

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/34/84 + Add. 1  
26 March 1979  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Thirty-fourth session  
Item 102 of the preliminary list\*

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Medium-term planning in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on medium-term planning in the United Nations (JIU/REP/79/5).

\* A/34/50.

MEDIUM-TERM PLANING IN THE UNITED NATIONS

By Maurice Bertrand  
Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva, March 1979

/...

/CONTENTS/

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
Chapter I - THE PLANNING CRISIS IN THE UNITED NATIONS . . . . .	1 - 7	6
Chapter II - ATTEMPT TO DIAGNOSE THE CAUSES OF THE CRISIS . . . . .	8 - 13	10
Chapter III - THE ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING WORK . . . . .	14 - 26	13
A. Difficulties arising from the present system of organization . . . . .	14 - 17	13
B. Possible use of in-depth programme studies . . . . .	18 - 21	14
C. Length of the preparations. Plans with fixed- time horizons. Consultations with Member States . . . . .	22 - 26	16
Chapter IV - THE PRESENT PROGRAMME STRUCTURE . . . . .	27 - 40	20
Chapter V - ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OBJECTIVE-BASED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE . . . . .	41 - 60	28
A. Distinction between programmable and non-programmable activities . . . . .	41 - 44	28
B. Typology of programmes based on the quantity or "dosage" of types of activities . . . . .	45 - 47	29
C. Identification of continuous activities . . . . .	48 - 49	34
D. Some examples of types of time-limited target objectives . . . . .	50 - 58	35
E. General methods of programme analysis . . . . .	59 - 60	39
Chapter VI - APPLICABILITY OF A TYPE OF OBJECTIVE-BASED STRUCTURE TO A NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES . . . . .	61 - 89	41
Environmental health at WHO. Basic sanitary measures . . . . .	71 - 73	48
Educational planning at UNESCO . . . . .	74 - 76	50
Social security programme at ILO . . . . .	77 - 79	52
Environment programmes . . . . .	80 - 82	55
Orientation of research:		
(a) Definition of the nature and characteristics of each programme . . . . .	85	58
(b) Identification of the United Nations contribution in the context of efforts of the international community as a whole . . . . .	86	59

/CONTENTS/ (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
(c) Definition of the role of the various programmes and funds (UNDP, UNICEF, UNEP, etc.) . . . . .	87	59
(d) The advantages of developing typologies for situations and problems with a view to facilitating technical co-operation . . . .	88 - 89	59
Chapter VII - TYPES OF DECISIONS WHICH MEMBER STATES SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE. DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINES OF MAJOR PROGRAMME POLICIES. ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES.	90 - 107	61
A. Descriptive outline of major programme policies . . . . .	92 - 95	62
B. Establishment of priorities . . . . .	96 - 107	66
Chapter VIII - PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .		72
ANNEXES . . . . .		77

/Chapter I/

/The planning crisis in the United Nations/

1. Medium-term planning in the United Nations is in a state of crisis. The last medium-term plan, for 1980-1983 (the third since the planning experiment began), submitted in September 1978 to CPC, has still not been approved by the Economic and Social Council or by the General Assembly. Its excessive bulk (1,300 pages), its presentation of the strategies and objectives of the various programmes, the fact that there has been an unacceptable delay in its distribution, have all been criticized in the report of CPC itself and in the statements of many delegations. It has in particular been said that:

- The plan has gone beyond reasonable proportions,
- Too often the description of the proposed activities is imprecise,
- The actual aim of the current plan is unclear and the content of subsequent plans should be different,
- The apportionment of tasks among the various United Nations bodies is not very clear,
- The integrated approach to the planning process still needs perfecting,
- The introduction to the plan, which should provide general guidelines for United Nations activities does not serve its purpose,
- The procedures for the consideration of the plans by Governments are unsatisfactory,
- The duration of future plans should be reconsidered,
- The practice of evaluation as an integral part of the planning cycle should be improved,
- The nature of the financial data to be provided in the plan should be more clearly defined,
- The planning process should be reconsidered.

Planning in the United Nations is in a state of crisis and the variety of criticisms ...

... shows the scale of a problem that is experienced throughout the United Nations system.

Everyone acknowledges the merits of the approaches set up (medium-term plans and programme budgets) ...

2. The quantity and variety of the criticisms thus indicate the scale of the present problem. The crisis in medium-term planning is, however, not confined to the United Nations. A similar crisis has occurred or is occurring in most of the main agencies or programmes in the United Nations system. In six years UNESCO changed its planning method three times before arriving at a formula which seemed satisfactory to the General Conference and which should be improved still further. ILO tried three medium-term plans before halting the process and embarking on an evaluation of the kind now being conducted in the United Nations regarding the actual design of the plan. WHO is currently developing a precise medium-term planning system on the basis of its Sixth General Programme of Work, while UNICEF is considering the kind of plan it might adopt. In UNDP thought is still being given to country programming methods. The work of CCAQ on the harmonization of programming systems and on joint planning methods is proceeding slowly.

3. Everywhere, however, the situations are comparable and the problems under consideration are the same. The merits of the machinery that has been set up are generally acknowledged, but there is an awareness that they must be improved if they are to live up to the hopes placed in them. Everyone recognizes that the patiently constructed apparatus of medium-term plans and programme budgets has yielded some results. In particular it is admitted that it has made it possible to produce a relatively consistent description of the activities of the secretariats, and that it has made it easier to forecast the resources needed for each programme. Monitoring of implementation has also been facilitated since it is now possibly better to identify the functions of the various administrative units and to determine more specifically the limits of their respective competencies. Finally, a number of programme policies or strategies have been outlined, giving reason to hope that the machinery might one day operate in a really useful way.

4. In most cases, however, the present system still does not make it possible:

- Either to bridge the gaps between the general and ambitious objectives set out in resolutions and the very varied outputs deriving from the day-to-day activities of the secretariats,

/...

- Or to establish priorities clearly,
- Or to choose the content of programmes in the light of the criteria of the new international economic order,
- Or to define the target-objectives in the various sectors of activity with sufficient clarity.

Thus the basic aims sought have still not been achieved.

But the basic aims sought have still not been achieved.

5. In short, the medium-term planning crisis reflects the desire of the Member States to increase the credibility of international organizations. No doubt everyone is aware that the resolutions of intergovernmental bodies, which are often couched in ambitious terms, are more a reflection of trends, aspirations or exhortations than of precise solutions to the problems mentioned. No one considers it sufficient to adopt resolutions on human rights for these to be respected, nor is it deemed sufficient to make recommendations on full employment in order to ensure a reduction in unemployment. No one expects that resolutions on literacy will immediately bring about the disappearance of illiteracy, nor does anyone imagine that the adoption of growth-rates will at once accelerate the pace of development. Member States would, on the other hand, have a right to hope that, in each of the areas under consideration, limited but reasonably effective action would be taken by international organizations within the framework thus established. The specific objectives sought should therefore be clearly defined and the nature and type of the activities leading to their accomplishment should be explained.

What is required is to increase the credibility of the international organizations by specifying limited but effective action and precise objectives.

6. But this is not at present the case, at least in the United Nations. The criticisms of the present medium-term plan seem quite moderate, considering the vagueness and banality of the style used in describing the activities of most programmes. The presentation of the document does not permit any programme to reach a reasonable "credibility threshold". When good work is done and positive results are achieved under a programme, the medium-term plan affords no means of ascertaining this or to verifying the fact. The most serious consequence of the situation is that, on the whole, the consensus arrived at among Member States on the need to take action in particular areas is still all too often accompanied by a great deal of scepticism.

In the case of most programmes the "credibility threshold" is not at present attained.

The role of current research is thus important.

7. The importance of the research which the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly have decided to undertake is thus considerable. It is not merely a matter of determining the presentation or the content of the document. What must be found is machinery to enable international organizations, and the United Nations in particular, to set reasonably attainable objectives and to demonstrate that they are capable of attaining them. The Member States must therefore be able to believe in their effectiveness. This kind of research is not an easy matter.



/Chapter II/

/Attempt to diagnose the causes of the crisis/

Deficiencies in the presentation of the most recent medium-term plan are the immediate cause of the crisis,

but these deficiencies must themselves be explained.

The planning methods themselves must be questioned ...

8. Undoubtedly the deficiencies in the document containing the most recent medium-term plan can be considered the most immediate cause of the crisis. Anyone who has tried to read these texts must inevitably have been disheartened by the plethora of banalities, by the vague and general wording devoid of any information, by the lack of descriptions of policies and objectives, by the substitution of lists of outputs for the description of strategies, etc. ...

9. Yet such deficiencies, so endemic that no programme is without them, in themselves represent a phenomenon which needs to be explained. Part of that explanation no doubt lies in the psychological climate in which the plan is prepared. Planning work in general is considered by those in charge of programmes as an exercise which is superimposed on their daily duties without making any real contribution to them. And certainly it can be neither easy nor pleasant to have to describe how one works when the work one has to do is already difficult in itself and is beset by all kinds of constraints and difficulties. For those in charge of programmes, and those who work with them, scepticism concerning the planning exercise also derives from a desire to retain the power to decide for themselves the steps to be followed in implementing the programme and to elude outside controls which could generate criticism. By themselves, however, all these factors combined could not explain so conspicuous a failure.

10. It is thus probable that the methods prescribed for preparing the exercise should themselves be questioned. For such surprising results can only be due to a mistake in conception. We are not concerned here with a detailed examination of the instructions which have been issued; we are concerned with the fundamental principles on which they are based. It should be noted that in the United Nations:

- All offices have been subjected to the planning exercise, and it has consequently been assumed that all the Organization's activities could be programmed;

/...

- All programme narratives have been given a uniform structure, as though the international organization always had an identical role to play in the most widely-differing fields;
- It has been considered that planning work should be carried out as quickly as possible and without any noticeable extra burden of work, thus implying that it does not involve close attention requiring exceptional efforts.

However, the opposite is the case since:

- Programming disciplines are not applicable to all activities;
- The roles played by the United Nations vary considerably and require different kinds of treatment;
- To be properly carried out, planning work requires suitable organization.

11. One of the misunderstandings most damaging to the institution of a sound programming system is the assumption that forecasting and scheduling procedures can be applied to activities unsuited to that type of exercise. The current presentation of the medium-term plans and programme budgets of the United Nations perpetuates this misunderstanding unhelpfully and even dangerously. In fact a number of activities of international organizations, political activities (Security Council, peace-keeping disarmament, etc. ...), activities concerning negotiations or, lastly, continuing functions, cannot be programmed. If account were taken of the unpredictability of the events to which certain offices are called upon to react, and of the regularity of the functions performed by other offices, it would be much easier to define the types of procedure which should be observed in the case of activities which can properly be programmed.

as well as the principles forming the basis of the exercise.

12. The programmable activities are the ones for which it is possible to set precise objectives, attainable within a normal time-span of several years, taking into account the modest resources available to the United Nations. In the economic and social field, technical co-operation activities, international co-operation activities between countries at all levels of development, and normative or study and research activities all belong to this category. But it is an oversimplification to claim that the same programming framework can be applied throughout. The types of activity carried out by

There is a need to differentiate between the various roles played by international organizations and the rules applied to them must be suited to each one of them.

international organizations in the fields of transport, education, the sea-bed, statistics, development strategy, international trade, public finance, fisheries, human rights, social security, employment, smallpox eradication, telecommunications or meteorology are simply not comparable in importance or nature. In other words, international organizations do not play the same role in all these fields. On the contrary, their types of activity are extremely varied, and it is difficult to define them precisely or to make a distinction between such activities and the responsibilities of the Governments of sovereign countries. The structure on which the organizations of the United Nations system have agreed, thanks to the work of CCAQ, to harmonize the presentation of their plans and their budgets - and which has four levels - the major programme, the programme, the subprogramme and the programme element - is perhaps in the circumstances too simple a framework for such very varied subjects. The different roles played by the international organizations in the social and economic fields need to be clearly defined, and the rules applicable to them must be suited to each one of them. This problem of the programming structure is therefore one of the problems which needs the most serious consideration.

Finally, planning work should be better organized.

13. Finally, it should be pointed out that planning work should be better organized and greater attention should be paid to it. If such a radical effort of thought and research is to yield maximum results it is insufficient merely to assert its importance: those called upon to participate in the work should be given the necessary scope, time and resources. In particular, this means:

- Not only that the importance of the exercise should be clear to all and that those who have to apply the methods recommended should accord them their intellectual allegiance,
- But also that the schedule of work should be suited to the importance of the effort required and spread out over an adequate period,
- That the exceptional nature of the work should not be undermined by over-repetition of the exercise,
- That provision should also be made for Member States to be able to devote adequate time and attention to the results of the secretariats' efforts.

/Chapter III/

/The organization of planning work/

A. Difficulties arising from the present system of organization

14. The organization of planning work should be considered before other problems because the time and significance allotted to the exercise in fact determine its methods and its content. In this respect the present framework has very serious drawbacks. One reason for the difficulties encountered and the misunderstandings which have arisen with regard to the very concept of planning has been the fact that the planning process has been identified entirely with the process of formulating one document: the medium-term plan.

15. This identification has had two major drawbacks:

- On the one hand, it has engendered the idea that the objectives and policies of all the programmes of an agency should be considered at the same time. Experience has shown that the concomitant consideration of so many very different questions is an almost impossible task for all the committees which have attempted it;
- On the other hand, it has created very difficult problems with regard to the length of the document. Contradictory requirements have inevitably arisen with respect to the number of pages to be devoted to a programme narrative. In order to keep the medium-term plan within reasonable dimensions (which at 250 pages are none the less substantial), a mere dozen pages would have to be allocated to the narrative of each major programme. At the same time, in order to explain everything which should be said if delegates were to understand the content of a programme, 60 to 100 pages would have to be devoted to each major programme in most instances. The compromise solutions which have inevitably been adopted have resulted in documents which combine imprecision with excessive length.

The total identification of planning work with the medium-term plan alone ...

has led to the idea that all programmes should be considered at the same time, while intractable contradictions have arisen regarding the volume of documentation.

The formula of the "rolling plan", renewed every two years, has meant that only a few months are devoted to preparation of the document.

16. These difficulties have been further exacerbated by the fact that the formula of a "rolling plan", which has to be considered every two years, was chosen. This has meant that the only time allocated for preparation of the plan has been the interval available between the preparation of two budgets, a few short months. The outcome of this is a tendency to consider the plan as a kind of supplementary and less precise budgetary document, less restrictive and ultimately less important than the budget, since it does not lead to financial decisions. An entirely different attitude of mind would be necessary if this exercise were to have the significance which Member States attach to it.

17. The mere identification of these difficulties will not suffice to produce an immediate solution to them. However, consideration of these difficulties points to several avenues of research to be pursued regarding:

- The nature of the actual planning instruments,
- The reasonable period of time for the preparatory work on the plan,
- The frequency with which these documents should be prepared: fixed-term plans or rolling plans,
- The question of possible consultations with the Member States on the definition of the policies of major programmes.

B. Possible use of in-depth programme studies

18. We have already indicated, particularly in the report on medium-term planning in the United Nations system published in 1974, that two organizations, ILO and WHO, used the system of in-depth programme studies when considering the programme. 1/ This system involves the annual submission to the Executive Board of one or more studies of some 60 to 100 pages, each of which is devoted to detailed examination of the policy of a programme (or of a major programme). The studies generally contain a section describing and evaluating past experience, a discussion of the changes of approach made necessary by new developments or by recognition of mistakes made, and proposals for future approaches. This practice seems to

The method of "in-depth programme studies" already in use in two organizations ...

---

1/ Para. 40 of the report.

have been discontinued by WHO, but it has been somewhat fitfully continued by ILO. <sup>2/</sup> It cannot be said that both instruments really contributed to the planning process, but it is quite possible to adapt this system of studies to the problems requiring solution.

19. There can be no question of replacing the medium-term plan by a series of detailed studies, even if it were complete. The reason is that it is difficult to imagine CPC, for example, being in a position to examine more than three or four in-depth studies each year. In the circumstances it would take about six years to review all the major economic and social programmes of the United Nations. Consideration of studies of this kind alone would thus not make it possible to identify a consistent over-all policy for all programmes and for the same period of time. Therefore the instrument known as the "medium-term plan" remains indispensable.

20. On the other hand, the adoption of a system of "in-depth studies" might considerably facilitate both the work of planning and the presentation of the medium-term plan. The studies could be used in the following way:

(a) At the first stage, at the start of the planning process, they could be drawn up in preliminary form to serve as a preparatory document for the medium-term plan. These "in-depth studies (first format)" could be approximately 40 to 100 pages in length. They could be drawn up according to a standard pattern which will be described in chapter VII on programme policies, and which would be the same as that used for the chapters of the medium-term plan. They would enable those in charge of major programmes to define their policy and the objectives that they wished to see approved, and would enable the expert committees (specialized committees) to study and discuss the content of the major programmes.

(b) These documents, accompanied by all the comments and suggestions made by the expert committees consulted in the course of the planning process, would subsequently be summarized in a much smaller number of pages for the preparation of the parts corresponding to each major programme in the medium-term plan.

---

<sup>2/</sup> The three most recent documents concern social security, integrated rural development and statistics.

might be suited to the needs of the United Nations.

In their initial form, these studies could serve as a preparatory document for the planning process ...

then, in their second form, supplemented by evaluation studies, they could be used by the intergovernmental committees for a continuing review of the principal programmes.

21. (c) These "first format studies" would also be used for the preparation of the studies which would be submitted to CPC and to the Economic and Social Council at intervals to be determined by these committees (probably three to five per year) for in-depth consideration of each of the major programmes. These "in-depth second format studies" would be accompanied by evaluation studies of each of the programmes whose results would be indicated at the beginning of these documents. The proposed future policy would thus be based on an analysis of the results obtained by means of the policy applied in the past. This review would enable the necessary revisions to be made and would lead to better integration of the machinery for evaluation and the machinery for programming. The work of planning and programming would thus constitute a continuous process whereby the intergovernmental committees would be permanently associated with the work of studying the orientation of United Nations activities: specification of the medium-term plans would thereby be considerably facilitated in future.

