REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION

ON THE WORK

OF ITS NINETEENTH SESSION

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1980

NOTE

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

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
CPC	Committee for Programme and Co-ordination
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
ECWA	Economic Commission for Western Asia
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOB	Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1.   The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination held three organizational meetings at United Nations Headquarters (565th to 567th meetings) on 18 and 19 April 1979.

2.   The agenda for the nineteenth session (E/AC.51/100), adopted by the Committee at its 565th meeting, is reproduced in annex I. The list of documents before the Committee is contained in annex II.

3.   At the 567th meeting, the Committee decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it should consider scheduling a resumed nineteenth session of of the Committee from 4 to 7 September 1979 for the purpose of examining agenda item 8, entitled "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981", as the documentation to be submitted under that item would not be available before that time. The Council, in decision 1979/11, approved the holding of a resumed nineteenth session of the Committee from 4 to 7 September 1979. The resumed session was subsequently rescheduled to take place from 24 to 28 September in view of the late issue of the documentation to be considered under the item.

4.   The Committee held its nineteenth session at United Nations Headquarters, the first part of which took place from 7 May to 1 June and the second part from 24 to 28 September and on 4 October 1979.

5.   At the 565th meeting, on 18 April the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Michael G. Okeyo (Kenya) Chairman. At the 571st meeting, on 8 May, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Sarbuland Khan (Pakistan) Rapporteur. The Committee elected by acclamation, at the 572nd meeting, on 9 May, Mr. Gustavo E. Figuero (Argentina) and Mr. Leif Skare (Norway) and at the 574th meeting, on 10 May 1979, Mr. Ion Goritza (Romania), Vice-Chairmen.

6.   Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3415 (XXX) of 8 December 1975 and paragraph 5 of Economic and Social Council decision 137 (ORG-76) of 15 January 1976, the Committee decided not to request summary records.

7.   The following States members of the Committee were represented:

Argentina	Norway
Belgium	Pakistan
Brazil	Romania
Burundi	Sudan
Colombia	Trinidad and Tobago
France	Uganda
Ghana	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
India	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Indonesia	United States of America
Japan	Yugoslavia
Kenya	

8.   The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers:

Algeria	German Democratic Republic
Austria	Germany, Federal Republic of
Canada	Netherlands
Egypt	Sweden
Finland	United Republic of Cameroon

9.   The following specialized agencies were represented: the ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank and IMF. IAEA was also represented.

10.   Present also at the session were the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development, the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre on Transnational corporations and other senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat, as well as representatives of ECA, ECE, ECLA, ECWA and ESCAP. Representatives of UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNEP, UNDP, WFP, WFC and IOB also attended the session.

11.   At the invitation of the Committee, Mr. Maurice Bertrand, Inspector, and Mr. Murray Chase, Executive Secretary, of the Joint Inspection Unit, participated in the Committee's discussion of the process of programme planning in the United Nations and cross-organizational programme analyses.

Control and limitation of documentation

12.   At the 615th meeting, on 4 Oct ber 1979, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee adopted a decision on the control and limitation of documentation (for the text, see chap. VIII, para. 303).

Adoption of the Committee's report

13.   The Committee considered and adopted its draft report on the first part of its nineteenth session (E/AC.51/L.97 and Add.1-10), as orally revised, at its 600th to 605th meetings, held from 30 May to 1 June 1979. The draft report on the second part of its nineteenth session (E/AC.51/L.97/Add.11-17) was adopted, as orally revised, at its 615th meeting.

CHAPTER II

THE PROCESS OF PROGRAMME PLANNING IN THE UNITED NATIONS

A. Introduction

14. The Committee considered agenda item 3, entitled "The process of programme planning in the United Nations", at its 568th to 579th, 586th and 587th meetings, from 7 to 11, 14 and 18 May 1979.

