recommendations to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly as a result of its consideration of cross-organizational programme analyses (chap. X C and F). 3/

9. Issues relating to the implementation of paragraph 49 of the annex, setting out requirements of timing and content for statements to be provided by the Secretariat of the programme-budget implications of proposals submitted to intergovernmental bodies, were dealt with in some detail in the Secretary-General's first progress report on restructuring for 1979. A related issue, raised in that report as well as in the progress report of ACC on restructuring (E/1978/107) which may require further consideration, is the question of the procedures to be followed for better assessing the total financial impact of, and the availability of resources for, the implementation of decisions of central United Nations organs having system-wide implications. The relevant passage in the ACC report (para. 9) reads as follows:

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2/ Ibid., chap. X A.

3/ Ibid., chap. X C and F.

"The need to pay due regard to the financial impact for the organizations concerned of decisions having system-wide implications and to be satisfied that the necessary resources can be made available is particularly relevant in this context. It is recognized that the recommendations of United Nations central intergovernmental bodies should not necessarily generate requests for additional funds by the organizations concerned, and should be regarded as an integral part of the co-operative endeavour to determine the thrust and direction of the common efforts of the organizations of the system. Yet, in a number of cases, those recommendations may involve entirely new sets of activities, as for example when certain of the organizations are called upon to contribute to the preparations for a world conference in a new area of international concern. In such cases appropriate arrangements should be made to enable the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to take into account the financial impact of such decisions, not only for the United Nations but also for the other organizations concerned. Such arrangements would be in line with the standard clause in the relationship agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies which provide that in the event of agencies being faced with "substantial extra expense" as a result of requests by the United Nations, consultations should take place with a view to determining the most equitable manner in which such expense should be borne. The ACC would be ready, if it is so desired, to elaborate a set of procedures to this end, for consideration and approval by the General Assembly."

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