C. Length of the preparations. Plans with fixed-time horizons. Consultations with Member States

22. The need to submit the in-depth studies (first format) for consideration by the appropriate expert committees would mean extending the preparatory work for the medium-term plan over a longer period than that at present allocated to it. Constraints that are sometimes conflicting are encountered in drawing up a suitable time-table:

Conflicting restraints have to be overcome in preparing a suitable time-table.

- The duration of the preparatory work should not exceed 15 to 20 months, so as to avoid a disposal of effort and so as not to obstruct forecasting by the adoption of too extended a time-scale,
- During this period it ought, however, to be possible to undertake, on the basis of well-prepared documents, a considerable number of consultations, particularly with the specialized expert committees, the frequency of whose meetings is often such that it can be accommodated within such a brief period only with difficulty,
- To make joint planning possible, consultations with the regional offices and with the other organizations within the United Nations system must also be arranged during this period,
- Finally, in the time-table for the preparations, space must be reserved for the Introduction to the medium-term plan.

23. The use of a number of special procedures and the preparation of a very precise time-table should help to overcome these difficulties. For example, provision might be made for:

(a) A period of approximately 4 months for preparation of the in-depth studies (first format), on the understanding that the regional offices would be associated with this preparatory work,

(b) Approximately 4 months for consultations with the various expert committees, or sometimes with intergovernmental committees and their subsidiary bodies, and consultations with the other organizations within the United Nations system with a view to joint planning.

Obviously, in order to combine, in so brief a period, consultations with these various committees, it would be necessary to resort to special procedures, such as: the convening of special sessions of these committees, or holding consultations in writing with the members of these committees, or a combination of these two procedures.

(c) One or two months to collate the comments, suggestions or amendments made by the expert committees in order to prepare a summary which would constitute the draft medium-term plan.

(d) Finally, a period of six to seven months (May to October/November) for consultations on the draft plan with CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Such a time-table would presuppose that the operation would begin 12 to 15 months before CPC's presentation of the medium-term plan (May session), which, for example, would assume that the preparation of a medium-term plan beginning in 1982 would start in February/March 1980.

24. A process of such importance and duration could obviously not be repeated too frequently. It would therefore be necessary to abandon the idea of a "rolling plan" whose preparation has to be undertaken every two years. As CCAQ has recommended, it would then be necessary to envisage the adoption of a "fixed time horizon" plan which would need preparing at much less frequent intervals.

The adoption of a fixed time horizon plan, as we stated in our last report, on programming in the

If special procedures are used, a time-table of approximately 18 months is feasible.

But in that case the system of "fixed time horizon planning" would have to be adopted.



United Nations (A/33/226), would have the further advantage of being more compatible with the establishment of specific time-limits for the targets which would serve as the basic components of the plan.

25. To ensure careful and thorough preparation of the medium-term plan we would thus recommend:

- The adoption of the system of fixed time horizon planning,
- The establishment of a precise time-table for the preparations, which means that within the framework of the schedule described in paragraph 23, the Secretariat should lay down instructions strictly regulating the progress of the various stages of preparation of the plan.

26. One point on which some doubts might persist is the possibility of consulting Member States directly during the preparation of the medium-term plan.

A procedure of direct consultations with the Member States could also be envisaged.

The possibility of identifying a consensus in the international community on the objectives of each of the major programmes is too serious a question for any avenue which might lead to the establishment of this consensus to be left unexplored. It may be noted that consultations with an expert committee elicits the views of only a certain number of Member States, or to be more precise, of the specialists on various questions which some Member States have been able to assign to these committees or commissions.

However, it is not impossible that in some cases the composition of an expert committee responsible for giving an opinion on a programme might be such that it gave too much weight to the concerns of the members of a particular profession without taking comparable account of the concerns of the users. Each profession has its interests and its own ideas, which do not necessarily coincide with those of the users of the services it provides.

Such considerations may thus mean that thought will be given to the possibility of instituting a procedure for written consultations with each Member State, so that the views of all the competent offices in the actual countries (specialist directors of technical ministries, directors of institutes, etc.) could be obtained.

If such a method is considered desirable by CPC and the Economic and Social Council, provision would have to be made, in the time-table proposed in the previous paragraph, for the consultation procedure. None the less, it would not appear to be necessary to extend the duration of the preparatory work for the plan on that account. The consultation of Member States might very well take place on the basis of the "in-depth studies (first format)" at the same time as the consultation of the various committees (and perhaps of some non-governmental organizations).

/Chapter IV/

/The present programme structure/

27. The problem of the programme structure is first of all only another way of looking at the problem of secretariat administrative structures. This problem is known to be virtually constant in organizations which are given new tasks each year, which must continually adapt to a changing world and which in fact are expanding at a fairly steady rate. The problems of administrative structure have in the past been resolved in two ways:

- Regularly, from one budget to the next, by increasing the number of posts and by making minor adjustments,
- Periodically (about every five years on average) by means of "restructuring exercises".

The necessary structural units at various levels, such as Departments or Offices, Divisions, Sections, and so on, have been based on a fairly uniform administrative hierarchy.

28. It is only natural that this administrative structure should have served as a model for the establishment of the programme structure. It was no doubt pointed out in various quarters that the two structures should not overlap and attempts must have been made, for example, to include under one "major programme" activities involving different units but directed towards a common objective. <sup>3/</sup> But such classifications, useful as they may be, still make the programme structure only relatively original. Certain levels, such as that of the programme or subprogramme, are again invariably identical to the division or section levels. It is, of course, perfectly normal that this should be so, and efforts to ensure optimum matching of such levels should certainly be encouraged. That should not, however, stand in the way of efforts to seek out the original features inherent in programme structures, and this has so far not yet been attempted. But these efforts should be pursued along different lines from those followed in the past.

The administrative structure ...

has served as the model for establishing the programme structure.

---

<sup>3/</sup> This has occurred at the United Nations in the case of Headquarters and regional office activities under the same major programme. At UNESCO, several departments (Education, Science, Culture) co-operate to achieve a common objective (human rights, participation of women in development, information systems, etc.).

The use of a four-tier programme structure (adopted by ACC) ...

29. The four-tier programme structure agreed upon by the organizations within the United Nations system are familiar. We have already mentioned in the annex to a previous report 4/ the definitions of the four programming levels provided by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, and we are attaching the annex once again to this report because of the importance of these concepts and the critical appraisal that will derive from the study of the results of their application in a number of organizations within the United Nations system (annex I).

30. On examining the present structure of the programmes of the United Nations and the three other main agencies in the United Nations system, one might initially form the impression that there is some regularity and logic in it. The statistics for the number of major programmes, programmes and subprogrammes in the economic and social sectors (which we consider to be eventually programmable)\* show the following figures:

<u>Organizations</u>	<u>MP</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>SP</u>
UN	19 <u>5/</u>	103 <u>6/</u>	335
UNESCO	10	41 <u>7/</u>	165
ILO	15 <u>8/</u>	78 <u>9/</u>	208
WHO	9 <u>5/</u>	46	N/A

in the various agencies of the United Nations system gives, at first sight, an impression of homogeneity.

The number of programme elements, at least for the United Nations, can be estimated at roughly 1,500 (from 2 to 20 programme elements per subprogramme, but on average 4 to 5), and in the case of UNESCO and ILO the number is approximately the same (about 1,000 to 1,500). It might thus be assumed that there is actually a fairly homogeneous structure, comprising, in each large organization of comparable size, some 10 to 20 major programmes, a few dozen programmes, 200 to 300 subprogrammes, and just over 1,000 programme elements.

\* We have not included major political or administrative programmes in these lists. See the lists in the annexes.

4/ A/33/226 - Report on programming and evaluation in the United Nations, chap. II.1, annex I.

5/ One of which has only one programme.

6/ Two of which have only one subprogramme.

7/ One of which has only one subprogramme.

8/ Four of which have only one programme.

9/ Forty-one of which have only one subprogramme.

/...

31. Upon closer examination, however, some differences will be detected. First of all, the scale of these different levels varies greatly. At the United Nations there are subprogrammes with 15 times as many Professional staff as the programmes and major programmes.

For example, a UNIDO subprogramme called "Programme development and evaluation" under the programme "Policy co-ordination" uses about 147 Professionals, while the major programme "Ocean economy and technology" uses only 9.

The major programme level comprises sets of activities involving 9 to 645 Professionals, and no average quantification can be arrived at (cf. annex II).

For instance, there is one major programme with 645 Professionals, two with more than 200, three with 100 to 150, four with 50 to 100, four with 30 to 40, and one with nine. The scale at the programme level is no more homogeneous (the amount varies from nine to 368 Professional staff), and the same can be said of the subprogramme level (between 1.3 and 147 Professionals).

But a closer examination shows that the use of the various levels is not very rational, either as regards scale ...

At ILO (cf. annex III), the scale at each level is slightly more homogeneous since, except for one major programme which employs only two Professionals, the others have 20 to 125. Programme magnitude varies from one to 22 Professional staff members and subprogramme magnitude varies from one professional work-month to 16 Professionals. On the average, the scale of each level is much more limited at ILO than at the United Nations.

At WHO (cf. annex IV) the magnitude varies from 7.2 to 217 Professional staff for the major programmes. Since programme staff are not indicated in the budgets, the figures for this magnitude must be given in dollars.

Programme size varies from \$1 million (programme called "Programme planning and general activities" under the major programme "Prophylactic, diagnostic and therapeutic substances"), to \$80.8 million (a programme entitled "Special programme for research and training in tropical diseases" under the major programme "Communicable disease prevention and control").

At UNESCO (cf. annex V) the percentage of programme resources allocated to major objectives varies from 0.6 per cent (Population) to 25 per cent (Educational policies). The amounts allocated to "objectives" (the term which at UNESCO corresponds to programmes) range from \$188,000 (objective 2.2, "Role of international law and international organizations") to \$11.8 million (objective 4.3, "Scientific and technological research and training"). The amounts allocated to themes (the UNESCO term for subprogrammes) range from \$40,000 (theme 9.3/04, "Education of the general public on the role of the media") to \$3,294,000 (theme 5.1/02, "Training of skilled personnel").

32. If scale were the only recognized criterion, it would be necessary, in order to make this classification seem more rational, to promote some subprogrammes to the level of programmes and some programmes to the level of major programmes. But the lack of homogeneity in these various levels is not confined to differences in scale.

33. The "major programme" classification might certainly seem fairly clear.

or as regards the principles applied in the classification of activities.

In general, especially at the United Nations, it means broad sectors of activity falling into traditional categories used by national administrations: Transport; Population, Trade, Industry, etc. In the case of WHO, it means clearly identified questions relating to health: Development of health services, Environmental health, Communicable disease prevention, etc. We find the same approach at ILO in major programmes such as Training, Employment and development, and Social security. But at ILO the major programme also covers technical co-operation activities by region: Management of field programmes in Africa, Management of field programmes in the Americas, etc.; and this already indicates a serious divergence in the use of the term "major programme". Lastly, UNESCO has adopted a classification according to "major objectives", which only partly coincides with the main divisions of its administrative structure: Strengthening of peace, Man as central to development, Man and his environment, etc.

34. But the use of the terms "programme" and "subprogramme" reveals far greater conceptual differences. At the United Nations, the programme level covers:

/...

- Either all the activities of a given office (a department or a regional economic commission) within a major programme:

For example, the six programmes in the major programme "Human Settlements" include the one at headquarters (programme 1) and those of the five regional economic commissions (programmes 2 to 6).

- Or activities within a traditional sector which is similar in type to a major programme:

UNCTAD, for instance, lists programmes such as "Money, finance and development", "Trade in commodities", "Trade in manufactures", "Shipping and ports", "Transfer of technology", "Insurance", etc. (the first 10 programmes), before using the five other programmes (11 to 15) for the activities of the five regional economic commissions in all fields of international trade.

35. WHO systematically includes within each "major programme":

- One programme devoted to "Programme planning and general activities";
- A series of "programmes" which represent a fairly logical breakdown of the activities of the major programme:

For example, the major programme "Communicable disease prevention and control" includes four separate programmes for different types of illness (Malaria, Bacterial and virus diseases, Smallpox eradication, Prevention of blindness) and four programmes corresponding to the different types of disease prevention and control arrangements (Epidemiological surveillance, Immunization, Research and training in tropical diseases, Vector biology and control).

ILO also includes in each major programme a programme devoted to "Departmental management". The others, as in the case of WHO, are broken down according to fields of activity:

Thus, for example, the major programme "Working conditions and environment" is broken down into "Conditions of work and life", "Occupational safety and health" and "Women workers' questions".

At UNESCO, the "programmes" are "objectives" identified by the General Conference itself in the course of the preparation of the last medium-term plan. These programmes are therefore never based on administrative structure. They involve categories of activity within one major objective.

For example, the major programme "Educational policies" comprises the following programmes: "Educational policies and plans", "Educational administration", "Educational structures", "Educational content", "Training of educational personnel", "Adult education", "Role of higher education in society".

The subprogramme level is hard to distinguish from the programme level.

36. The subprogramme level is hardly distinguishable from the programme level.

At the United Nations, the programme content is broken down according to category of activity.

For example, the major programme "Human Settlements" which is broken down into six programmes (one for Headquarters and one for each regional economic commission) shows a breakdown into subprogrammes which is approximately the same for all the programmes. Thus, in programmes 1, 2, 3 and 4 we find the same subprogramme 1 "Settlement policies and strategies", the same subprogramme 2 "Settlement planning", in three cases the same subprogramme 4 "Development of the building sector", etc. ...

At ILO the subprogramme level is used either to reflect an administrative structure such as "Programme management and support", which is very widely used, or to break down a programme into its logical categories.

Thus, programme 70/20 "Management development" contains subprogrammes for the "General development of management competence" (subprogramme 1), for "Management development in selected sectors" (subprogramme 2), in "small enterprises" (subprogramme 3), in "rural areas" (subprogramme 4), and for the "contribution of management to social objectives" (subprogramme 5).



This seems to be the most common practice. Nevertheless, it should be noted that some subprogrammes seem to correspond to a single programme element.

Thus, in programme 100/70 "Industrial meetings" we find subprogrammes with such titles as "Iron and Steel Committee (tenth session)", "Second Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Printing and Allied Trades", "Third Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Timber Industry", and even a subprogramme entitled "Preparation of reports".

At WHO, subprogrammes do not appear in the budgets, which only list projects at the world or interregional level. The planning documents, however, list activities classified according to the targets sought by Member States themselves. The level of importance that each activity represents for each region is depicted graphically (by coloured dots), but no further details are given regarding the staff or dollars involved. In any case, programmes are broken down according to logical categories.

At UNESCO, subprogrammes (which are called "themes" in the budget and "targets" in the plan) also represent a breakdown of programmes into types of activity. An effort is certainly being made to find a precise time-limited target-objective for each theme, but the present structural design is not helpful.

37. On the other hand, the typological system for programme elements in all the organizations is much clearer and much better known. The programme elements reflect day-to-day activities at the level of programme implementation. They correspond to outputs: surveys, reports, guidelines, conventions, meetings, seminars, projects, etc. ... which are the same in all the organizations. 10/

The programme element level, on the other hand, is very easy to identify.

---

10/ Here it should be noted that recommendation No. 2 in our previous report (A/33/226 - Report on programming and evaluation in the United Nations) dealt with the development of a more precise method of identifying outputs in the budget and with the preparation of a report by the Secretary-General on the nomenclature and definition of outputs. This recommendation, which was accepted by the Secretary-General, has been approved by CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

A number of anomalies could no doubt be rectified without changing the present structure ...

38. This cursory review of the programme structure of four organizations first of all reveals anomalies which could certainly be corrected if stricter standards were introduced and if a general framework of uniformity was accepted. The organizations in general have great difficulty in distinguishing between the programme structure and the administrative structure. The result is that some of these levels are used to describe administrative activities which did not fit into logical categories ("Departmental management", or "Programme planning and general activities"). In the United Nations this anomaly is particularly evident, as the programmes correspond sometimes to logical categories and sometimes to administrative categories. In this Organization, the confusion is further increased by the fact that the accepted size of the major programmes, programmes and subprogrammes varies greatly according to the departments. At UNIDO, for example, the "programme" level actually corresponds to the level of "major programmes" in the Departments of Economic and Social Affairs.

Such anomalies could certainly be corrected or eliminated if all the organizations adopted a logical structure for the breakdown of major programmes into programmes and subprogrammes, without becoming involved with the administrative structure.

but the basic problem would not be solved as a result.

39. But these corrections would not suffice to solve the problem. Even with a programme structure based solely on logical categories, it is still extremely difficult to determine the criteria for defining the various levels. Only a very few examples corresponding to the theoretical definitions adopted by CCAQ can be cited.

Of the four existing levels, only two can be easily put to use: a real programme structure remains to be devised.

40. Lastly, of the four existing levels, there are two which are relatively clear: the major programme level, which generally corresponds to a traditional field of activity, and the programme element level which corresponds to the various conventional means of action employed by international organizations. On the other hand, the entities called programmes and subprogrammes are the result of attempts to set up categories of activity in response to a need for classification. But there are no precise criteria either for making such a classification or for determining what distinguishes a programme from a subprogramme. Furthermore, the connexion between this classification and the determination of specific objectives is only very rarely evident.

A real programme structure, based on objectives and known criteria, still remains to be devised.

/...

/Chapter V/

/Establishment of an objective-based programme structure/

A. Distinction between programmable and non-programmable activities

41. Any programme structure worthy of the name must be established in terms of objectives. Furthermore, these objectives must be specific, clear and really attainable within set time-limits, and it must be possible to verify by evaluation of their results, that they have been achieved within the prescribed period. In order to establish such a structure, the methods currently in force, and even the thinking that led to their introduction, must be changed.