15. At its eighteenth session, the Committee agreed that it would carry out an in-depth study of the planning process at its nineteenth session, on the basis of a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the organizations of the United Nations system and a report by the Joint Inspection Unit. Further, the Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 32/197, of 20 December 1977, on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, had called for the development of co-operative and, wherever possible, joint planning of programme activities in the United Nations system. In that connexion, the Committee emphasized that United Nations planning efforts should be tailored to the needs of system-wide joint planning. 1/

16. At its eighteenth session, the Committee had before it information on the financial aspects of the proposed medium-term plan provided by the Secretary-General in response to paragraph 3 (a) of General Assembly resolution 31/93 of 14 December 1976, which it considered to be a reference document. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that chapter 3 should not be included in the medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 and decided to consider, at its nineteenth session, the application of paragraph 3 (a) of General Assembly resolution 31/93 in the context of its review of the planning process in the United Nations. 2/

17. The Economic and Social Council, in paragraph (d) of its decision 1978/84, approved the decision of the Committee to study in depth, at its nineteenth session, the process of planning and programming. The General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 33/118 of 19 December 1978, also welcomed the Committee's intention to conduct such a study.

18. In connexion with the consideration of the item, the Committee's attention was drawn to the guidelines on financial information, proposed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, to be included in future medium-term plans (A/33/345, paras. 7-11), which were endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 7 of its resolution 33/118.

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), paras. 2 and 3.

2/ Ibid., para. 55.

19. In paragraph 10 of the same resolution, the General Assembly approved the recommendations of the Committee, at its eighteenth session, on further harmonization of programming in the United Nations system, including the request to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) to submit detailed proposals for securing an overview of the objectives and plans of the organizations of the system. 3/

20. The Committee's attention was also drawn to Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/4 of 9 May 1979 on the medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983, in paragraph 1 of which the Council invited the Committee, in its proposed in-depth study of the process of programme planning in the United Nations, to pay special attention to the question of how better to ensure that the proposed medium-term plan conforms to the strategies, policies and priorities laid down by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

21. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) In-depth study on the planning process in the United Nations: report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/97 and Add.1-2);

(b) Medium-term planning process in the United Nations: report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/84); 4/

(c) Chapters 2 and 3 of Part One of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983; 5/

(d) Summary of the discussion in the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme) of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the in-depth study on the planning process in the United Nations (E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.1);

(e) The identification of output in the programme budget of the United Nations: note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/34/2);

(f) Establishment of internal work programmes and procedures for reporting on programme implementation: progress report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/34/3).

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3/ ibid., paras. 46-49.

4/ Although the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/84) had been submitted to the Committee pursuant to its specific request made at its eighteenth session (see ibid., para. 3), the date of submission of the report did not provide the Secretary-General with sufficient time, as provided for under the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (para. 4 of art. 11 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976), to make his comments available to the Committee. Accordingly, the comments made by members of the Secretariat in the course of the discussions were preliminary, representing the view of their respective offices. It was understood that the Secretary-General would in due course submit his official comments on the report.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/33/6/Rev.1).

B. General discussion

22. As a basis for the general discussion of agenda item 3, the Committee agreed, on the suggestion of the Chairman, that it would consider simultaneously the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/97 and Add.1 and 2) on the same subject.

23. In introducing the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/97 and Add.1-2), the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination pointed out that, while the concept of medium-term planning in the United Nations had been accepted in principle and the Organization had gone through four experimental cycles of preparation and implementation, a need for further improvement had become apparent in a number of aspects which were outlined in the report. The planning system suffered from several inconsistencies, the usefulness of the plan as a tool showed certain weaknesses and the choice between possible remedies or alternative solutions was not an easy one, since a hard core of problem areas, encountered from the beginning, were still present.

24. In introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/84), Inspector Maurice Bertrand indicated that he considered that report to be complementary to the report of the Secretary-General. He mentioned his broad agreement with the choices outlined by the Assistant Secretary-General, explained the rationale behind his recommendations and submitted argumentation in support of three of them, which covered aspects of the planning process not dealt with in detail in the report of the Secretary-General, namely:

(a) The orientation by objective of the programme structure;

(b) The role of the introduction to the medium-term plan;

(c) The need for an involvement of programme managers in the work on the methodology of medium-term planning.

25. Representatives of the organs, organizations and bodies within the United Nations system participated actively in the consideration of this item.

26. The general debate helped to identify the weaknesses of the planning process and to clarify several issues of principle. The discussion focused on the following major themes:

(a) The links between the legislative mandates of the various policy-making organs and the medium-term plan and the nature and status of the plan;

(b) The time horizon of the plan and its "rolling" or fixed nature;

(c) The optimum level and frequency of planning cycles and the volume of documentation which would effectively serve the purposes of the General Assembly in evolving an operationally effective and efficient system of programme planning;

(d) The actual extent of choices between alternative strategies;

(e) Harmonization of planning periods with the agencies of the system for co-ordination purposes;

(f) The nature and depth of the involvement of various levels of intergovernmental bodies in the plan formulation process;

(g) The amenability of different activities to planning and programming;

(h) The nature and meaning of the relationship between the medium-term plan and the programme budget;

(i) The purpose and nature of the introduction to the medium-term plan;

(j) Evaluation as a part of the planning process;

(k) Setting of priorities.