42. We have just seen that the method for the establishment of programmes at present comprises the following stages:

(a) The determination of general objectives by means of resolutions of intergovernmental bodies.

(b) Attempts by programme managers to identify activities that are conducive to the attainment of those objectives. In this attempt they will resort to a wide range of activities which, as a rule, includes the following: meetings of experts, seminars, studies and publications, regular publications (newsletters, reviews, yearbooks), technical assistance projects and training courses. Sometimes these activities are supplemented by less common ones, such as world conferences, international years, etc.

(c) When a list of activities is drawn up, an effort is made to classify them into various logical-looking groups. These are the "programmes" and "subprogrammes" created for the planning exercise and generally devised with an eye to the existing administrative structure, actually after the real choices have been made.

(d) Finally, the intergovernmental committees must comment on the results of the classification exercise: it is this questionable method of presentation of the medium-term plan that has led to the current crisis.

43. This process must be replaced by an entirely different one which, instead of being based on the translation of

The establishment of an objective-based structure calls for a change in methods, and even in thinking.

Current methods, based on the use of programme elements, must be replaced by a structure involving time-limited target-objectives.

An analysis of categories of activities suggested in the attached table.

broad objectives into programme elements, should be based on a dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat on the definition of time-limited target-objectives.

44. To accomplish this, it will first be necessary to analyse the current activities of international organizations; i.e., to identify the various types of role they play. For this purpose, a tentative general classification of the main categories of activities of these organizations is provided in the following table.

This table will enable us to:

- Analyse the main categories of activities of international organizations (column 1) by various specific types of activities (column 3),
- Differentiate (column 4) between programmable activities and those that are non-programmable, and in particular to identify continuous functions,
- Form a preliminary idea (column 5) of types of time-limited target-objectives that should make it possible to achieve programmable activities.

B. Typology of programmes based on the quantity or "dosage" of types of activity

45. At this stage of the analysis it should be noted that the various types of activities listed in column 3 (research, gathering and dissemination of information, advisory services, training, etc. ...) are in most cases used within a single programme or major programme. Most programmes include:

Most programmes are composites ...

- Some continuous activities (for example, publication of periodicals, regular meetings to exchange information, etc. ...);
- Applied research activities (for example, research on means of perfecting methods on harmonization of methods used in different systems, etc. ...);
- Training activities (training of specialists required for implementation of policies);
- Activities for the provision of advisory services;
- Activities for the dissemination of norms or standards approved or recommended by meetings of experts or intergovernmental committees;
- Etc. ... /...

1 Main category of activities	2 General objectives	3 Types of secretariat activities	4 Programmability	5 Types of possible target- objectives	6 Specific examples of these types of activities
I. Support for negotiations	Finding consensuses in new fields	*Gathering and dissemination of information (reports for committees, etc. ...)	Non-programmable		
		*Medium-term research programmes	Programmable	Investigation of a specific research field	Negotiations on political problems, the New International Economic Order, Development Strategy
		*Conference services	Continuous function		
		*Improvement of these services	Programmable	Implementation of a specific reform to improve operations	Prices of raw materials, sea-bed

/...

1	2	3	4	5	6
Main category of activities	General objectives	Types of secretariat activities	Programmability	Types of possible target-objectives	Specific examples of these types of activities
II. International co-operation activities	Organizing international relations in specific fields. Contributing to development (particularly in developing countries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Gathering and disseminating information</li> <li>*Activities for the transfer of technology               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- advisory services</li> <li>- training</li> <li>- provision of equipment</li> <li>*Applied research</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Difficult to programme (often a continuous function)</li> <li>→ Programmable</li> <li>→ Programmable</li> <li>→ Programmable</li> <li>→ Programmable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provision to countries of development tools</li> <li>→ such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establishing institutions</li> <li>- developing training materials</li> <li>- training a certain number of specialists</li> <li>- selecting methodologies, etc.</li> <li>- developing a suitable technology, etc. ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Technical co-operation activities in all the economic and social programmes of the various organizations, UNDP, UNICEF, etc. ...</li> </ul>

....

1 Main category of activities	2 General objectives	3 Types of secretariat activities	4 Programmability	5 Types of possible target- objectives	6 Specific examples of these types of activities
		*Establishing → norms or standards applicable to international relations	Partly programmable	Preparing → international conventions	Normative activities, codes of conduct and ILO conventions, etc.
		*Establishing → norms or standards applicable by countries	Partly programmable	Formulating → rules to be reflected in national legislation	Human rights; Status of Women
III. Information and management activities	Publicizing the activities of international organizations.  Ensuring secretariat operations	*Disseminating → information to the public	→Continuous function		
		*Refining methods of dissemination	→Programmable →	Modification → of methods	Reforms and modernization
		*Administrative functions	Continuous functions		
		*Improvement of those functions	→Programmable →	Reforms	→ Reforms and modernization

...

46. The quantity or "dosage" of these different types of activities varies. For example, certain major United Nations programmes (Population or Statistics) involve a large number of continuous activities (between 30 and 50 per cent): (gathering and disseminating information on the world population situation or on statistics in general), a great deal of applied research and, lastly, a number of technical co-operation activities (advisory services and training).

A number of other programmes, for instance certain UNCTAD programmes (raw materials for example) comprise:

- Many activities connected with support for negotiations (preparations for meetings, information and reports required for negotiations on the Common Fund) and
- Some research activities (on the structure of raw materials markets, on methods of diversification, on improvement of the competitive value of certain products, etc. ...).

Other programmes are mainly aimed at the dissemination of norms or standards. This is the case with all human rights programmes in the United Nations and UNESCO (although they also involve a great deal of research) or the major programme "Human Rights and International Labour Standards" in ILO. The codes of conduct of the Transnational Corporations programme also come under this category. Finally, some programmes comprise a very high proportion of technical co-operation activities. Last year we gave the example of the United Nations Public Administration and Finance programme, and we might also mention the major programme "Natural Resources and Energy", in which technical co-operation appears to account for more than 75 per cent of Headquarters activities.

In the UNIDO programmes, technical co-operation activities also appear to play a major role, probably accounting for more than 50 per cent of the whole.

In the case of some major bodies, such as WHO or FAO, technical co-operation appears to be a raison d'être of the organization, and the proportion it constitutes of their activities definitely exceeds 50 per cent.

The weight placed upon one or another type of activity gives each department or organization an individual character. Today, specialists would have little difficulty in estimating the order of magnitude of these proportions, but the proportions cannot be determined with great exactitude.

and the quantity or "dosage" of the different types of activity varies.

The character of each programme depends on this.



These proportions must be determined in order to establish specific target-objectives.

47. The fact is that the current method of presentation of programmes in medium-term plans and in programme budgets at the United Nations and elsewhere does not enable us to determine the share accorded to each of these types of activities in each programme or major programme. This is one of the main short-comings of the current classification system. It is essential, however, to undertake this analysis if a clear distinction is to be made between programmable and non-programmable activities, if specific target-objectives are to be set and if a value judgement is to be made on the general orientation of programmes (which will depend on the share accorded to each of these types of activity).

C. Identification of continuous activities

A restrictive approach must be taken in identifying continuous activities.

48. The identification of continuous activities is the first operation necessary for this kind of analysis. It would seem essential, however, to take a restrictive approach to the concept of continuous activities. Often a sort of intellectual lethargy leads to the assumption that everything is continuous: that might indeed be so in the case of research (one could continue to do research without ever setting specific stages for the verification of results), or in training (in some situations these activities may indeed be continuous, but in the programmes of international organizations this is not often the case), etc. ... In that case, nothing would be programmable and international organizations would "continue" to carry out the same types of different activities without bothering to ascertain whether those activities helped the international community to achieve specific results. The genuinely continuous activities actually do not make up a very large proportion of most programmes; in economic and social programmes they are generally confined to certain information activities (regular publications) or activities for monitoring the implementation of international conventions. They are only really extensive in organizations of a technical nature (UPU, ILO, ICAO ...).

Continuous activities involve the "functions" assigned by Member States to international organizations. They should therefore be monitored regularly.

49. The fact is that continuous activities are to be found only in the case of "functions" assigned to international organizations. For such functions to be established, there must have been a permanent delegation of authority by the Governments of Member States to the international organization. This involves a decision serious enough to require specific approval by international bodies. Currently, however, such approval is not sought. Whenever there is a decision, for example, to start a news letter or periodical under a programme, a continuous function is thereby created even though the

/...

attention of Member States has not been specifically drawn to that decision. Therefore the classification of some programmes as continuous activities should be the subject of very careful regular and periodic scrutiny, according to a previously arranged schedule in order to determine:

- whether the activities are actually worth while and whether they should be continued or not and
- whether those that are continued are carried out in the most economical and effective way.

It would be interesting to know, inter alia, whether consideration has been given to methodological reform. Since the majority of continuous activities take place largely in the field of information, an assessment of the type and size of the audience (clientele) would seem to be indicated in most cases. It should be possible to compile a complete list of performance indicators for all these functions.

D. Some examples of types of time-limited target-objectives

50. In the case of non-continuous activities, some examples of types of time-limited target-objectives that may be set are given below:

(a) For research activities

In very many cases, within the United Nations system information gathering and summarizing activities are described as research activities. They may consist of studies made to describe a situation (for example, the current use of a certain technology in various countries). In such cases, the following courses may be considered:

- Either publishing a series of descriptive studies covering an entire field (when this objective is achieved it will merely be necessary to up-date these studies),
- Or establishing one genuine information system on the subject (when that objective is achieved, the system could be managed either by an institution ultimately able to make such management profitable, or by the international organization itself - it would then become a new continuous function).

We have attempted to define some types of possible target-objectives for research activities ...

51. In the case of real applied research it is also possible to establish time-limited objectives in the form of a level or stage to be reached in the investigation of a particular field (for example, in developing a system of environmental or energy statistics or establishing practical methods for diversifying production for countries that mainly produce particular raw materials, etc. ...).

In the field of research it is also possible to consider:

- Establishing an institutionalized research system (for example, the establishment of some regional or international public administration institutes);
- Developing research programmes in which Member States might participate directly by sharing the workload (for example, creation of intergovernmental research programmes in the field of meteorology, geology, oceanography or "peace research").

52. (b) For training activities

for training  
activities ...

The training of specialists in a particular field is usually one element of a policy which this training is designed to implement (for example, the training of primary health care specialists or hydraulic engineers with a view to the development of water supply policies, etc. ...). It is also the preferred means for the transfer of technology. The establishment of time-limited objectives should in this case be sought by determining an ideal number of specialists to be trained (by country or by region, depending upon needs), and this number would represent a typical level or stage in the implementation of a policy or the attainment of a certain stage of development in a specific field. Defining a training policy in terms of needs should be standard practice in this field. It is therefore to be considered regrettable that this is rarely the case.

When needs are great, it is necessary to resort to the establishment of institutions that will provide continuous training. The objective of a programme in this field might thus be the establishment of a number of national, regional or international institutions.

for activities  
involving  
dissemination of norms  
or standards ...

53. (c) For activities involving dissemination of norms or standards, examples of time-limited objectives existing in this field are:

/...

Definition of "codes of conduct" or preparation of international conventions (as in many ILO programmes), and

Securing a number of accessions to the texts of proposed conventions.

54. (d) Activities connected with dissemination of information, although they largely involve continuous functions, may in some cases include efforts to establish time-limited objectives. We have already mentioned the example of the development of information systems, but it is also desirable that in the majority of information activities, the specific definition of the clientele or audience to be reached should lead to the formulation of quantified objectives (corresponding to successive levels of information dissemination).

55. (e) Lastly, it is, of course, possible and even desirable to establish time-limited objectives comprising several types of activity. For example, with regard to efforts to remedy social evils, WHO was able to set itself the objective of eradicating smallpox and to achieve that objective in co-operation with all its member States. It would certainly be tempting to take that example as a model. Unfortunately, the conditions that would facilitate the formulation of an international organization's objectives in this manner are rarely encountered. Except when powers are specifically delegated, such objectives are mostly the responsibility of Governments and not of international organizations. Under favourable conditions, however, a combined effort by Member States and the organization can be sought with a view to establishing an "intergovernmental programme".

56. Generally speaking, an objective involving many types of activities should aim at defining the type of contribution that the international organization could make in order to help Member States to attain a global objective for which they are responsible (for example, the eradication of illiteracy, access to drinking water for all by 1990, universal access to health care by the year 2000, etc. ...). The definition of these types of contributions must take account of conflicting restraints, such as absolute respect for the sovereignty of Member States in whose territory or in whose service the international organization has to act, and compliance with the principles and rules formulated by those same Member States in the intergovernmental bodies of the international organization.

and for information activities.

Objectives encompassing several types of activity might also be considered.

The contributions that the international organization can make in achieving global objectives must be defined.

Here difficult situations may arise because not all the implications of the principles adopted by the Conferences and General Assemblies of the organizations are always fully accepted by each of the Governments concerned.

The concepts of "instruments of co-operation in a regional area" ...

57. The best solution would seem to be that the contribution made by international organizations to their member States (within the framework of principles and rules formulated by their intergovernmental bodies) should consist of a certain number of work tools. Apart from the examples we have already given above, in the fields of research and training, the following examples may be considered:

- Institution of an intergovernmental programme. We have already mentioned this formula, used by some organizations (UNESCO, WMO, etc. ...) in the case of research, but it could be extended to concerted action to eradicate problems in the social field or even in the economic field. Developing countries, bilateral assistance, various organizations, etc., could thus be associated in the pursuit of a global objective ... The main contribution of the international organization concerned would be to develop complex machinery for co-operation.
- Establishment of a network of multipurpose institutions (application of the "institutions-building" type of objective to a composite programme).
- Development of an instrument of co-operation within a regional area (a model is to be found in UNEP's "regional seas" programme, but other applications of that method are conceivable, either for industrial development or for the development of infrastructure).

and of "concentration areas" could also be applied.

58. The concept of "concentration areas" or of "development zones", which are already applied by some organizations might also provide material for fruitful research. In this field, UNICEF's activities may mainly be taken as a possible model, for in its technical co-operation programmes at the country level it very often concentrates a major portion of its activities in limited geographical areas identified in consultation with the Government concerned. This model for "concentration areas" in country programmes, if more

/...

widely adopted by Governments, by UNDP and by other international organizations might facilitate the establishment of concerted programmes in a number of areas at the regional or (multiregional) level. The establishment of very specific quantified objectives (social or capital development objectives, etc. ...) for this set of areas would thus be made possible and the model could greatly facilitate "joint planning".

E. General methods of programme analysis

59. Within the very short period allowed for the preparation of this report it was not possible to elaborate in greater detail a general method of programme analysis for the formulation of time-limited objectives.

Further elaboration, drawing on contributions from all the parties concerned, should make it possible to arrive at a much more specific formulation. The set of examples that we have been able to give, however, should constitute a preliminary but serviceable tool for summary analysis. We therefore thought it might be useful to make a summary of all of these elements.

60. In order to set time-limited target-objectives within a programme the general orientation and some details of which are already known, it should be possible to proceed as follows:

(1) Single out continuous activities that parallel permanent functions within the organization, according to strict criteria,

(2) Among the non-continuous activities, ascertain which have to do with information-gathering, transfer of technology and training and the setting of norms or standards applicable to international relations or applicable by countries,

(3) Try to organize the non-continuous activities belonging to the various categories outlined above on the basis of the following types of time-limited objective:

- Preparation of a series of descriptive studies relating to a specific field,
- Establishment of an information system,
- Setting of a target-level or stage to be reached in research in a particular field,

These paragraphs summarize the proposed method.

- Establishment of an institutionalized research system,
- Establishment of an intergovernmental research programme,
- Training a specific number of specialists to be available to Member States for implementation of a policy,
- Establishment of institutions responsible for providing continuous training,
- For a specific subject, setting of the level of information for an audience defined by composition and quantified order of magnitude,
- Elimination of a particular social evil (e.g., the eradication of smallpox), (uncommon),
- Institution of an intergovernmental programme to attain an objective defined by the international community,
- Construction of a network of multipurpose institutions for use by Member States to facilitate their implementation of a plan in a particular field,
- Development of an instrument for co-operation in a regional area,
- Definition, in consultation with a number of Governments, of "concentration areas" for technical co-operation programmes and establishment, within the over-all areas thus defined, of specific social objectives. 11/

We have personally attempted to ascertain whether this method could be applied to a number of existing programmes.

---

11/ This list is clearly far from exhaustive and it should be possible to supplement it by further research.

/...

/Chapter VI/

Applicability of a type of objective-based structure to a number of programmes

61. We have attempted to apply the method which has just been described to the analysis of a number of programmes of the United Nations and some major agencies. We have tried to ascertain whether it was possible to change the current (and to our mind faulty) presentation of some major programmes into an objective-based presentation. This methodological experiment is merely the logical follow-up to recommendation No. 1 in our previous report on programming and evaluation in the United Nations (A/33/226), which dealt mainly with the adoption of a system of time-limited objectives for subprogrammes in the medium-term plan and was approved by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. 12/ As we know, because of reservations expressed by the Secretary-General in his written 13/ and oral comments on this report, a decision was taken at the same time to test the conditions under which this recommendation could be implemented. CPC had recommended "that the Secretary-General proceed with selected programmes in the economic and social sectors to try out the feasibility of the recommendation" and had decided to select a number of programmes for reformulation along the lines of that recommendation (report of CPC, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), para. 10). For its part, ACABQ had endorsed the idea of this experiment, which would "enable all concerned to test the applicability of the JIU proposal" (A/33/226/Add.2, para. 11).

62. An account of the experiment made by the Secretariat will probably be given in the Secretary-General's report on the medium-term plan. For our part, we felt it would be useful to examine the experience of organizations other than the United Nations itself, which would also enable us to consider which aspects of the different methods of presentation or analysis can be accepted and better understand the problems of programme structure.

In this chapter we propose to test the applicability of the objective-based structure to some major programmes of the United Nations and some other Organizations.

---

12/ Economic and Social Council decision 1978/84 and para. 5 of General Assembly resolution 33/118, adopted on 19 December 1978.

13/ A/33/226/Add.1.



This is a promising, though limited, experiment.

For the public administration and finance programme we have produced a "mock-up", which shows how the conversion is possible.

63. In general, mainly because of the short time at our disposal, the test of applicability which we made did not result in any new presentation models for the programmes considered, with the agreement of the programme managers themselves. It seems to us, however, that one result of this quick examination has been to confirm the over-all feasibility of changing the present structure into an objective-based structure.

64. First of all, we would briefly note that last year we analysed the United Nations public administration and finance programme, 14/ and that we have already demonstrated the feasibility of establishing time-limited objectives for this programme. This demonstration may be found in the analysis made in the two above-mentioned reports and in a "mock-up" of a possible public administration programme which we prepared at the request of CPC and ACABQ. The mock-up is attached to this report in annex VI. The analysis on the basis of which this mock-up was produced showed, inter alia:

- That with a staff comprising 24 Professionals at Headquarters (plus 10 Professionals in three regional economic commissions) and about 50 field experts, it was impossible to pursue all the objectives which the programme's purpose might seem to entail. In any event, a sprinkling of different activities, giving the impression that all the problems could be dealt with at once, seemed a poor kind of response to the problems posed;
- That the rate of programme implementation was in many cases very slow, since only some of the outputs mentioned in the budget could be delivered on schedule, and that these outputs (publications, seminars, etc.) reached only a very small proportion of potential programme users;
- That it was therefore necessary and possible to concentrate activities in an attempt to attain modest and realistic objectives which could provide Member States with simple but effective instruments to assist them in the improvement of their public administration systems. This therefore meant a scaling-down of the programme's ambitions.

---

14/ A/33/227.

65. For its part, the mock-up itself showed:

- That a six-subprogramme structure, which merely presented a breakdown of the programme under headings as perpetual as the programme itself, 15/ could be replaced by a two-subprogramme structure defining precise and time-limited objectives:
- That by comparing existing resources with the programme's over-all purpose, it was possible to explain the programme policy envisaged, justify the choices expected to be made among the various possible courses of action and translate those choices into precise subprogramme proposals. 16/

66. This year we examined the presentation of the United Nations statistics programme and had several working sessions on that subject with the Director of the

---

15/ The six subprogrammes in the 1978-1981 plan were:

Trends and development:

Reform of public administration and management of development;

Institutional and management techniques:

Budgetary and financial management;

Mobilization of financial resources;

Public enterprises.

16/ On the other hand, this mock-up shows that the programme that can be implemented with existing resources is relatively modest. The proposals it contains appeared to us to represent reasonable possibilities for action matching those resources. The mock-up therefore tends to show that one should not harbour the illusion that everything can be accomplished with inadequate resources. If Member States, after an in-depth examination of the requirements and possibilities in this field, decided to give a much higher priority to this programme, they would have to consider increasing the resources accordingly. But this increase should not be calculated as a percentage of resources now available: instead it should correspond as closely as possible to a specific new task, a new time-limited target-objective to be added to current programmes. This kind of approach should lead to the invention of an entirely new method for calculating priorities. See chap. VII below.

The major statistics programme may be broken down into ...

continuous activities (50 per cent)

Statistical Office. In the medium-term plan, statistics represent a "major programme" subdivided into seven "programmes" (classified according to the titles of the departments responsible for executing the programmes: Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Office of Technical Co-operation and the five regional economic commissions) and 18 "subprogrammes", including six for the Statistical Office of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and two for all the other programmes. The list of the titles of these programmes and subprogrammes is attached hereto in annex VII. This distribution of activities actually reflects almost exactly the administrative structure based on divisions and sections. The information provided on activities for the period 1980-1983 is on the whole extremely vague, although the document has 69 pages. Most of the sections, particularly those on the activities of the regional economic commissions, merely outline in general terms what the departments have done since their establishment and will continue to do as long as they exist. 17/

67. An analysis of this major programme according to the methods proposed above suggests:

- That it would be quite possible to identify the activities which are definitely continuous. The Director of the Office believes that they represent a very large proportion of the over-all programme: approximately 50 per cent. This category includes all activities related to the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistical data, such as the publication of the Statistical Yearbook, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, the Statistical Pocketbook, all the regular publications on international trade, energy and industry, the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, the Demographic Yearbook and many other annual or monthly publications;
- That the non-continuous activities are divided into:

17/ Only para. 24.22, which indicates the points to which special attention will be given during the period of the plan, provides some details on the particular trends of this period.

/...

- . Co-operation and servicing activities within the United Nations system (approximately 10 per cent of the programme);
- . Statistical research and development activities (approximately 25 per cent);
- . Technical co-operation activities (approximately 15 per cent).

servicing and co-operation activities (10 per cent), research and development activities (25 per cent) and technical co-operation activities (15 per cent).

Clearly it is these non-continuous activities which are the most original and interesting, although they represent only half of the programme.

68. The best description of these activities is to be found in the set of documents submitted to the Statistical Commission, which met in New York from 20 February to 2 March 1979. These documents (33 different reports) provide a considerable amount of data on a series of questions such as industrial, energy, transport and trade statistics, the review of national accounting systems, public sector statistics, the harmonization of economic classifications, censuses, social statistics, environment statistics, technical co-operation activities and, in particular, training activities, the programme to develop national household survey capabilities, statistical activities of organizations in the United Nations system, etc.

But despite their precision, these documents do not provide a synopsis of the policy of the major programme for Statistics. They do not provide an over-all picture of the activities and propose no possible choices of different courses. They simply amount to a collection of projects, to be approved in outline by the Commission, which also discusses the modalities. This reflects a certain concept of the respective roles of the Secretariat and Member States in determining the policy to be followed in this field. The Secretariat activates and proposes a number of projects all designed to improve the existing situation with respect to the extent of the fields in which statistical data are gathered, means of developing and harmonizing presentation, the reduction of margins of error, equipment and training in countries which do not yet have all the necessary resources, etc. Member States, through the Statistical Commission, thus engage in a technical dialogue with the Secretariat and can consider participation in a number of projects. But they are never given the opportunity to make an over-all judgement on the policy thus defined: it is possible for

The set of documents submitted to the Statistical Commission does not provide an over-all picture.

them to steer it in one direction or another by giving greater or lesser support to a particular project, but they are never invited to judge it as a whole.

Member States should be able to decide on:

69. In fact, the areas in which Member States should be able to take a decision concerning the orientation or approach of a major programme, such as the statistics programme, are basically as follows:

the over-all orientation or approach.

(a) Over-all orientation or approach: is the existing machinery for the preparation of world statistics, the improvement of statistical methods and technical co-operation precise and comprehensive enough to meet the needs of the international community, and particularly of the new international economic order? What are the main deficiencies to be remedied in that respect and how are they to be remedied?

proportion of activities to be devoted to various types of tasks,

(b) In the context of the orientation which might be defined after consideration of the previous point, what would be a reasonable proportion of programme activities to be devoted to any particular priority task or target-objective?

Is the present de facto apportionment (50 per cent for data collection and only 15 per cent for technical co-operation) reasonable? In other words, what policy should be followed in defining this programme? Only by singling out the continuous activities within a major programme (with an estimate of their cost and return, the users to be reached, the amount of services delivered, etc.); and a set of time-limited target-objectives, between which a choice could be made, could Member States decide rationally on the apportionment of the programme among various categories of activity

and the choice of target-objectives.

(c) For each of the target-objectives selected and each of the corresponding programmes, the date by which it can reasonably be expected that the proposed target levels or stages (for research, the development of statistical systems in a specific area, and the levels of national capability in any given area) may be reached is a point on which the most precise criteria should be provided to Member States. The possibility of accelerating the achievement of a particular result by increasing the resources mobilized for that purpose or, conversely, the possibility of reducing the resources and delaying the process should be among the questions considered.

Ultimately, the information provided should enable

/...

Member States to solve the problem of priorities within this major programme. This is not the case at the moment.

70. If a descriptive outline of the policy of this major programme is to enable Member States to determine the contribution of the United Nations and the United Nations system in the field of global statistics, it must contain:

- A description of current continuous activities, with information on users, cost price and profitability;
- An account of the world situation with respect to statistics (corresponding to subparagraph (a) above);
- A list of time-limited target-objectives which might be considered, together with a description of the corresponding programmes.

We were not able to compile such a list with the Director of the Statistical Office, but a study of the Commission's documents and of the medium-term plan itself leads us to believe that it would not have been impossible to establish objectives such as:

- . The development of a system of environment statistics;
- . The development of a system for energy statistics;
- . The programme to develop national household survey capabilities;
- . A training programme;
- . A programme to reform and improve the preparation of national accounts;
- . The establishment of development target levels or stages for national statistical services in various categories of countries, etc.

Much work certainly remains to be done before the degree of precision in the establishment of objectives required by this type of presentation can be attained. For instance, the establishment of a typology of problems to be solved in the developing countries should make it

The presentation of this major programme by target-objectives is certainly possible.

easier to determine what "work tools" the United Nations could make available to them. This problem is not confined to the field of statistics: it is to be found in all programmes which have a sizable technical co-operation component. This is one of the reasons why we think it imperative to involve programme managers more closely in future in the establishment of planning and programming methods.

71. Environmental health at WHO - Basic sanitary measures

The planning experiment in which WHO is engaged does not resemble that of the other agencies. The basic features of the experiment mainly include:

- The use of three documents (General Programme of Work covering the specific period 1978-1983, medium-term programme 1978-1983, programme budgets) instead of the binary system of the other agencies (medium-term plan and programme budgets);
- The fact that the "medium-term programme" for the period 1978-1983 is still in the process of preparation in 1979 and that so far it covers just over half of the major programmes;
- Differentiation between the targets of the States members of WHO and co-operation activities representing WHO's contribution to the attainment of those targets;
- A fairly long preparatory process involving the regional programming committees (the highly regionalized structure of WHO is thus taken into account) and the description of the medium-term programme in several documents including a global programme and seven regional annexes;
- Finally, the fact that it is WHO's constant concern to obtain the views of the countries themselves on the content of the programme.

We felt that these factors were sufficiently original, important and interesting to warrant giving the interested reader a somewhat more comprehensive description in annex VIII.

The major programme on environmental health is one of those for which the corresponding part of the medium-term programme has now been concluded.

The WHO planning experiment is original.

72. This "major programme" is divided into four "programmes":

- 5.1.1 Environmental health planning and management;
- 5.1.2 Basic sanitary measures;
- 5.1.3 Identification and elimination of environmental hazards;
- 5.1.4 Food safety.

In order to enable the reader to understand WHO's methods of programming its activities we have also reproduced, in annex IX, the main parts of the document dealing with programme 5.1.2 "Basic sanitary measures", which show that:

- The programme's basic activities can be discerned from a brief description of the situation;
- The programme objectives and trends described in paragraph II.2.2 are focused on five specific points;
- Table 5.1.2 indicates, in a set of columns:
  - . The objectives set by member States themselves for the period 1978-1983 (three objectives);
  - . The technical co-operation activities for which WHO is responsible (column 2) (13 activities);
  - . By means of graphic devices (coloured dots), the levels of importance of these activities for the six WHO regions and WHO headquarters.

The most precise description of the programme is given in column 2, which lists the 13 types of activities, but the text as a whole is too general and vague to afford an exact definition of the exact objectives which WHO proposes to achieve, or alternatively, the types of operational tools which it proposes to make available to member States in 1983.

73. Our study of this presentation and the discussion which we were able to have with the persons in charge of this major programme at headquarters prompt the following comments:

An examination of the major programme on environmental health, and particularly the programme on basic sanitary measures, shows that WHO's contribution could be more precisely identified and that an objective-based programme structure could be used.



WHO's idea of "integration" of this programme with that of the countries themselves certainly has positive features, but it does not make for a very clear formulation of the objectives which would constitute WHO's contribution to the policies of the various countries. The activities which might constitute time-limited objectives could certainly be identified among the technical co-operation activities in column 2. For example, activity 2.2 relating to training could constitute a precise objective if an indication was given of the number of different types of experts and workers to be trained in a particular region or country.

Among the activities mentioned under programme 5.1.1 (Environmental health planning and management) we can also find activities which might, in some cases, constitute quantified and timed objectives, such as:

- 1.3 Establishment or strengthening of regional environmental health centres;
- 3.1 Establishment or strengthening of national data collection systems;
- 3.3 Promotion of research, development and application of appropriate technology, in collaboration with national and regional centres.

The "regional annexes" to the medium-term programme certainly give more details about particular objectives. But there are far more details on specific projects, which correspond to the "programme element" level, than there are definitions of target levels or stages for development or of "working tools" representing WHO's contribution to the attainment of the objectives of member States. Much therefore remains to be done in order to arrive at a clearer and more precise definition of WHO's objectives. There again, since this is basically a technical co-operation programme, the development of typologies for situations and problems in various countries would make for a more precise formulation. Studies for this purpose have already been undertaken, and the programme manager at headquarters informed us of the results of the initial efforts made. These studies must be continued and carried out in greater depth.

#### 74. Educational planning at UNESCO

Under the UNESCO medium-term plan (the design for

/...

which is referred to in para. 95), educational action objective 5.1 "Promotion of the formulation and application of policies and improvement of planning in the field of education" corresponds to a programme initiated in 1961, which has a number of achievements to its credit. Special mention may be made of:

- The establishment, between 1961 and 1965, of Regional Centres for Educational Planning and Administration, which were subsequently incorporated into UNESCO's four Regional Offices;
- The establishment in 1963 of the International Institute for Educational Planning;
- A very important collection of publications, such as those of the International Institute for Educational Planning ...

UNESCO's educational planning programme already has important achievements to its credit. The breakdown by subprogramme is rational (one subprogramme of continuous activities, one subprogramme for research, one subprogramme for training).

75. The programme is presented in the medium-term plan according to the traditional UNESCO order. It contains a statement of the problem and principles of action, and is divided into three subobjectives:

- 5.1.1 Organization of international meetings for the exchange of experience and assessment of new developments;
- 5.1.2 Strengthening of national capacities with regard to the formulation and implementation of educational policies and plans (provision of advisory services and training activities);
- 5.1.3 Further extension, through research, of the data base required for the design and implementation of the plans (information mechanisms and research programme).

76. This presentation prompts the following comments:

It is a programme which has rapidly matured and which, thanks to the various conferences of Ministers of Education and its training and research activities, has resulted in proposals for useful models for planning methods and policy formulation, has served to alert most Governments to the significance of the issue and also resulted in the training of a considerable number of planners (thanks largely to IIEP).

The results are therefore significant. Accordingly, the programme may now concentrate on pursuing the avenues already explored with regard to research or training, and on promoting the exchange of experience.

The breakdown of the programme into the three subprogrammes mentioned in the preceding paragraph thus seems rational. The first subprogramme, relating to the exchange of experience and basically involving the organization of three sessions of the International Conference on Education, five regional ministerial conferences and eight symposia and seminars, can be considered to be very much in the nature of a continuous function.

On the other hand, objectives 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, the first of which has an important training component and the second a specific research programme, can be considered time-limited objectives.

In effect, the text gives:

- Some precise figures for the number of specialists to be trained (240 planners in six years by IIEP, eight-month traineeship periods, 1,260 students trained in 33 countries by national institutions, etc.);
- A specific orientation for the research programme (centring on the six major IIEP projects).

IIEP has, in fact, described its programme in its own distinctive medium-term plan document. Generally speaking, UNESCO is still seeking greater precision in the establishment of "targets". In this area, as in those already considered in connexion with technical co-operation, progress is certainly possible, too, but it requires a more systematic knowledge of the types of needs which international organizations must meet in order to co-operate usefully with the developing countries as a whole. The establishment of typologies for situations and problems is therefore a priority field of research to which the most substantial efforts should be devoted.

#### 77. Social security programme at ILO

The preparation and use of medium-term plans at ILO has temporarily slowed down (the last plan - for 1976-1981 - was not updated in 1978, although it was in the nature of a "rolling plan". Sufficient documentation is, however, available for a study of the various programmes (the most

/...

recent plan theoretically in force, the in-depth reviews, the programme budget)).

An in-depth review of the social security programme was carried out in 1972 (see GB/185/FA/12/9, 185th session, March 1972). This review (47 pp. long) gives a very clear account of the history of the programme since its inception (role of ILO during the "social insurance" period, 1919-1943 and the "social security" period, 1944 to date. It also contains an evaluation of the results achieved during this period (in terms of research, the application of standards and the revision of those standards by various conventions, standards for the protection of migrant workers and technical co-operation). Lastly, the review considers future prospects with a view to identifying future programme trends and objectives (relationships between social security, the economy and social development, migrations, health and population, technological change, training and administration).

The ILO major programme on social security can also be broken down into a subprogramme involving continuous activities, a subprogramme relating to standards and a subprogramme relating to research.

The primary purpose of the continuous programme is still:

- to develop and improve sound social security schemes;
- to harmonize social security schemes at the international level.

78. The activities listed under these two headings in the programme budget for 1980-1981 include:

(a) For the development and improvement of social security schemes:

- The publication on a regular basis of the ILO inquiry into the cost of social security (tenth and eleventh inquiry);
- The provision to Governments of actuarial and other technical advisory services;
- The collection and dissemination of information;
- Three major studies on the relationship between welfare and primary health programmes and social security, on new methods of financing social security benefits, and on the participation of workers and employers in the administration of social security.

(b) For the harmonization of legislation:

- Activities for the protection of migrant workers in Europe;
- The preparation of a European multilateral agreement (Eastern Europe and Western Europe);
- The social protection of European boatmen;
- Technical support for regional organizations in developing countries for migrant workers.