27. The approach to planning in the United Nations system was discussed from various angles. By its very nature, the medium-term plan should be future-oriented rather than extending existing activities and should thus have a deductive approach (see E/AC.51/97, paras. 100 to 106). It was recognized, however, that some interpretation might be required when translating certain resolutions into programmes. In that context, it was suggested that different types of resolutions might require different treatment. Legislative mandates setting broad aims and principles, such as the new international economic order or the international development strategy, required a considerable amount of interpretation, while other more specific resolutions, such as the world plans of action in the fields of population, integration of women in development and water, provided rather precise and detailed directives for action and required much less interpretation. The Committee agreed, however, that the medium-term plan should be a faithful translation of legislative mandates into programmes.

28. A further difficulty arose when sectoral or regional legislative mandates had to be made compatible between themselves and with central mandates in a coherent global medium-term plan. This was an aspect of programme formulation which encompassed programme co-ordination and required not only faithful and skilful translation by the secretariats concerned, but also the active support of Member States.

29. The Committee agreed that the status of the medium-term plan could be considered in relation to the chronological order of its formulation. The legislative mandates for the plan objectives exist a priori; the proposed medium-term plan would remain a proposal of the Secretary-General until adopted by the General Assembly in its final form, when it would become a principal policy directive. Subsequently, a review mechanism would allow the incorporation of the implications of further legislation and legislative changes in the plan.

30. The Committee noted that the present frequency of the planning exercise and the volume of the planning documents had overwhelmed everyone's ability to review thoroughly the proposed medium-term plan. If the plan were to serve its main purposes satisfactorily, it had to become a briefer and more concise document. A balance should be struck between the need of Member States for full information to judge the legitimacy, adequacy, relevance and relative priority of programmes and the need to limit the time and efforts required for the formulation, integration, review and adoption of the proposed medium-term plan. The resources invested in the planning process should be commensurate with the benefits to be derived from it. The Committee emphasized that programme planning

should be viewed as an essential feature of the responsibilities of the programme managers and not as a burdensome addition to their work.

31. The Committee was initially faced with a number of choices which, if taken at face value, seemed mutually exclusive: continuity versus flexibility; fixed-horizon versus "rolling" plan; central co-ordination versus sectoral and regional requirements; full involvement of sectoral and regional organs versus the need to limit the preparation period to an acceptable length etc. The discussion revealed that most of those choices were not between mutually exclusive alternatives, but were rather distributed along a spectrum, since in practice the solution selected could be neither all black nor all white, but a blend, the real question being that of the mix. Also, most delegations noted that the differences between both ends of the spectrum were not as great as might have appeared at the beginning. The "trade-offs" involved were often less of a technical nature than of a political one and should be judged on the basis of relevant criteria.

32. The Committee considered the question of the planning cycle in relation to the need for continuity, flexibility and co-ordination. While there was general agreement that the planning period should be lengthened to six years, different points of view were expressed on the "rolling" or fixed nature of the plan. Since ACC had recommended the adoption of a synchronized fixed-horizon six-year plan as a standard for the United Nations system and certain specialized agencies had undertaken steps to implement the recommendation, a number of delegations felt that it would be desirable for the United Nations to follow that recommendation. It was stressed by other delegations, however, that the political character and central role of the United Nations would justify a different planning cycle and that the United Nations medium-term plan could be harmonized with those of other agencies without total synchronization.

33. A full involvement of intergovernmental organs at the central, functional, regional and sectoral levels in the formulation of the medium-term plan was generally considered desirable. As pointed out, however, by the representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, there were difficulties in so far as the programme structure, the format and review procedures instituted by regional and sectoral intergovernmental organs were often different from those currently in use at the central level. There were valid reasons for these discrepancies and, as a consequence, the programme management tools used by the regional and sectoral secretariats were often their own work programmes and not the medium-term plan. The problem was further complicated by the fact that, when submitting their programme budget, the sectoral and regional secretariats had to conform to the central programme structure and transform their work programmes accordingly.