79. The foregoing is, of course, a presentation of the programme for budgetary purposes, and it does not provide the medium-term perspective we would have wished for. On the whole, the programme is characterized by its modest proportions (measured by the number of professional staff, accounting for only 15 work/years including 4 in the regions), and by the fact that the managers of this well-established programme, which was launched more than 60 years ago, have clearly become aware of the need for a readjustment of its general approach.

The studies relating to new methods of financing and the relationship between social security and welfare and primary health-care programmes are intended to prepare the way for such a readjustment of the programme. Having shifted its focus in 1943-1944 from "social insurance" to "social security", the programme must now move into a third phase and adjust to the problems of the most disadvantaged segments of the population, both in rural and urban areas, where the traditional approach to social security is impracticable. Thus, in addition to traditional activities relating to the drafting of legislation or the organization of social security schemes, the programme includes activities involving this readjustment. Thus, in a medium-term presentation of this major programme a distinction could easily be made between:

- Continuous activities (actuarial advisory services, application of conventions, etc.);
- An objective involving the harmonization of legislation for the benefit of migrant workers (for whom it should be possible to set a target level or stage);
- An objective involving the development and

/...

adoption by a number of countries of new financing arrangements and legislation encompassing welfare and primary health-care programmes.

The application of an "objective-oriented structure" to a major programme of this kind should not, therefore, present serious difficulties.

#### 80. Environment programmes

Although included in chapter 14 of the United Nations medium-term plan because of the peculiar status of the United Nations Environment Programme, the programmes of the Fund are not comparable to the other programmes of the United Nations or the specialized agencies which we have considered so far.

The problem of the presentation and design of UNEP "programmes" is part of the more general problem of the planning of activities under programmes financed from extrabudgetary sources (UNEP, UNICEF, UNDP, other special funds), whose operating procedures are not comparable to those of the specialized agencies. For example, the subdivisions of its over-all programme include not only human and health settlements but also terrestrial ecosystems, the use of natural resources, water, the oceans, education and so on, all which areas are already covered by the various agencies in the United Nations system. In most cases, UNEP does not carry out projects itself, but negotiates with the specialized agencies with a view to their undertaking activities to solve problems which the UNEP Governing Council considers priority problems.

81. UNEP's planning methods are in the process of changing. Whereas hitherto, despite a rational classification, the system was based mainly on lists of projects and, as CPC noted last year the presentation of the programme under the United Nations medium-term plan did not always coincide with the presentation to the UNEP Governing Council. The Executive Director (following the recommendation of CPC) has proposed to the Governing Council that changes along the following lines should be introduced into existing planning practices (UNEP/GC/7/6 of 24 January 1979):

- UNEP's planning methods should foster the development of joint planning within the

The planning methods applied by UNEP are in the process of changing, and this should facilitate joint planning.

framework of a system-wide medium-term environment programme (SWMTEP);

- The preparation of the chapter in the United Nations medium-term plan should be submitted to the UNEP Governing Council before being transmitted to CPC;
- There should be a major programme on the environment in the United Nations medium-term plan, and its subdivisions should be called programmes;
- Time-limited objectives should be set for the various subprogrammes;
- These objectives should serve as the basis for thematic exercises in joint planning.

This theoretical framework would be thoroughly conducive to the solution of the problems stemming from the adoption of the new objective-oriented structure proposed in the preceding chapter.

The regional seas programme has time-limited objectives; an objective-based structure could also be adopted for the world oceans programme.

82. We did not have time to review, as we would have wished, the UNEP "oceans" programme. <sup>15/</sup> However, reference to the documents describing this programme (programme for the environment submitted by the Executive Director on 20 June 1978 (UNEP/GC/6/7), shows that it could very easily be broken down into time-limited objectives. It includes:

- A regional seas programme; <sup>15/</sup>
- A world programme <sup>15/</sup> on pollution of the marine environment and on the living resources of the sea.

The regional seas programme, which is broken down into several sets of activities, each relating to one of the seven seas currently covered (Mediterranean, Red Sea, Gulf of Guinea, etc.) is in fact a programme for the institution of agencies. The aim is to bring together the States bordering on each sea, in a regional institution, for the purpose of carrying out and financing jointly

---

<sup>15/</sup> The terminology for these various subdivisions needs to be reviewed in the light of the proposals made in the preceding chapter.

programmes in such areas as pollution control and resource development. This is a type of activity for which it is easy to set specific time-limits. In any case, the Executive Director of UNEP would like UNEP to terminate its involvement when the intergovernmental programmes in question have become operational. These institution-building programmes are managed directly by UNEP without any intermediary involvement of other agencies in the United Nations system.

The world programme with its two subdivisions (pollution control and living marine resources) is, on the other hand, an example of activities delegated by UNEP to other agencies in the system.

Each of the subdivisions corresponds to a set of projects executed by other organizations (IMCO, FAO, UNESCO, WMO, WHO, IAEA and the United Nations, in the case of pollution of the marine environment; and FAO, UNESCO, IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) in the case of living resources of the sea). The various activities promoted by the programme mainly cover research and the setting of standards. It should be possible in the case of both types of activity to set time-limited objectives of the kind we recommended in paragraph 60. Further efforts are needed, however, to define them with greater precision.

83. Because of the shortage of time, we were unable to make as thorough a study as we would have liked of the applicability of an objective-oriented structure. Some conclusions, however, can be drawn and avenues of research identified. It seems certain that, if a reasonable attempt at analysis is made, it is nearly always possible to set time-limited target-objectives, either in the field of public administration, or statistics, the environment, educational planning, social security, regional seas or pollution of the oceans. Of course, this sampling does not cover every possible type of major programme but it is sufficient to show the direction in which efforts need to be made in devising universally applicable solutions.

84. Naturally, further effort is needed to introduce greater precision into the methodology and facilitate its application. To that end, attention should be focused, in particular, on four aspects:

(a) The definition of the nature of each programme and its distinctive features;

While this limited review shows the possibility of applying an objective-based structure to various types of major programmes,

it also highlights the need for further study:

/...



(b) The need to integrate the contributions made by the United Nations to the solution of various problems with the efforts of the international community as a whole;

(c) The use, of contributions from the various programmes and funds (UNEP, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.), for the development of joint planning;

(d) The use of typologies for situations and problems to facilitate technical co-operation.

85. (a) Definition of the nature and characteristics of each programme

on programme typology,

As soon as an attempt is made to define time-limited target-objectives for a major programme, it becomes evident that account must be taken both of the characteristics of the situation with which each programme must deal, the kinds of problems involved, the length of time that a major programme has been in existence, the results already achieved, the general context in which the programme is operating (in particular, its institutional environment), the degree of consensus obtained on its objectives, etc.

For example, the initial, and usually readily identifiable, tasks of a new major programme in an area that has not yet been fully explored, will be:

- To make a series of studies aimed at acquiring a basic understanding of the matter under consideration;
- To develop an initial general action theory or the first "codes of conduct";
- To establish an institutional network for teaching and research, etc.

On the other hand, a programme which has been in existence for a number of years will usually have attained these initial objectives. In the case of such programmes, therefore, what will need to be done is to define more precisely the area in which research should be carried out in greater depth, methodology improved, training developed, information better organized, and so on. The establishment of a major programme typology taking account of the main characteristics of those programmes would certainly be one way of facilitating the implementation of an objective-oriented structural approach.

/...

86. (b) Identification of the United Nations contribution in the context of the efforts of the international community as a whole

As we have seen, the degree of concern to involve Member States in the definition of major programme objectives has varied from organization to organization. The efforts made by WHO in this area are exemplary, but they do not make it possible adequately to identify the nature of the WHO contribution to the pursuit of the objectives of the Member States themselves. This difficulty is very widespread. Accordingly, further efforts should be made to find methods to facilitate better identification. In this connexion, there is no doubt that the introduction to the medium-term plan, which we shall discuss in the next chapter, can provide valuable assistance. It is very important, however, that parallel efforts should be made to identify more clearly the specific roles which should be assigned to each of the protagonists associated in the pursuit of a global objective, namely, Member States and organizations in the United Nations system. In that regard, the joint planning exercises should play a decisive role.

on identification of the contribution of the United Nations,

87. (c) Definition of the role of the various programmes and funds (UNDP, UNICEF, UNEP, etc.)

The example of UNEP served to show that the setting of time-limited objectives relating to the environment within the United Nations system could serve as a catalyst for a number of joint planning exercises. We have also pointed out that the system of areas of concentration used by UNICEF in its country programmes might usefully be considered by a great many organizations. There seems to be a need, in general, to ascertain how the contribution of programmes and funds could help with joint planning within the framework of an objective-oriented structure.

on the role of Programmes and Funds in joint planning,

88. (d) The advantages of developing typologies for situations and problems with a view to facilitating technical co-operation

With several of the examples studied (statistics, environmental protection, educational planning), it soon became apparent in discussions with programme managers that the only way of clarifying the role of the international organization, providing Member States with the "work tools" they need and making technical co-operation activities really plannable, was to define a

and on a typology for situations and problems.

Arrangements must be made to involve programme managers in the definition of planning methodology.

typology for situations and problems which have to be dealt with. This endeavour, which has already been undertaken by some offices, should be developed quickly.

89. The various studies mentioned above can be carried out only with the participation of the officials in the various secretariats who are responsible for designing and implementing major programmes. The method of imposing a medium-term planning formula by means of instructions can continue to be used only if supplemented by a discussion of methods by those who have to apply them. This is the only reasonable course to follow if a satisfactory planning system is to be instituted. We therefore feel we should recommend the adoption of measures to enable programme managers and other staff responsible for the implementation of major United Nations programmes and, if possible, working in other organizations within the system, to participate in discussions concerning the improvement of planning and programming methodologies. A simple, uncomplicated structure should be set up for this purpose.

/Chapter VII/

Types of decisions which Member States should be able to take.  
Descriptive outlines of major programme policies.  
Establishment of priorities.

90. The points discussed in this report would seem, as a whole, to indicate that a planning system based on an objective-based programme structure should enable Member States to make a number of informed choices. These choices, which the present system does not allow for, relate to:

- (1) The maintenance, elimination or, in any case, verification of the usefulness and effectiveness of the continuous functions,
- (2) The general orientation of each programme, as determined, in particular, by defining the share allotted to research, training, technical co-operation and to other categories of activities,
- (3) The establishment within each programme of the various time-limited target objectives,
- (4) Finally, the general definition of priorities for United Nations programmes as a whole and, possibly, for those of the United Nations system, in the light of the criteria laid down by the General Assembly, and especially those of the new international economic order.

91. The instruments which should enable such choices to be made are, essentially:

(a) Within each major programme, an outline of the "programme policy" giving, in particular:

- The reasons for the apportionment of the various categories of activity, and
- An exact description of the continuous functions,
- The various possible types of time-limited target-objectives.

(b) For the programmes as a whole, an introduction to the medium-term plan providing a global analysis which puts into perspective the choices suggested for each programme by measuring them against the existing general criteria.

Member States should be able to make four types of choice.

The instruments which should facilitate this are:

the policy outlines for major programmes,

the introduction to the medium-term plan.

A. Descriptive outline of major programme policies

92. The comments made in the preceding chapters give a clearer idea of the manner in which descriptive narratives of major programme policies should be presented, both in extensive, in-depth studies and in summary form in the medium-term plan.

The purpose of such narratives should be to enable Member States:

- To become familiar with all aspects of the problems to whose solution a particular major programme is supposed to contribute,
- To define the roles to be assigned to the international organization to enable it to contribute to the solution of the problem.

93. In this respect, it seems to have been generally agreed by all the planning specialists within the United Nations system that descriptions of the contents of major programmes, programmes and subprogrammes should clearly explain the situation, the problems and the progress already made, the strategies or policies proposed and the objectives. There thus seems to be an accepted general pattern which is in fact recommended in the instructions sent by the heads of organizations for the preparation of plans. The general agreement on this has actually been explicitly formulated as a result of the work of the CCAQ working party, and paragraphs 30 to 34 of the ACC annual report for 1977-1978 (E/1978/43/Add.2) contain a series of recommendations on the subject which apply to all the organizations. They state, inter alia:

"The medium-term plans should contain:

- a. Descriptions of problems, their situation and their evolution both in past years and as expected in future over a long-term period;
- b. Programme policies and criteria derived from a;
- c. Statements of objectives and, for each of these objectives, (1) targets (subobjectives), the achievement of which can be verified, if possible; (2) approaches or strategies for reaching the targets (subobjectives) and realizing the objectives; and (3) types of activities related to the objectives with an indication of location and, if possible, timing;

A general pattern seems to have been adopted for these policy statements.

/...

d. Indications showing shifts in emphasis, where possible." 18/

These recommendations merely confirm the decisions taken by the General Assembly with regard to the United Nations plan (para. 3 (c) of resolution 31/93 of 14 December 1976).

94. Unfortunately, the gap separating this agreement on general principles from actual practice remains very wide. In the case of the United Nations, the reason lies:

- Firstly, in the fact that the instructions on preparation have failed to situate the place and role of the desired developments correctly,
- Secondly, in the loose interpretation given by the drafters of the outlines to the key words used in the instructions: strategy, objective, impact, etc.

The instructions for the preparation of the medium-term plan in fact:

- Situate the main developments, particularly with regard to strategy, at the subprogramme level, whereas it is at the major programme level that an outline of strategy or of policy is needed;
- Call for an outline of the "strategies" for subprogrammes covering two consecutive periods 1980-1981 and 1982-1983, which negates the very notion of a strategy.

The model forms (Plan Form 1), on the other hand, do not provide for any policy outline explaining the choice of objectives, at either the programme or the major programme level.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the planning structures do not reflect the real meaning of the key words.

---

18/ This document also contains interesting recommendations concerning the formulation of objectives. For example:

- (i) Objectives should be expressed in terms of a situation to be achieved or maintained and should be outward-looking, i.e., directed towards an external impact;
- (ii) They should be framed in such a way that progress in attaining them can be verified, without unduly costly data collection. The indicators to be used in verifying progress and the target groups to be reached should be identified.

Unfortunately in the United Nations the instructions on preparation have misinterpreted the notion of strategy and the role of descriptive outlines.

There are three different levels to which three types of descriptive outline should correspond:

the level of continuous functions,

the level of major programme policies (by far the most important),

95. It is, therefore, essential, if descriptions are to serve the intended purpose, namely to provide Member States with the information necessary for the definition of the policy and objectives of each major programme, to clarify a number of points:

(1) In the new objective-oriented programme structure which we are proposing, there are three levels for which there should be three corresponding types of descriptive outline:

- The level of "continuous function" sections,
- The "major programme policies" level,
- The level of programmes (with time-limited objectives);

(2) At the level of the "continuous function" sections, fairly brief descriptive outlines should give:

- The reason for the existence of the function,
- A description of the content (regular publications, monitoring methods, etc.),
- A list of performance indicators.

(3) The most important part of the narrative at the level of the "major programme policies", should be situated since it should be designed to explain which time-limited targets-objectives the "programmes" might focus on and the reasons for choosing a certain number of them in preference to others. These descriptive outlines of major programme policies should therefore contain:

- (a) A description of the situation and of the problems arising from it;
- (b) A definition of the principles on the basis of which the organization is called upon to act;
- (c) A description of the efforts already made to resolve these problems, both by Member States and by the international organizations and the United Nations, and the results already obtained;
- (d) Where appropriate, a reference to the continuous functions which have contributed to these results (an exact description of the functions being given in the section set aside for this purpose);

/...

- (e) Proposals for time-limited target-objectives and corresponding programmes. These together would constitute the United Nations contribution to the solution of the problems considered. For each of the programmes, an indication of relative size (for example, in terms of the number of Professional staff), and of the amount of resources to be allocated, might also be given;
- (f) A proposed choice among the possible objectives: alternative choices open to Member States (this paragraph would be amended when Member States had made their choice and the final plan adopted would indicate only the choices made and the reasons for them). 19/

---

19/ It may be useful to mention that, of the various definitions of descriptive policy outlines which have already been given within the United Nations system, the one which seems best suited to the methods we have recommended is contained in the instructions prepared by the Director-General of UNESCO in 1975 for the preparation of his organization's medium-term plan. These instructions provide, in essence, that "medium-term objectives" (which in fact are the objectives of each programme) should be "developed" in accordance with a four-part plan comprising:

- A statement of the problem, briefly reviewing the global situation in the specific and limited field to which the objective relates;
- The historical background to the efforts already made or action undertaken in that particular field by Member States, where appropriate, and by the organizations and institutions within the United Nations system and, lastly, by UNESCO;
- A description of the Organization's principles for action to achieve the objective, i.e., UNESCO's "theory" on the subject;
- The targets and corresponding variants.

It should be noted that the word "target" (cible) is used in this terminology to designate what would be described in the United Nations as a time-limited objective. In this respect, we may quote the following passage from the instructions:



the programme level.

(4) At the level of each programme, much briefer descriptive outlines should give only:

- A description of the proposed time-limited target-objective;
- The plan of operations proposed for attainment of the target-objective (this plan of operations should not, save in exceptional cases, cover programme elements).

B. Establishment of priorities

The establishment of priorities is a difficult exercise.

96. The establishment of priorities, i.e., of the importance to be attached to the various types of activity, either within the United Nations system as a whole or only within the United Nations itself, has often been described as an indispensable exercise. One of the most important results of planning should be to enable Member States to make these essential choices. It is unfortunately very difficult to give Member States access to this power, although at first sight it seems quite natural and simple.

The relative importance of the various major programmes and sectors is the result

97. The main reason for this is that the priority accorded in practice by the international community to any given sector in the United Nations system (health, labour, education, agriculture, industry, etc.) or to any given major programme within an organization, is the result of a historical process. This process involves a great many factors, one of the most important of which is the degree of consensus reached by Member States in spite of their divergent interests, different levels of wealth, different philosophies and political systems.

(continued)

"for the sake of practical convenience, a medium-term objective may be broken down into subobjectives, when justified by the objective's scope and complexity. In such cases, each subobjective should have a corresponding target, that is, a description of the desired impact and, of course, a subprogramme. If each objective is followed by the corresponding target for 1982, the time-limits and stages for the attainment of this target must be specified so as to provide a basis for establishing the sequence for each successive biennium in the corresponding budgetary documents."

This passage shows that the Director-General of UNESCO was in favour of "time-limited objectives". Finally, it should be pointed out that each of the 40 "objectives" adopted by UNESCO seems to correspond to the level of a major programme as defined in this report. Subprogrammes or current themes would, in the proposed new structure, correspond to "programmes".

/...

The sectors in which it has proved easiest to reach a consensus (health, for example) have naturally developed more than others (industry or education), in which opinions are widely divergent. This phenomenon has been instrumental in determining the amount of funds which can be allocated to the various organizations and, within an individual organization, to major programmes.

98. The other factors include the organizational ability, the imagination and the continuity or irregularity of the efforts put into the various administrative units responsible for the different sectors: such as a good manager who has paid attention to the quality of the staff recruited and has ensured that a network of correspondants was set up, that the questions he is responsible for studying are dealt with in an institutional framework and that there is adequate dissemination of information, has secured the appointment of a successor capable of carrying on his work and has given the major programme the decisive impetus which ultimately ensures its growth and development. Otherwise, inadequate attention is paid to the most pressing problems and the size of the major programmes devoted to those problems reflects these adverse or unfortunate circumstances. Other factors, such as the emergence of new trends of thought, or restructuring and amalgamations, could have altered the relative importance of the various major programmes. The interplay of all these factors has produced the present structure which reflects a de facto scale of priorities.

99. This scale of importance does not correspond to the scale of priorities which would be definitively established if the General Assembly had to decide today on the comparative importance to be attached to the various major United Nations programmes or to the various organizations within the United Nations system. The problem of the establishment of priorities can, therefore, be resolved only by specifying future approaches and must be reflected in decisions on the relative growth to be allowed for the various major programmes or sectors. It is therefore understandable that, after considering the problem, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should have decided that the answer lay in the definition of "relative growth rates".

100. But this system runs into serious difficulties. On the one hand, it is impossible clearly to define the criteria on the basis of which these choices are made. Account is no doubt taken of the potential usefulness of each programme or major programme to Member States, of the

of a historical process.

Changes in priorities must be gradual.

The present system lacks precise criteria ...

/...

apparent quality of management, general policy considerations, etc. These aspects are important, but they do not add up to a systematic measuring device. The criteria applied may vary from year to year. In addition, the present medium-term plan does not provide Member States with the information which might enlighten them on this matter and enable them to determine clearly the underlying political will of the international community.

and the "threshold of growth" phenomenon is not fully appreciated.

101. Lastly, the types of decision taken on the subject of the development of a programme have no very clear meaning. A growth rate which allows the head of the administrative unit coinciding with a major programme to be allocated one or two additional staff in the Professional category, does not generally enable him to mobilize the necessary resources, to add a new time-limited target-objective or a new programme to his scope of activity. The normal consequence of a decision on priorities, however, should be to permit increases or reductions in the light of the establishment or discontinuance of programmes. We need to be able to take this "threshold of growth" phenomenon into account in the future. 20/

The introduction to the medium-term plan could help Member States to solve this problem.

102. The system of objectives-oriented structures proposed in this report could help to remedy most of these problems. The presentation which is recommended should facilitate, on the one hand, choices relating to the continuation or discontinuance of functions or programmes within each major programme. 21/ Consequently, the trends towards growth or reduction defined as a result of decisions on priorities could be reflected not in percentage increases in the funds made available but in decisions to institute or eliminate programmes. It remains to be seen how Member States could obtain the information they need to define these trends or approaches. This is the function which the Introduction to the medium-term plan should be able to perform.

---

20/ Member States have considered this question on many occasions. In a series of evaluations by CPC of certain major programmes, it was requested that an estimate be made of the type of change which would result from a 20 per cent increase or decrease in resources. Variations of this magnitude could result either in new programmes or, on the other hand, the discontinuance of existing programmes.

21/ This corresponds to choices 1, 2 and 3 defined in para. 87 above.

103. It is important to take a decision on the nature of this document. In other words, the following should be specified quite clearly:

- The type of information and guidance which Member States would like it to contain;
- The stage in the process of preparation and discussion of the medium-term plan at which the document should be distributed.

104. Here we can only make a few suggestions to facilitate the decisions which should be taken. With regard to the date of distribution, it would seem that, if the introduction is to serve all the purposes expected of it, it should be distributed some months before the document containing the medium-term plan itself. A minimum of six months would seem reasonable if the views of Member States on the document are to be obtained and if there is to be sufficient time for these views to be taken into account in the preparation of the medium-term plan itself. Various solutions are conceivable, such as the convening of a special session of CPC or of the Economic and Social Council, or both, to consider the document six months before the plan is submitted to the same intergovernmental committees, or consultation of Member States in writing, by means of a questionnaire accompanying the document.

105. With regard to the contents of the Introduction, the following components might be considered:

(a) A description of the relative importance of the major programmes within the United Nations and, possibly, of the relative importance of the major sectors within the United Nations system. So that this description might serve as a point of departure for the description of priorities, it might well be supplemented by background information indicating the differences in growth rates among the various major programmes, or sectors, and attempting to explain the reasons for them;

(b) A number of tables, diagrams and descriptive outlines indicating, for each major programme (or for each sector) the scope and nature of the continuous functions, the nature and percentage distribution of the activities devoted to research, technical co-operation, dissemination of standards, etc.;

This document should be distributed at least six months before the draft plan.

The Introduction could provide information on existing priorities and, in particular, could examine the criteria for choices.

(c) An examination of the criteria which Member States might apply in establishing subsequent trends or guidelines. This, the most important and most difficult section, should examine:

- (i) The political criteria, that is, those laid down by the General Assembly or by the Economic and Social Council and, possibly, by the General Conferences of the specialized agencies which establish guidelines for the economic and social activities of Member States and of the international organizations, the new international economic order, etc.;
- (ii) The most precise criteria resulting from the definition of development strategy and, possibly, from the guidelines established by the regional economic commissions;
- (iii) Criteria for effectiveness, that is, criteria for assessing the capacity of the international organizations and of the United Nations, in particular, to make useful contributions to the solution of the problems considered to be the most urgent in existing economic and social circumstances;
- (iv) Finally, criteria for the apportionment of tasks among the international organizations themselves, which might be used for joint planning exercises.

On the basis of these criteria guidelines should be set to determine the specific choices which would give the next plan its originality and individuality.

(d) Finally, the Introduction might perhaps reflect, even more precisely, the various options open to Member States by suggesting the major programmes which should be developed, the joint planning themes which should be considered to be of fundamental importance, the reductions in activities which should be considered, etc.

106. It should lastly be noted here that the political scope and the size of this Introduction could vary considerably according to the field to which it applied - whether it was confined to the United Nations plan or, instead, covered the establishment of priorities within the United Nations system as a whole. In the latter case, it would considerably facilitate the development of joint planning, and the possibility of its use for this purpose should, therefore, be given very serious consideration.

If the  
Introduction  
could cover  
the whole

/...

107. In short, then, the Introduction could become an extremely useful instrument in that it would provide Member States with a global perspective and enable them to determine the nature of the contribution which the United Nations and the United Nations system could make to economic and social development within the framework of the collective efforts of the international community as a whole (new international economic order, development strategy, possibly regional development plans, etc.).

system, it would considerably facilitate joint planning.

Chapter VIII

Principal recommendations

The principal recommendations of this report are contained in chapters III, V, VI and VII. We shall confine ourselves here to a recapitulation of the essential points in a logical order.

RECOMMENDATION No. I - Adoption of a plan with fixed-time horizons

(a) In order to give the necessary importance and time to the preparation of the plan, and to facilitate the adoption of an objective-based structure, the medium-term plan should have "fixed-time horizons".

(b) It should be drawn up to cover a minimum period of four years, on the understanding that an attempt should be made to harmonize the United Nations planning cycle with that of the other agencies of the United Nations system. 22/

Chapter III, paragraph 25

RECOMMENDATION No. II - Establishment of an objective-based programme structure

(a) The Organization's activities would be classified according to two categories: those which are programmable and those which are not. The non-programmable activities would be described in separate chapters or sections.

(b) The present four-level programme structure (major programme, programme, subprogramme, programme element) - where the "programme" and "subprogramme" (levels 2 and 3) are not based on any precise criteria - should be replaced by an objective-based structure.

(c) This structure would have the following characteristics: the "major programme" (level 1) and the "programme element" (level 4) would remain unchanged.

The intermediate levels would comprise:

(i) "Continuous-function" sections, which would contain the description of all activities of an unquestionably continuous nature;

---

22/ If a four-year cycle was adopted for 1982-1985 and then for 1986-1989, the second four-year plan could coincide with the major portion of the six-year plan of the bulk of the other organizations envisaged for 1984-1989. This is but one possible method.

- (ii) "Programmes" of widely varying dimensions, focusing all the other activities on time-limited target-objectives.

The "subprogramme" level would either be abandoned or be used only for the apportionment of "programmes" among the various administrative units co-operating in their execution (individual departments, regional commissions, etc.).

(d) The methodology which would be used to organize the activities of a major programme around time-limited objectives would be as described in paragraph 60 of this report. This method would later have to be improved and refined.

Chapter V, paragraphs 41 to 60

RECOMMENDATION No. III - Adoption of an "in-depth study" system

(a) In-depth studies should be prepared for each of the major programmes, setting out the proposed policy for each programme (following the outline in recommendation No. V hereunder).

(b) These studies, of the order of 40 to 100 pages in length, would initially take the form of preparatory documents for the medium-term plan ("in-depth studies format 1"). The documents would serve as a basis for discussion of the medium-term plan by all the expert or intergovernmental committees involved in the preparation process, before the plan is transmitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). After amendment in the light of the comments and suggestions received from these committees, summaries of the studies would form the basis for the drafting of the portions of the medium-term plan corresponding to each major programme.

(c) "In-depth studies format 2" would then be prepared on a regular basis, at a rate of three to five per year, for submission to and consideration by CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The first part of each of these studies would consist of an evaluation of the corresponding major programme.

Chapter III, paragraphs 18 to 23

RECOMMENDATION No. IV - Adoption of a time-table for the preparation of the medium-term plan

(a) The preparation of the medium-term plan should take place over a period of approximately 18 months comprising:

Approximately four months for the preparation of the "in-depth studies format 1";

Approximately four months for consulting the various expert and intergovernmental committees involved in the preparation process before the plan is considered by CPC;

/...



Two months for collating the comments and drafting the text of the medium-term plan;

Six to seven months, from May to November, for consideration, discussion and final drafting of the medium-term plan by CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

(b) Special procedures would have to be envisaged to enable the competent expert and intergovernmental committees to consider the in-depth studies format 1 during the period provided for that purpose, before the CPC session.

Chapter III, paragraphs 22 and 23

RECOMMENDATION No. V - Presentation of policy descriptions of major programmes

(a) The presentation of the policy descriptions of major programmes in the in-depth studies and in the chapters of the medium-term plan should be in the following sequence:

1. World situation in the sector under consideration and associated problems;
2. Principles for action defining the nature of the intended contribution of the United Nations to the solution of the problems;
3. Account of past efforts by Member States, by the United Nations system, and by the United Nations itself;
4. Identification and brief description of continuous activities;
5. Definition and explanation of reasons for proposing time-limited target-objectives on which the Organization's activities could be focused (a choice of alternatives for Member States);
6. Proposal concerning the choice of objective (in the final version of the plan document this paragraph would be replaced by an explanation of the choice made).

(b) Briefer narratives should be devoted to:

The description of continuous functions;

Each programme.

Chapter VII, paragraph 95

/...

RECOMMENDATION No. VI - Role of the introduction to the medium-term plan in the establishment of priorities

(a) The document entitled "Introduction to the medium-term plan" should be drawn up with the intention of helping Member States to define the priorities which should guide the Secretariat in preparing the draft medium-term plan (and at a later stage the programme budget).

(b) This document should be submitted to Member States several months prior to the preparation of the draft medium-term plan, so that their opinions can be solicited in good time.

(c) The document should cover developments relating to:

The description of the priorities which actually exist (relative importance accorded to individual sectors or individual major programmes);

The criteria to be used by the Member States to define priorities, and, in particular, the implications of General Assembly decisions relating to the new international economic order and the development strategy, economy and efficiency factors, etc.;

Methods for applying these priorities in the draft medium-term plan.

(d) A decision should be taken on the extent to which this Introduction will deal with the problem of priorities within the United Nations system as a whole.

/Chapter VII, paragraphs 104 to 106/

RECOMMENDATION No. VII - Consultation with officials responsible for executing the major programmes on the improvement of planning and programming methodology

Arrangements should be made to ensure that those responsible for executing the major programmes are involved in the coming months in discussions on the improvement of the planning and programming methodologies.

/Chapter VI, paragraphs 84 to 89/

/ANNEXES/

- Annex I            Definitions of the four programming levels as adopted by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
- Annex II           United Nations: list of major programmes
- Annex III          International Labour Organisation: list of major programmes
- Annex IV           World Health Organization: list of major programmes
- Annex V            UNESCO: list of major programmes
- Annex VI           Tentative "mock-up" of the presentation of a programme in the medium-term plan. Example: public administration programme
- Annex VII          Breakdown of a major programme - "Statistics" - into programmes and subprogrammes
- Annex VIII         Programming at WHO
- Annex IX           Extract from document EB 63/PC/WP/5/Rev.1: global medium-term programme for the promotion of environmental health

Annex I

DEFINITIONS OF THE FOUR PROGRAMMING LEVELS AS ADOPTED BY  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION IN ITS  
REPORT E/5803 OF 28 APRIL 1976

"2. Programme narratives

"27. In October 1975 ACC instructed the Task Force to give priority to the harmonization of programme narratives in the programme budgets. The overriding importance of this for making comparisons is self-evident but the difficulties involved are also very great. The Task Force singled out three separate issues for consideration: (a) the hierarchy of substantive programmes and the need to identify 'narrative levels'; (b) minimum information requirements for narratives; and (c) treatment of programmes for administrative and supporting services.

"28. Perhaps the most useful single achievement by the Task Force has been the identification and agreement on four levels for the subdivision of organizations' over-all programmes, together with recommendations on the levels on which they would normally include their detailed programme narratives. The four levels, with examples of each, are the following:

"Level 1 - Major programme corresponds to a major purpose or function of the organization for which objectives may be set. Normally these objectives are of such a long-term nature that no time-frame can be established for their attainment. The level is often used for purposes of aggregating budget data or for appropriation purposes. It includes such existing aggregations of programmes as:

Population (United Nations);  
Development of skills and aptitudes for work (ILO);  
Conservation of resources and control of diseases and pests (FAO);  
Education (UNESCO);  
Environmental health (WHO).

"Level 2 - Programme is a grouping of related subprogrammes directed at the attainment of one or more objectives that contribute to the broader objectives of the major programme at level 1. At this level some organizations include detailed narratives and specific objectives. For some there is no need for any further breakdown of the over-all programme narrative, and in such cases the detailed recommendations of the Task Force on the minimum requirements for narratives at level 3 would take effect at this level. Examples of current programme titles that might correspond to this level are:

Population in the ECA region (United Nations);  
Vocational training (ILO);  
Control of diseases and pests (FAO);  
Higher education and training of education personnel (UNESCO);  
Basic sanitary measures (WHO).

/...

"Level 3 - Subprogramme is a coherent collection of several activities directed at the attainment of one objective, and which is capable of being evaluated in terms of output indicators and, normally, success criteria. To the extent possible, the evaluation should be in terms of its impact on conditions within and among the countries of the world. At this level most of the organizations represented in the Task Force would include detailed narrative material, including statements of subobjectives. Typical examples of current programme titles at this level would be:

Demographic projections (United Nations);  
Industrial vocational training (ILO);  
Control of African animal trypanosomiasis (FAO);  
Higher education (UNESCO);  
Water supply (WHO).

"Level 4 - Programme element is either:

(a) A project, directed at a precise objective in terms of output over a prescribed period of time, the achievement of which can be verified; or

(b) A continuing activity with a measured output. It contributes to the objective of a level 3 subprogramme, is composed of elements which can be costed and is normally the managerial responsibility of one person. Examples of such programme elements are:

Estimates and projections of total population by sex and age for individual countries (United Nations);  
In-plant training scheme (Iraq) (Field project) (ILO);  
European Centre for Higher Education (Bucharest) (UNESCO);  
Algeria - field project (WHO).

"29. Even if some organizations find that their programmes do not require them to use all four of these levels, the across-the-board presentation of programme information under them will simplify interagency comparisons. It is also particularly helpful that the detailed narrative material will be at level 3."

Annex II - United Nations

<u>Major programmes</u>	<u>List of major programmes</u>	<u>Number of Professional staff</u>		
		<u>RB</u>	<u>XB</u>	<u>Total</u>
6	International justice and law	53	2	55
9	Human rights	42	-	42
10	International drug control	31	9	40
13	Development issues and policies	167	39	206
14	Environment	49	85	136
15	Food and agriculture	36	34	70
16	Human settlements	50	36	86
17	Industrial development	545	100	645
18	International trade	215	38	253
19	Natural resources and energy	105	44	149
20	Ocean economics and technology	8	1	9
21	Population	37	54	91
22	Public administration and finance	24	10	34
23	Science and technology	32	5	37
24	Statistics	128	37	165
25	Transnational corporations	37	5	42
26	Transport	47	20	67
27	Women and special groups	78	24	102
28	Major programmes unique to the regional commissions	34	29	63

RB: Regular budget.