34. Involvement of these organs in the plan formulation, however, should not extend to having them formally approve their relevant portion of the medium-term plan, since only the General Assembly could approve the plan. Also, as desirable as it might be, that involvement could not justify disruption of the calendar of conferences or the holding of additional or special sessions, which might cause insuperable difficulties in the allocation of conference facilities and resources.

35. There was general agreement that some of the substantive obstacles to fuller involvement might be alleviated by lengthening the preparation cycle for the proposed medium-term plan and by greater co-ordination in the calendars of meetings

of various organs. Further, the sectoral and regional organs could consider adapting their programme structures to the central one; that should be possible, since their work programmes were already being made compatible with the programme budget structure.

36. Concerning the scope of the medium-term plan and the degree of amenability to programme planning of various types of activities, it was generally felt that most substantive activities were programmable. Several delegations felt that planning programmes within a six-year horizon, according to a standard analytical format, was mainly valid for economic and social activities. However, the point was also made that all objectives and activities of the United Nations, including the maintenance of peace and security, should be dealt with in the medium-term plan document, possibly in a differentiated and more appropriate type of narrative.

37. The distinction between continuing activities and those aimed at time-limited objectives cut across broad programme areas, such as political, legal and humanitarian on the one side and economic and social on the other. There was agreement that, again in an appropriate format, strictly defined continuing activities had to be described in the plan, especially as regards potential changes to be introduced in their substance or periodicity and for a periodic review of their continuing relevance and usefulness.

38. The Committee agreed that the medium-term plan should provide the framework for the programme budget. A number of delegations pointed out, however, that the exact nature of the link between the future medium-term plan and the programme budget needed further consideration. Furthermore, the Committee considered the financial and programme relationships between the plan and the budget.

39. A number of delegations reaffirmed their view that medium-term planning should not be conceived as a way to control the budget, but as a means to analyse the scope and spread of activities. Other delegations, however, felt that the plan should serve as the main criteria for formulating the budget. The plan should not, however, go into details, but should provide only broad indications of financial magnitude. Another delegation emphasized that, in the process of preparation of the medium-term plan, it was necessary to take into account the present level of the regular budget of the United Nations.

40. The question of the programme structure in the medium-term plan was also considered in relation to the programme budget. The Committee agreed that, while the programme structure should be kept under review, the existing format should continue for the present, as it facilitated a comparison between the medium-term plan and the budget. Also, the programme budget can be used as an instrument for ensuring the implementation of the time-limited objectives within and beyond the time horizon of the medium-term plan.

41. Towards the end of the general debate, the substance of the statements indicated that, on a number of issues, broad agreement was forming along the following lines:

(a) The 1980-1983 medium-term plan, with reviews at an appropriate time, could remain valid until the plan beginning in 1984 was in force;

(b) Future medium-term plans should be less frequent and should attempt to be shorter and more concise than heretofore;

(c) The introduction to the medium-term plan envisaged by General Assembly resolution 33/118 should become an important feature of the planning document;

(d) Medium-term plans should have a longer horizon and the preparation should be conducted over a longer period of time for a fuller involvement of functional, sectoral and regional intergovernmental bodies;

(e) Medium-term plans should be comprehensive and not staggered;

(f) The present broad programme structure of the plan was acceptable; although some changes in programme structure, including the four programme levels agreed upon by ACC, might be needed, these should be carefully considered before they were implemented.

C. Consideration of specific issues

1. Fixed or "rolling" plan and the duration of the planning period

42. There was considerable discussion in the Committee as to whether the medium-term plan should be fixed-horizon or "rolling", together with the question of the duration of the plan. Several delegations supported a proposal for a six-year plan which would be reviewed after the first two years and rolled, that is, completely reformulated after four years, again for a six-year period. It was pointed out in favour of this proposal that no logical connexion had been established between the "rolling" nature of the present plan and the difficulties of the exercise. The existing argument that a rolling plan afforded the best opportunity to accommodate change was therefore still valid. This was all the more so because, by its very nature the United Nations should not only be in a position to reflect proposals of Governments arising out of changing situations as they arise, but should also be adequately equipped to undertake crucial initiatives - a role which is unique to the United Nations. It was further argued that the goal should be the harmonization and co-ordination of planning efforts, in order to eliminate costly duplication in the United Nations system rather than mechanical synchronization of planning periods. In that connexion, it was pointed out that planning in the United Nations system ought to be a vehicle for a systematic ordering of activities and a basis for a rational allocation of resources, in order to enhance the efficiency of the system and the effectiveness of its programmes. It was unfortunate to regard planning as a means of squeezing resources out of the system.