XB: Extrabudgetary resources.

Annex III - International Labour Organisation

<u>Major programmes</u>	<u>List of major programmes</u>	<u>Man/years and man/months per biennium</u>		
		<u>RB</u>	<u>XB</u>	<u>Total</u>
50	International labour standards and human rights	89/00	-	89/00
60	Employment and development	121/11	49/08	171/07
70	Training	103/06	76/04	179/10
80	Industrial relations and labour administration	97/04	6/04	103/08
90	Working conditions and environment	155/08	3/04	159/00
100	Sectoral activities	98/03	19/06	117/09
110	Social security	43/11	3/04	47/03
130	Statistics and special studies	52/08	1/02	53/10
150	International Institute for Labour Studies	4/02	-	4/02
160	Personnel	86/00	64/00	150/00
250	Management of field programmes in Africa	248/00	2/00	250/00
260	Management of field programmes in the Americas	196/00	6/00	202/00
270	Management of field programmes in Asia and the Pacific	235/03	4/00	239/03
280	Management of field programmes in Europe	76/00	13/00	89/00
285	Management of field programmes in Arab States	39/00	2/00	41/00

RB: Regular budget.

XB: Extrabudgetary resources.

/...

Annex IV - World Health Organization

<u>Major programmes</u>	<u>List of major programmes</u>	<u>In millions of \$</u>		
		<u>RB</u>	<u>XB</u>	<u>Total</u>
3.1	Health service development	51.5	26.7	78.2
3.2	Family health	12.9	70.7	83.7
3.3	Mental health	4.8	2.4	7.2
3.4	Prophylactic, diagnostic and therapeutic substances	8.6	1.7	10.4
4.1	Communicable disease prevention and control	66.0	151.0	217.0
4.2	Non-communicable disease prevention and control	10.8	17.0	27.8
5.1	Promotion of environmental health	26.1	24.8	50.9
6.1	Health manpower development	52.3	20.1	72.4
7.1	Health information	42.9	9.6	52.5

---

RB: Regular budget.

XB: Extrabudgetary resources.



Annex V - UNESCO

<u>Major programmes</u>	<u>List of major programmes</u>	<u>% of programme resources</u>
I	Assurance of human rights	9.36
II	Reinforcement of peace	1.44
III	Man as the centre of development	9.58
IV	The application of science and technology for man and society	13.96
V	Educational action in response to individual and social requirements	25.00
VI	Quantitative and qualitative improvement in the opportunities for certain groups to achieve their individual and social potential	9.24
VII	Man and his environment	16.54
VIII	Population	0.64
IX	Communication between persons and between peoples	5.40
X	Transfer and exchange of information	8.83

Annex VI

Conference Room Paper No. 1  
12 September 1978

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION  
Eighteenth session  
28 August-15 September 1978  
Agenda item 9. Medium-term plan for the  
period 1980-1983

Tentative "mock-up" of the presentation of a programme  
in the medium-term plan\*

---

Example: public administration programme\*\*

---

8 September 1978

- A. Organization
- B. Co-ordination
- C. Strategy of the Programme
  - (a) Legislative authority (resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council)
  - (b) Problems addressed
  - (i) Present situation

The Governments, particularly those of the developing countries, have a number of problems to solve in order to improve the capacity of the public sector to carry out their policies, particularly those defined in development plans.

---

\* This is a working paper prepared by Mr. Maurice Bertrand, member of the Joint Inspection Unit, in order to give an example of the possible presentation of a "strategy" for a programme.

\*\* This example is limited to the field of public administration (with the exception of public finance) and to the programme at the United Nations Headquarters (excluding the regional commissions).

The main problems are:

- Lack of trained people in the various specialities and lack of training facilities; political and social constraints hampering the recruitment of civil servants.
- Difficulty in achieving a balance between centralization and decentralization, proliferation of administrative units, lack of co-ordination and planning, etc.
- Absence of basic information on the structure and composition of the public sector.
- Absence of a methodology for analysing the situation in the public sector, etc.

(We should add here a description of the various types of situation in the public sector of the least developed countries, in countries with a large public enterprise sector, etc. A brief description of types of situation could be given.

(ii) Development of the discipline of public administration

During the last 10 years, research and teaching in public administration have developed considerably. It is possible to speak, if not of a science, then at least of a new academic discipline, of public administration. The development of this discipline reflects the existence of different systems of public administration in different countries, with different types of approaches and different methods, even if a consensus is developing in some fields.

(iii) Institutional environment of the programme

Training courses in public administration have been developed in almost all the universities. The majority of developing countries have created national institutes or schools of public administration. Five regional institutes are extending their activities. Hundreds of regular publications exist in the field of public administration. But all these developments are insufficient to meet the existing needs of developing countries.

(iv) History of the programme and its main achievements

Since its inception in 1953, the public administration programme has, inter alia,

Established and distributed some 75 publications.

Helped a number of countries to create national schools or institutes.

/...

Participated in the creation or development of the five regional institutes.

Helped in the organization of training courses, through a number of technical co-operation projects.

Supported numerous technical co-operation projects for "administrative reform", etc.

(v) Evaluation of the efficiency of the programme

A recent evaluation of the activities of the programme has shown that:

- The programme's publications were insufficiently distributed and utilized and became largely obsolete without having reached potential users.
- The role of the regional institutes vis-à-vis the role of the national institutes has not been clearly defined.
- Co-ordination of the programme of activities between Headquarters and the regional commissions of the United Nations, between the United Nations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and between the United Nations system and the various regional or national institutes and universities has been insufficient.
- Knowledge of the programme's existing "clientele" has not been well enough developed and a dialogue with the "clientele" has not been established.

A change in the conception of the programme and of the methods of work has to be introduced.

(c) Possible strategy of the programme

(i) Possible alternative strategy

Bearing in mind Member States' existing needs, the institutional environment of the programme, the modesty of its resources and the possibility of developing co-ordination and co-operation, the various possible orientations of the strategy of this programme could be:

I. To develop training facilities

1. Either by concentrating on the development of training courses by sending experts, granting fellowships systematically, etc.
2. Or by producing training material (specialized manuals or handbooks) presenting methods and solutions for the various systems of public administration in the various branches (budget, personnel, supply, management methods, accounting, etc.).

II. To develop support for "administrative reform" projects

1. Either by sending experts recruited on the international market to advise Governments.
2. Or by developing a method for analysing countries' existing problems and thus facilitating diagnosis and the adoption of solutions.

III. To help to create new institutes at regional and national level, or even to create an international centre (as envisaged by the first resolution on the programme in 1948). 1/

IV. To develop information for managers and political decision-makers on new trends and developments.

V. To pursue all these orientations at the same time.

(ii) Reasons for the choice

Because of the modesty of existing resources orientation V hardly seems feasible. To try to go in several directions at the same time would not lead to any measurable result. Orientation III can be eliminated because there is more need for strengthening existing institutions than for creating new ones. In the fields of "training" and "administrative reform" (orientations I and II), methods used to transfer technology have consisted in recruiting experts or teachers who have proved their competence in their own country and sending them to developing countries to disseminate their personal knowledge and experience. In the majority of cases, therefore, the nature of the technical solutions proposed depends directly on the nationality and the personal background of the expert. Governments have not been able to choose between the possible methods and solutions offered by the various systems of public administration which are linked to the traditions of different countries, and they have had no possibility of devising solutions adapted to their own problems using all possible information.

Under these conditions it is a matter of priority in these two fields that:

The most recent advances in knowledge of the various branches of public administration in the different existing systems be presented in a manner easily accessible to all interested parties;

A system be devised for collecting data and analysing problems in each country (methods for reaching a consensus, analysis of structures, definition of needs, diagnosis of main defects, etc.).

---

1/ General Assembly resolution 246 (III).

Such a programme of collection and distribution of existing knowledge and of methodological research could be accomplished in a few years if the co-operation of the regional commissions, the regional and national institutes, and the universities were systematically organized. The role and the programme of the regional commissions and the regional institutes could be defined with more precision through the creation of this network of co-operation. All these considerations suggest that the strategy of the programme should be based essentially on the orientations defined in paragraphs I.2 and II.2 above, to the exclusion of the others. The needs described in orientation IV could be met completely by permanently updating the various publications (orientation I.2). Finally, the strategy of the programme would consist in organizing international co-operation to provide Member States with instruments of action that the United Nations is uniquely able to create. This choice would therefore lead to the creation of the two following subprogrammes:

D. Subprogrammes

Subprogramme I - Creation of a set of manuals (or handbooks) covering the various branches of public administration

(a) Objectives of the subprogrammes. To place at the disposal of Governments, civil servants, specialists, teachers and students as complete a set as possible of publications presenting, in the various branches of the discipline, the present body of knowledge, methods and solutions applied in the various systems of public administration; to keep these publications permanently up to date.

The main fields to be covered would be: personnel management, training for public service, local and regional administration, tax administration, planning, programming and budgeting, management of public enterprises, public service laws and practices, public accounting, customs administration, public auditing, evaluation, modern management and use of computers, international bibliography of public administration, systems of public administration, repertory of institutes, schools of public administration, etc.

Each of these publications would present the different practices of the various systems of public administration, give a number of practical and precise examples, be published in a convenient format and, if possible, in a looseleaf binding so that they could be kept up to date.

(b) Method of establishment and date of achievement. It would be necessary, to achieve such an objective, to secure the partnership of the top specialists in these various fields in the main universities and institutes of public administration, representing the views of the various systems and the traditions of the various countries. An important part of the activities of this subprogramme must be devoted to identifying partners, organizing their co-operation, obtaining their agreement on the conception of the various publications, etc. The first biennium would

probably be devoted to preparation and to the first experiment. One or two publications for which usable documentation already exists, and which for various reasons would be the easiest to produce, could also be prepared during the first two years. A further two biennia would be necessary to cover the entire range of problems. So, it could be estimated that the end of this subprogramme would be 31 December 1986. Arrangements for keeping these publications permanently up to date should be part of the programme after 1986.

(c) Clientele and number of copies. In each country, the clientele for these publications should be civil servants specialized in some of the fields covered, experts, professors and students in institutes, schools or faculties of public administration. The number of copies to be distributed and sold in each of the various languages could be estimated for each publication by calculating the size of the potential clientele. It could be roughly estimated, for example, that in English more than 10,000 copies of each of these publications would be a reasonable order of magnitude.

(d) Achievement indicators and methods of evaluation.

Indicators of volume and performance: number of copies distributed, number of copies sold.

Indicators of clientele satisfaction: inclusion in each publication of a very short questionnaire requesting the reader's opinion, and analysis of the answers.

Indicators of impact: the main correspondents of the Division could at fairly regular intervals, for example every two years, transmit their personal assessment of such results as the regular use of the publications in educational establishments, adoption of the methods described by individual countries, etc.

Subprogramme II - Establishment of a methodology for the analysis of public administration problems

(a) Objective of the subprogramme. A small number of existing research projects have shown the possibility of establishing the basis for a diagnosis of public administration problems in a given country. An accurate knowledge of all available information as to the number, qualifications, salaries and functions of civil servants in the various categories in a given country and an analysis of the existing machinery for performing administrative functions are prerequisites for the accurate identification of existing needs and for determining the best ways of meeting those needs, either through training or through the reform of methods or structure.

However, the methods devised to assist in identifying problems are not yet sufficiently well known, have not yet been put to sufficient use, and have not yet been worked out in full detail.

The objective of the subprogramme would be to develop a complete methodology for analysing public administration problems within individual countries and to publicize the results of this research in order to place at the disposal of Governments a powerful tool for preparing the necessary reforms.

(b) Methods of execution and date of termination. The execution of this subprogramme would involve the organization of co-operation of the same type as that described in the previous subprogramme. The co-operation of top specialists in public administration, political science, economics and statistics is needed.

The first biennium should be devoted to organizing this co-operation, developing research experiments in various countries, and establishing the research programme in detail. The other two biennia would be devoted to generalizing research experiments in the various regions or countries, collecting the results of these experiments, preparing publications on the various parts of this methodology, including the distribution of statistical data, and publicizing these methods and studying with Governments the possible consequences of their application. The estimated date of completion of this subprogramme could be 31 December 1986.

(c) Clientele and achievement indicators. The clientele for this subprogramme consists mainly of Governments (and civil servants specialized in the study of the structure of public sectors, administrative reform, etc.). The clientele among teachers and students is limited to highly qualified specialists. As a result, the number of copies of publications could not be considered as an accurate achievement indicator. The only possible achievement indicator would be:

The number of countries agreeing to conduct experiments in this field;

The number of countries satisfied with the proposed methodology;

These results would be easy to measure at the end of the subprogramme; special studies would be necessary to measure the final impact.

E. Continuation of the programme after completion of the two subprogrammes

If these two subprogrammes were completed at the end of 1986, the activities of the public administration programme would not cease. It is difficult to define in advance the orientation which the programme should follow at that point, but it could be assumed that the development of evaluation methods in the various countries, the comparison of the effectiveness of the methods adopted, the exchange of information between the various countries, the reinforcement of existing institutions and the search for new methods for improving training might be some of the features of the new subprogrammes to be developed at that time.



General remarks on this "mock-up"

1. This paper has been written very quickly in order to assist the deliberations of CPC and ACABQ and to facilitate the understanding of a possible different conception of a medium-term plan. It has not been discussed with the Director of the public administration and finance programme. A more thorough preparation, had it been possible, would have enabled it to be more precise and more accurate.

2. Were it a "real" document, this presentation, after revision by the department responsible for public administration, would not normally be presented to CPC directly but offered for discussion by specialists (meeting of experts). After clearance by this meeting, a revised draft could be given to CPC for comments and observations.

3. The type of decisions that Member States might take on such a proposal would be:

A. At the time of examining the draft medium-term plan

(a) To examine whether the proposed strategy seems satisfactory, i.e. whether the choice of subprogrammes corresponds to the real needs of Member States and to existing possibilities for action. If an alternative strategy were chosen by Member States, a new document would have to be prepared along the lines indicated by them.

(b) To decide on the possible importance of the various subprogrammes and on the dates of their completion.

B. At the time of adopting programme budget:

To approve a list of programme elements for each subprogramme for a two-year period and to authorize their financing.

C. After the execution of a subprogramme:

To evaluate the results obtained (with the help of the main achievement indicators).

Annex VII

Breakdown of a major programme - "Statistics" - into  
programmes and subprogrammes

	<u>Number of Professional staff per programme</u>		
	<u>RB</u>	<u>XB</u>	<u>Total</u>
P1 - Department of International Economic and Social Affairs	69	22	91
SP1 - International trade, industry, natural resources and energy			
SP2 - National accounts, income distribution and related statistics			
SP3 - Price statistics and related areas			
SP4 - Social and demographic statistics			
SP5 - Improved dissemination of statistics			
SP6 - Co-ordination of international statistical programmes			
P2 - Department of Technical Co-operation for Development	12	2	14
SP1 - Improvement of statistical capabilities of developing countries			
SP2 - Improvement of statistical data-processing capabilities of developing countries			
P3 - Economic Commission for Africa	12	5	17
SP1 - National statistical services			
SP2 - Regional framework of statistical information			
P4 - Economic Commission for Europe	14	-	14
SP1 - Standards and methodology			
SP2 - Research data and projects			
P5 - Economic Commission for Latin America	9	4	13
SP1 - Regional framework of quantitative information			
SP2 - Basic statistics			
P6 - Economic Commission for Western Asia	4	-	4
SP1 - Development of statistical services			
SP2 - Development of national accounts, finance and price statistics			
P7 - Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	8	4	12
SP1 - Statistics development			
SP2 - Statistical compilation and analysis			

/...

Annex VIII

Programming at WHO

I. Programming instruments

Programming at WHO is based on three instruments, totally different in form, quality and importance:

The general programme of work covering a specific period;

The medium-term programme;

The programme budget.

(a) The general programme of work for a specific period (currently the Sixth General Programme of Work covering the years 1978-1983) contains the over-all guidelines of the organization's programme for a six-year period and provides the general and detailed objectives, together with the policy framework of the activities which will be explained (that is to say described in more detail and accompanied by technical information) in the medium-term programme. In fact, this document is misnamed, since it is more a "general plan of work" than a "programme". At first sight, one might well wonder about the danger of confusing the programme of work and the medium-term programme, and whether it might not be better to merge the two. At the present juncture, this solution would seem to be impossible because, although the general programme of work actually exists and was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1976, the medium-term programme (or rather programmes) is conceived as a much more flexible instrument, subject to periodic reviews, and is still far from complete.

(b) The medium-term programme (N.B. "programme" and not "plan") <sup>1/</sup> theoretically covers the same period as the programme of work. It translates the policy guidance and strategies defined in the programme of work into activities and provides, where necessary, further policy guidance, either more general (for example the Second Development Decade), or more specific but long-term (for example the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990), or as defined in the resolutions of the regional committees, the Executive Board or the Assembly (cf. infra).

(c) The programme budget (the current one covers the period 1978-1979). Whereas the medium-term programme gives only a general indication of the financial

---

<sup>1/</sup> This terminology is confusing: it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the organization's medium-term programme (i.e. the whole series of programmes) and a medium-term programme (i.e. a series of activities grouped under one of the six programmes).

implications of the activities which it describes, the programme budget contains the specific allocations. The structure of the programme description does not correspond with that of the programme of work or the medium-term programme. The new "programme classification structure", which is already in use for the programme of work and the medium-term programme, will in future also be used for the budget.

The basic programming instrument is therefore the "medium-term programme", since it forms the true link between the level of definition of general and detailed global objectives (programme of work) and the level of specific activities of the regional and national plans (the programme budget in its present form being merely a summary of global analytical statements taken from the two upper levels, to which financial specifications have been added.

Before looking at the format of the medium-term programme, it is useful to look at the process of programme formulation, or more precisely the formulation of each of the six programmes. The originality of WHO's approach seems to lie in the fact that the dynamic process of programming takes precedence over the static structure of the document or documents in which a programme is set out. In other words, the very structure of the medium-term programme would seem to be largely determined by the process of preparation, discussion and presentation of the programme. The flexibility of the approach adopted leads, ultimately, to the final programming document being seen as a provisional synthesis (that is to say, it may be changed before the end of the normal six-year period, more especially when the programme budget is prepared), whereas the process of programme formulation, which implies the involvement of all levels of the organization, together with the regional offices and member countries, is seen as a permanent feature of the organization's work. The integrated nature of WHO is due to the fact that the same structures and channels of communication used for programming are also used for execution, for information feedback and, of course, for evaluation.

## II. The formulation process 2/

In accordance with the accepted WHO definition of "programme", it can be inferred that medium-term programming consists in determining - on the basis of priorities decided at the national, regional and global levels - the objectives and targets, and the activities to be undertaken. In principle, measurable and quantifiable targets have to be defined at all levels of programming - country, regional and headquarters. Moreover, WHO makes a distinction between targets, that is to say, the quantifiable and measurable strategic goals to which its activities are directed, and output indicators, which apply exclusively to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of WHO inputs.

For the purposes of programming, WHO activities have been grouped under six principal programming areas corresponding to the subdivisions of the general

---

2/ The information contained in this paragraph is largely drawn from document PWG/3/15.

programme of work. Preparation of a medium-term programme for the years 1978-1983 has been completed or is in progress for each of these major programmes:

Complete health services development (programme presentation planned for 1979),

Disease prevention and control, which is divided into two "detailed programmes":

Communicable diseases (programme presentation in 1980),

Non-communicable diseases (programme presentation in 1979),

Promotion of environmental health (the programme is ready and will be considered by the Programme Committee of the Executive Board in November 1978),

Health manpower development (already submitted),

Promotion and development of biomedical and health services research (to be prepared),

Programme development and support (to be prepared).

In its final form, the medium-term programme will, therefore, consist of six separate documents, each comprising the global programme as such and seven annexes containing the six regional programmes and the headquarters programme.

The formulation of each programme theoretically comprises four distinct phases and normally proceeds from the general level (major programme) to the level of component programmes (subprogrammes). In fact, owing to the highly decentralized structure of the organization, this over-all approach cannot always be maintained. The four phases are:

- (a) Gathering and sifting of information,
- (b) Situational analysis,
- (c) Formulation of major programmes,
- (d) Formulation of component programmes.

Phases (a) and (b) are not restricted to a mere static analysis of the past and present situation, but also include projections on opportunities for future action in the field under consideration during the programme period (six years) and beyond (up to 20 years) to determine whether potential long-term developments are likely to influence programme formulation and execution. The aim of phase (c) is to establish an order of priorities for activities under each programme.

/...

For this purpose, the normal criteria of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness are taken into account and, in principle, the possibility of alternative programmes or activities to achieve the same objectives (including alternatives which can be carried out by other organizations) should also be taken into consideration.

The final outcome of phase (d) consists in a detailed description in the global programme (and extremely detailed accounts in the regional annexes) of the methods, approach and activities planned, together with estimates of the financial resources required, an indication of interconnexions with other programmes or activities, output indicators for each activity, and a detailed plan of action comprising each of these elements.

The above description covers the logical sequence of the phases of programme formulation but does not take account of the actual complexity of an enterprise of this nature, which involves the various levels of the organization at headquarters, in the regional offices, and in the countries themselves. Even before reaching the top policy-making level as represented by the Executive Board and its Programme Committees - such a formulation process requires the existence of a series of bodies, both legislative and "substantive" (technical):

(a) The working group on medium-term programming, which comprises the directors of the regional health services and members of the headquarters team responsible for the development of the medium-term programme, forms the link between the technical and policy-making levels. Its mandate is to work out the methodology, machinery and time-table for the execution of the WHO medium-term programme.

(b) The preparation of regional contributions to each programme is the responsibility of the regional programming committees, which are called upon to establish the appropriate machinery (generally a working group comprising the "substantive" staff of the Regional Office for the programme concerned, programming experts, regional advisers, WHO representatives in the countries concerned and experts from those countries).

It is interesting to note that country-level consultation within the context of the formulation of the regional programme is one of WHO's constant concerns (see document PWG/3/15 on this subject).

(c) The headquarters team responsible for the development of the medium-term programme, the members of which are also members of the working group on medium-term programming (see para. (a)), is responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating the development of the medium-term programming process and providing back-up for the various working groups at headquarters involved in the preparation of specific programmes. The headquarters working groups, like those in the regions, may be multidisciplinary in nature and comprise external experts, including specialists from the countries concerned.

(d) The consolidation of the contributions is carried out by the programme working groups (one for each major programme), which are made up of officials from

the sector concerned, both from headquarters and from each of the regions. The task of these working groups is to draft the medium-term programme on the basis of the contributions from the regions and from headquarters, by means of exchanges of correspondence and information in the first instance, and later, by means of a meeting held when the process is almost complete. Theoretically, these working groups could confine themselves to one plenary meeting every six years to finalize the programme. In fact, there is provision for such meetings to take place also during programme execution, particularly in the context of the preparation of the programme budgets, should a review of the programme prove necessary because of external changes or altered priorities.

(e) Finally, the medium-term programme is transmitted for a decision to the policy-making organs: the Programme Committee of the Executive Board and the regional committees. In this connexion, it should be pointed out that the Programme Committee focuses its attention on the document containing the global programme for the sector under consideration. The seven annexes (programmes of the six regions and headquarters) are not discussed or considered in detail, although they are made available for consultation in the meeting room. The principle behind this would seem to be that since each of the seven entities planned, managed and evaluated a programme, the major medium-term programme ought not to be an instrument for programme management at the global level, but should show how this major programme responds to the general policy guidance, how, through the seven medium-term programmes, it is tailored to the needs of the seven structural entities of WHO, and how these seven entities and their activities together contribute to the pursuit of the same objectives.

It is difficult - and probably premature - to say if this shuttling of the programme in the course of preparation between countries, regions and headquarters can guarantee genuine monitoring of the content by Governments, both during preparation and at the time of the final discussion by the Programme Committee. The latter does not seem to have made any significant changes to the programmes which have already been submitted to it. However, WHO seems to have encircled itself with a series of guardrails which ought to limit "parachuting" of programmes or activities which do not conform with the Governments' priorities. Since the machinery is still being run in, it will undoubtedly be difficult to evaluate its effectiveness for several years.

### III. Format of the medium-term programme

Although consideration of the process of formulating the medium-term programme does not raise too many difficulties - despite the complete lack of synchronization of the logical sequence and the actual formulation process - consideration of the format of the medium-term programme, on the other hand, poses major problems. As regulations stand at present, there is no standard format for the presentation of medium-term programmes. There are examples (HMD submitted in 1977 and PEH which will be submitted this year) which can serve as guidelines for the drafters of the other programmes, but it is understood that until the experimental, running-in period is completed (that is to say, for all practical purposes, until 1983) there will be no formal decision on the type of format to be adopted.

This lack of a format applies not only to the global programmes but to the regional contributions as well. That the latter should differ is considered normal, since their aim is to monitor the execution of regional programmes at the member-country level and for the region as a whole, and since the structure and practices of the Regional Offices also lack uniformity.

The result of this situation is that the global programmes differ from one another and the regional annexes of a single programme are considerably different in format (and in quality). It is enough to look at the tables of contents of three global programmes to realize how different they may be. For example, section III "Management considerations", which is of prime importance in the PEH programme, is totally insignificant in the draft programme on immunization and does not appear at all in the HMD programme.

A look at the table, at the end of each global programme, in which the objectives and activities planned for the programming period are given in detail, reveals equally striking differences. The PEH programme confines itself, for each target and each activity which it lists, to a very general indication of the degree of priority to be assigned to it in each region, whereas the HMD table is much more detailed and gives a breakdown, by region and by year, of the actions to be undertaken under each "activity".

Similar differences also occur in the regional annexes of one and the same programme. For example, for the PEH programme, the SEARO annex is very comprehensive and detailed (sometimes excessively so, for there is a tendency to repeat the same objectives and targets under different headings and in increasingly greater detail) and comprises a final table showing an annual breakdown of programme execution for each activity and giving for each specific objective time-limited targets (for example: by 1983, five countries will have established regulatory mechanisms for the control of environmental pollution and health hazards) and output indicators, whereas the AFRO annex is drafted in much more general terms (both in its narrative section and in the final table).



Annex IX

Extract from document EB 63/PC/WP/5/Rev.1

GLOBAL MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAMME FOR THE PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

2.2 Basic sanitary measures

2.2.1 Country-by-country and regional information on coverage of community water supply and excreta disposal services, and on the investment made during 1971-1975, was published in the World Health Statistics Report. This shows that of the 77 per cent of urban population having access to piped water supply, 57 per cent had house connexions, and the remaining 20 per cent had reasonable access to public standposts. Of the 75 per cent of urban population with reasonable sanitation facilities, 25 per cent were served by connexion to public sewers, the remaining 50 per cent possessing household systems. The backlog of work to be carried out in rural areas is quite apparent: 78 per cent of the population is without an adequate water supply, and 85 per cent is without satisfactory sanitation services.

2.2.2 There are considerable differences between regions and from country to country. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that many water supply systems are overloaded to the extent that intermittent supply is resorted to, so as to ensure water to all the metropolitan areas. In 1970, as much as 54 per cent of the population served by public piped water received it only on an intermittent flow basis. This fact assumes particular importance in view of recent epidemiological findings relating an outbreak of cholera in one Member State to an intermittent-flow community water supply. This is in contrast to most current epidemiological findings in the present cholera pandemic, which have implicated faecally contaminated foods rather than water supplies.

2.2.3 Water quality and water quality surveillance, the sanitary inspection of water supply and wastes disposal facilities, and the operation and maintenance of facilities are subjects of particular concern. The fact is that in few countries are there adequate administrative arrangements for this purpose, and health agencies do not assume their obligatory role. Also there is inadequate community involvement in operating and maintaining systems once they have been constructed. Health standards have not been established or, where they exist, are often not enforced. The trained manpower needed to supervise and inspect is in short supply in health agencies, or is relegated to seemingly more important tasks.

2.2.4 A considerable quantity of water is also "unaccounted for" (undetected leakage, unauthorized use, unmetered supply, under-registration of meters, etc.). While no firm data are available, enlightened guesses put this at between 20 per cent and 50 per cent of the treated water leaving the waterworks.

2.2.5 The information on the adequacy and accessibility of water supply and sanitation services which the organization has assembled and analysed has had a

/...

major impact in guiding policy development for this sector at both the national and international levels. The emphasis contributed by the organization is on the overriding need to provide basic sanitation services to those most seriously affected in terms of water-related disease, and to the underserved, particularly in rural areas.

2.2.6 The major constraints hampering progress in these areas are: (1) lack of priority for community water supply and sanitation in national economic development plans; (2) lack of adequate national policies, plans and programmes; (3) application of inappropriate technology; (4) absence of a viable financial policy; (5) continuing need for manpower development; (6) lack of community participation; (7) inappropriate institutional arrangements and poor management of programmes; and, last but not least, (8) lack of proper operation and maintenance of existing systems (often directly related to inadequate training of operators), including lack of surveillance of the quality of water provided to the consumer.

2.2.7 The major activities in the programme of Basic Sanitary Measures have so far been as follows:

(a) Promotion and co-operation with member countries to initiate activities in environmental sanitation and rural water supply. Programmes have been developed in many countries, and in some have been incorporated into socio-economic development plans and considered as a priority programme in environmental health. Many of these activities have been carried out jointly with UNICEF. WHO field engineers have participated in a great variety of tasks, including the preparation of specific plans and programmes and the identification of sources for funding for projects.

(b) Manpower training. A large number of professionals have been trained in sanitary engineering and in general sanitation. This investment has paid handsomely, as is evident from the number of projects implemented in countries. Several in-service training programmes for plant operators and other staff have been conducted in order to upgrade the quality of personnel operating and maintaining water supply undertakings, and ensuring water quality and the sanitary quality of waste disposal. Technical co-operation has also been provided to training institutions.

(c) Co-operation in national planning, primarily as part of the World Bank/WHO co-operative programme, which was initiated in 1971. This has been instrumental in placing water supply and sanitation in the mainstream of national development plans, and in identifying sector-wide needs and the potential roles of the different national agencies concerned as well as of WHO, UNDP, bilateral assistance organizations, and lending agencies. Sector studies have involved the assembling, analysis and evaluation of data, and projections of future requirements. The joint participation of WHO and the World Bank in the co-operative programme helps to ensure that health requirements are taken into account in the Bank's lending decisions. To date, reports on 27 sector studies have already given rise

to some 140 project proposals, many of which - despite severe constraints - are under preparation or implementation by member countries. An example is the massive rural water supply project with World Bank loan assistance in Uttar Pradesh, India.

(d) Pre-investment activities are often sponsored by potential lending agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, as well as by UNDP. As the competent intergovernmental agency for community water supply and wastes disposal, WHO is usually involved in UNDP-financed studies, either as executing agency or in an advisory capacity. The projects include institutional and manpower development, giving emphasis to the technical and managerial capabilities required to implement ongoing programmes and mobilize internal and external resources. Over the past decade co-operation has covered some 40 countries interested in undertaking pre-investment studies for urban and rural community water supply and wastes disposal facilities. These studies have been instrumental in decisions to build new water supply and sewage systems at a cost of over \$500 million, benefiting to varying degrees a total of about 60 million people.

(e) Information. Collection of data at regional and global levels on the current status of community water supply and waste water disposal facilities has in many instances provided a clear picture of the country situation for the first time.

(f) Transfer of technology and methods. Collaborating centres for water supply and wastes disposal have been established at national institutions, for the exchange of technical information. The activities of these centres are being re-evaluated in the light of the expanded needs of the International Drinking-Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, and past short-comings in resources of the centres which impaired their effectiveness. Research investigations, demonstration projects and field trials are encouraged in the search for technologies appropriate to local situations. A number of publications on basic sanitation have been issued by the organization, covering a large variety of subjects including guidance material for the sanitary surveillance of water quality, the International Standards for Drinking-Water and others.

## 2.2 Basic sanitary measures

2.2.1 Objective. To promote and co-operate with member States in the development of basic sanitary measures and to promote the active participation of other international and bilateral agencies concerned.

2.2.2 Trends. The emphasis of the organization's programme during the period from 1978 to 1983 will be on:

(a) Co-operation with member States in national planning and programming for water supply and sanitation within the framework of the International Drinking-Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, including data collection, analysis and the strengthening of managerial capacity to carry out programmes.

/...

(b) Co-operation and co-ordination at the international level with the aim of increasing awareness of, priority to and the flow of external resources for water supply and sanitation in those countries and populations that are most seriously affected;

(c) Transfer of information on appropriate technology;

(d) Co-operation and co-ordination with primary health care and other development programmes in providing water supply and sanitation to rural populations;

(e) Operation and maintenance of water supply and waste disposal systems, including the systematic hygienic surveillance of drinking-water quality.

TABIE I

Programme 5.1.2 BASIC SANITARY MEASURES

**Objective:** To promote and cooperate with Member States in the development of basic sanitary measures, in collaboration with international and bilateral agencies concerned.

Targets for period 1978-1983	Technical cooperation with Member States in carrying out the following activities	AFR	AMR	ZMR	EUR	SEAR	WPR	HQ
1. By 1983 most countries will have strengthened or expanded their capabilities to formulate and initiate the implementation of national plans for the extension of water supply and sanitation services, particularly in rural and underserved population areas, in keeping with resolutions of the WHO Governing Bodies and as agreed for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990).	1.1 Improvement of data collection; sector feasibility and design studies; and project identification for use in national socioeconomic plans.	●	●	●	◐	●	●	●
	1.2 Completion of rapid assessments of the sector and the preparation of national plans to meet the goals for the International Decade (1981-1990).	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	1.3 Developing and strengthening of managerial, organizational and technical functions of national water supply and sanitation agencies including the development of legislative aspect, criteria and standards.	◐	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐
	1.4 Developing improved operation and maintenance of facilities with emphasis on training of operators.	●	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐
	1.5 Collaborating with national, bilateral and international finance agencies in programmes for identification, development and the implementation of projects.	●	●	◐	●	●	◐	●
	1.6 Carrying out the coordinating role among United Nations and other agencies in implementing programmes in connexion with the International Decade (1981-1990).	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	●
2. Countries will develop and strengthen a network of collaborating institutions for water supply and sanitation.	2.1 Developing criteria, strategies and mechanisms for establishment of a network of collaborating institutions.	◐	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●
	2.2 Developing and implementing national and intercountry courses, projects and workshops for training water supply and sanitation workers, including the preparation of training aids and manuals.	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐

- High level of activity
- ◐ Moderate level of activity
- ◌ Low level of activity

TABLE 1 (continued)

Programme 5.1.2 (continued)

Targets for period 1978-1983	Technical cooperation with Member States in carrying out the following activities	AFR	AMR	EMR	EUR	SEAR	WPR	HQ
3. Strengthening general sanitation activities in all ministries and national agencies concerned.	2.3 Promotion of Applied research to develop appropriate technology for use in the extension of water supply and sanitation services, with emphasis on rural and underserved areas.	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
	2.4 Development of mechanisms for the collection and dissemination of information on water supply and sanitation.	●	●	◐	○	●	○	○
	3.1 Establishment of linkages with primary health care (PHC), community participation efforts and water related diseases units, especially those involved in rural and underserved areas.	●	●	○	●	◐	◐	○
	3.2 Initiating and developing the water supply and sanitation components of training programmes for PHC and community workers.	●	○	○	◐	○	◐	○
	3.3 Strengthening programmes concerned with health aspects of housing and human settlements.	○	○	○	●	○	○	○

● High level of activity

◐ Moderate level of activity

○ Low level of activity