43. Other delegations, which argued for a fixed horizon plan, advanced the following arguments in its favour:

(a) General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system requested the organizations of the United Nations system to intensify their work on the harmonization of plan cycles. ACC had invited its members to comply with that resolution and had recommended the adoption of six-year fixed-horizon plans with synchronized cycles;

(b) Synchronization of the United Nations plan cycle with those of the specialized agencies would facilitate joint planning;

(c) Sufficient flexibility to ensure that the plan incorporated new decisions of intergovernmental organs would be provided by reviewing it biennially and by bringing it up to date, since United Nations objectives did not generally change substantially over a short period of time;

(d) A six-year fixed-horizon plan would involve less frequent major planning exercises.

44. The Committee did not reach a conclusion on whether the plan should roll or be of fixed horizon. It was agreed, however, that the time horizon of the plan should be extended from four to six years and that new plans should be prepared on a less frequent basis than every two years, as at present.

2. Involvement of intergovernmental organs

45. The discussions of the Committee addressed two aspects of the involvement of intergovernmental organs in the planning process: the technical aspect of the length of time required for preparation and review, and the substantive aspect of the nature of the review required.

46. It was generally agreed by the Committee that the period of preparation, including formulation and review, should be extended from the present period of about one year to allow for greater involvement of intergovernmental organs and to allow the Secretariat more time to produce better analyses. However, the three-year preparatory period presented as one of the options in annex II of the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/97/Add.1) was generally found to be too long, especially since it would result in the plan being initially prepared too far in advance to be an up-to-date document.

47. On the other hand, it was recognized that, if intergovernmental organs at all levels were to be involved in the formulation of the plan, a two-year preparatory period would entail revisions in the present scheduling of meetings and conferences.

48. Several delegations were of the view that such rescheduling should not lead to additional meetings of the organs involved. At the same time, it was acknowledged that, initially at least, a preparatory period of somewhat more than two year might be required. There was an emerging point of view during the discussions that the preparation period for the subsequent plans should be extended to between 18 months to two years.

49. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination pointed out that the involvement of intergovernmental organs, in fact, goes far beyond simply reviewing the draft plan. The process of involvement should cover the formulation, review, implementation and evaluation stages. There was general agreement with that degree of involvement.

50. The Committee concluded that it should suffice that all sectoral and regional intergovernmental bodies should review their portions of the proposed medium-term plan during their regular cycle of meetings prior to its consideration by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

51. The discussion on this issue also addressed the special consideration to be given in the preparatory process to the introduction to the medium-term plan, to be prepared by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation (see paras. 68 to 82).

3. Possible alterations in the structure of the present medium-term plan

52. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination explained that the present four-level classification into major programme, programme, subprogramme and programme elements had been arrived at in agreement with programme agencies of the United Nations system. He said that the structure by objective proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit was not so far apart from the agreed upon theoretical programme level classification, since, for instance, a subprogramme was therein defined as a cluster of programme elements aimed at one single objective. The United Nations organ responsible for co-ordination within the system should weigh the advantages and drawbacks of modifying unilaterally the agreed classification system. It was further suggested that the formulation of a few programmes on an experimental basis, which had been requested from the Secretariat for the twentieth session of the Committee, should provide an opportunity to test the need for and usefulness of changes in the programme structure. Rather than deciding on the number of programme levels in the abstract, he continued, it might be wiser to review the results of the experimentation, possibly including different approaches to the issue, and then make an informed decision.

53. Regarding the detail of information and the possibility for varying its density, he pointed out that this question concerned both the managerial and legislative levels. In this context three levels could be distinguished: (a) operational level, (b) sectoral or regional level and (c) central level. In line with the above classification, it might be possible to vary the density of information according to the kinds of decisions to which the various organs and managers had to address themselves. He also suggested that the density of information could vary in relation to the time horizon.

54. In answer to questions on what methods could be employed to identify new activities in the medium-term plan, Inspector Bertrand suggested that the proposed distinction between continuing and time-limited activities might help in the identification. If the distinction were accepted, new activities would appear when either the time-limit of the objective was reached or the term of the plan had come to an end, or when a continuing activity was terminated. It might be possible, if it were considered useful, to group new activities in separate chapters of the plan, thus identifying separately that part of the programme which was continuing, a procedure which could further facilitate the review of the plan.

55. Some delegations stressed the need for identifying completed and obsolete activities in the plan. It was noted, however, that the medium-term plan was of necessity forward looking and related to the future. It would therefore be more appropriate if the planning process itself facilitated the identification and elimination of completed and obsolete activities. One delegation suggested that the administrative units should describe the 10 per cent of subprogramme activity to which they attached the least priority.

4. Use of the medium-term plan as a tool for co-ordination within the United Nations system, including the use of joint planning operations

56. The Committee reaffirmed that the medium-term plan should be used as a tool for co-ordination and harmonization within the United Nations system. A number of delegations stated that a longer preparation cycle, and variations in plan narrative laying greater emphasis on objectives and strategies would facilitate co-ordination. One delegation suggested that the narrative under "co-ordination" should analyse the delimitation of areas of common concern between major programmes and the actual allocation of responsibilities between bodies.

57. In the initial formulation of a new plan, the enlarged schedule should provide ample room for interagency consultations. It was also pointed out that, when the joint planning technique was widely used in all areas of common concern within the system, the co-ordination procedure based on the medium-term formulation process could be made lighter and less time-consuming. Some delegations suggested that bringing up to date operations undertaken within a tighter calendar might hinder a co-ordination procedure.

5. Use of time-limited objectives including the question of programmability of activities

58. It was pointed out that, while all objectives should and could be clearly defined and as specifically as possible, irrespective of whether a plan covered a period of six or four years, each objective should lend itself to evaluation at the end of the period, whether it had been reached yet or not. However, unless one was very specific and detailed regarding objectives at the programme element level, it might be very difficult to determine the exact time frame within which systematic evaluation could be performed.

59. In this context, the point was made that the idea of time-limited objectives would only gain meaning if programme managers were really made responsible for the performance of their programmes, whether the medium-term plan was designed along programme and/or subprogramme levels. It was important, therefore, that in the framework of internal evaluation, specific time-limited objectives be defined to serve as a standard against which the progress achieved at the end of the relevant time period could be assessed.

60. The Committee agreed that its future deliberations on the subject would benefit from the experimental formulation of programmes to be carried out by the Secretariat in accordance with the above proposals so that it could study and assess fully all implications of basing the future plans on time-limited objectives.

61. Answering questions raised by a few delegations, Inspector Bertrand suggested that there should be a clear relationship between the administrative structure and the programme structure by objectives, a problem that up to now had not been solved. Furthermore, while the present plan as submitted included very few time-limited objectives, an experiment on three programmes had been carried out. Those experiments had shown that the application of time-limited objectives to the existing type of subprogrammes was nearly impossible, but that the problem could

easily be solved by adopting a subprogramme structure of the type proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit, as had been demonstrated in the case of the Population Division.

62. The Committee had doubts about the proposal to classify activities as programmable or non-programmable. Some delegations felt that the concept was a relative one and expressed reservations regarding its introduction in the methodology of planning.

6. Evaluation as a step in the planning and programming cycle, and the use of achievement indicators

63. The Committee generally agreed that the application of achievement indicators and the process of evaluation were very closely related, since any meaningful evaluation would have to be based on achievement indicators, which should be built into the programme design. Furthermore, evaluation was seen as an ongoing, continuous process in parallel with programme implementation, but this internal and self-correcting process had to be matched by an external check and control. A major concern expressed by a number of delegations related to the selection of the point within the planning cycle when evaluation exercises should be carried out. While many agreed that any evaluation exercise should at the same time aim at and facilitate the redrawing and redefining of the programme, the opinion that evaluation should not be exclusively connected with the redrafting of programmes was also expressed.

64. The view was expressed that evaluation should take place at the end of each plan period so as to provide a general overview and comparison between what had been programmed and what had actually been achieved. Therefore, in the case of a six-year plan, rolling after four years, evaluation should take place at the end of four years, which would coincide with the review of a new plan. Several delegations pointed out that, attractive as the idea might be, the volume of work entailed by a thorough evaluation of all programmes simultaneously every four years made it impossible; furthermore evaluation should be a continuing process.

65. A further point discussed related to the relationship of internal to external evaluation. It was recalled that the Committee had already made its choice on the methods of evaluation and basically relied on a combination of internal evaluation carried out on a number of programmes each year, complemented by external evaluation by the Joint Inspection Unit and the competent intergovernmental organs.

7. Relationship between the medium-term plan and the programme budget

66. The Committee reiterated that the medium-term plan should and can be an essential instrument for the preparation of the programme budget. It should be precise and concise in its presentation. In order to be fully effective as the basis or framework for the preparation of the proposed budget, it should contain time-limited, quantitatively measurable objectives, an indication of the strategy to be followed to achieve the objectives, estimates of completion time for different phases of work and achievement indicators.

67. The importance of having a similar or comparable programme structure in the two documents was pointed out. While in the medium-term plan it should be enough to indicate the kind of activity that would be carried out under each subprogramme, the budget document would describe all the activities of the subprogramme.

8. Setting of priorities and introduction to the medium-term plan

68. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was invited by the Committee to present his views on the planning process with particular reference to the role and nature of the introduction to the medium-term plan. At the 586th meeting, the Director-General made a statement (see E/AC.51/101), in which he expressed the view that the role that might be played by the introduction can be identified in the perspective of the process of priority setting, policy guidance and decision making. This process should commence at the beginning of the planning preparation period, provide thereafter suitable mechanisms for policy interaction between Member States and the Secretariat, and conclude with an authoritative pronouncement by the General Assembly. The preparations might begin with a mechanism for pre-planning consultations, which would provide ways and means for Member States to indicate their views on the general policy guidelines which should determine the preparation of the plan and possibly give an indication of the broad priorities to be established in the light of intergovernmental legislation.

69. He indicated that such a mechanism for pre-planning consultations should ensure that (a) a fully representative number of Member States take part in the consultations; (b) the Secretariat should play an appropriate role in initiating and organizing these consultations; (c) the results of the consultations should be such as to provide the Secretary-General with fairly clear guidelines from Member States, especially if major shifts in priorities were envisaged; and (d) allowance be made for some flexibility in case the course of events required some revision of the general guidelines thus established.

70. A possible way of meeting these conditions would be through a debate in the Economic and Social Council and/or the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination conducted on the basis of a statement made on behalf of the Secretary-General. Another device would be the issue of a pre-planning document. He pointed out that, for a variety of reasons, the pre-planning phase should seek an optimal balance between formal pronouncement and retaining its preliminary character.

71. The second stage of the process would be the internal Secretariat procedure for the circulation of the instructions for the preparation of the plan. These instructions would not simply deal with the mechanical process of putting the plan together, but would also contain, on the basis of the views expressed by Member States through the pre-planning consultations, instructions on the strategies to be followed in preparing the plan.

72. The third stage of the process would be the formulation of the introduction to the proposed plan. In accordance with views of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, this introductory statement would give an overview of the main concerns of the entire Organization as expressed in the plan and explain what the

Organization intended to do during the period covered by the plan. It should concentrate in particular on the question of medium-term strategies for the United Nations.

73. The fourth and final stage of the process would be the consideration by the central intergovernmental bodies of the proposed medium-term plan in the light of the strategies outlined in the introduction. At the end of the process, therefore, the proposed plan would become the agreed medium-term plan for the United Nations and would thus, in the language of General Assembly resolution 31/93, "constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations".

74. As regards the components of the introduction, the Director-General expressed himself to be in broad agreement with the approach suggested by Inspector Bertrand in paragraph 105 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/84). However, he felt that his approach to the examination and definition of the criteria to be applied by Member States in establishing trends and guidelines would need to be made with careful regard to the policy-making prerogatives of central intergovernmental bodies; similarly, some flexibility would be required in regard to the level of specificity and detail to be included in the indications regarding major programme areas. On the question of the organizational coverage of the introduction, he thought that it would be realistic at this stage to focus the introduction on the United Nations plan, rather than on the establishment of priorities covering the system as a whole. The introduction must, however, place the United Nations plan within the context of the system as a whole and should deal with areas that might be amenable to co-operative or joint planning, so that the plan might serve also as a useful tool of co-ordination.

75. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Director-General for appearing before the Committee to present his views, which constituted a valuable input to the discussion.

76. A number of delegations expressed their support for the idea of a pre-planning document. They indicated the political nature of this document and its usefulness in providing a tool for interaction between the Governments and the Secretariat. Some delegations further suggested that this document could be discussed in the General Assembly where the widest representation exists.

77. Other delegations, however, indicated that the more informal approach of an oral presentation was preferred. They expressed the view that anything overly formal would restrict the possibilities of adapting to changes that might occur over the rather long preparatory period envisaged for consultations.

78. Some delegations further pointed out that, if observers and agencies were present, the Economic and Social Council would be an appropriate forum for the oral presentation by the Director-General. Several delegations indicated their view that the mechanics of the presentation should be studied further as no decision needed to be made during the current session of the Committee.

79. On the question of the scope of the introduction, the Committee recalled that, in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/118, the introduction to the medium-term plan "should constitute an analysis of the activities of the Organization and the strategy for their implementaion and be prepared by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation under the authority of the Secretary-General". The Committee,

recalling General Assembly resolution 32/197, emphasized the need for the introduction to highlight objectives and policy orientations of the United Nations system and to indicate trends as deduced from the legislative mandates which reflect the priorities set by the intergovernmental organs. The Committee expressed its desire to see the United Nations move firmly in this direction.

80. A number of delegations indicated the great importance they attach to the role of the introduction to the medium-term plan in setting out the priorities established by legislative mandates. It was indicated, however, that in this respect the introduction should focus on general trends.

81. It was generally agreed that the priorities which should be reflected in the plan must be based on legislation adopted by intergovernmental organs. Throughout the process described by the Director-General, therefore, the task of the Secretariat should be to translate those decisions in such a manner as to arrive at a coherent interpretation of them for the consideration of the appropriate intergovernmental reviewing bodies. In this context, stress was laid on the need to take full account of priorities established at the regional level.

82. The Committee agreed that the issues involved should be explored further before a carefully considered decision was made, given its importance in the planning process.

83. Pursuant to a decision taken by the Committee, the Rapporteur submitted an informal working paper containing draft conclusions and recommendations, which were considered and adopted, as orally revised, during the discussion. The conclusions and recommendations appear in chapter VIII, paragraphs 304 to 306 below.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION

A. Introduction

84. The Committee considered agenda item 4, entitled "Evaluation", at its
583rd and 588th to 593rd meetings, on 16 and 21 to 23 May 1979.

85. At its eighteenth session, the Committee had decided to evaluate, at its
nineteenth session, the programme on transnational corporations. 6/

86. In that connexion, the Committee's attention was drawn to General Assembly
resolution 33/118 of 19 December 1978, part of which read as follows:

    "The General Assembly,

        ...

    "5. Approves the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint
    Inspection Unit on programming and evaluation 7/ in the light of the
    conclusions of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination 8/ and the
    observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary
    Questions, 9/ as well as the recommendations of the Committee for Programme
    and Co-ordination concerning the study by the Secretary-General on the
    feasibility of establishing time-limited objectives for subprogrammes. 10/

    "6. Approves the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint
    Inspection Unit on evaluation in the United Nations system, 11/ as commented
    on by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination 12/ and the Committee
    for Programme and Co-ordination, 8/ and on evaluation of the programme on
    public administration and finance, 13/ as commented on by the Secretary-
    General 14/ and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination." 15/

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement
No. 38 (A/33/38), para. 4.

7/ A/33/226.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement
No. 38 (A/33/38), paras. 6-12.

9/ A/33/226/Add.2 and Corr.1.

10/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement
No. 38 (A/33/38), para. 10.

11/ A/33/225.

12/ A/33/225/Add.1.

13/ A/33/227.

14/ A/33/227/Add.1.

15/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement
No. 38 (A/33/38), paras. 15-20.

87. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Programme evaluation for the period 1976-1978 – Transnational corporations" (E/AC.51/98 and Add.1). 16/

88. At the time the Committee began its consideration of the item, the Commission on Transnational Corporations was considering the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (E/C.10/45) and the progress report of the Secretariat on the information system on transnational corporations (E/C.10/47). Accordingly, the Committee decided to request its Chairman to co-ordinate informally, with the Chairman of the Commission on Transnational Corporations, the work of the Committee and of the Commission so that each body could be informed of the other's views. Both Chairmen met on several occasions and the Committee was informed by the Chairman of the discussions held by the Commission.

89. In introducing the report, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination explained to the Committee the methodology and procedures used. In doing so, he pointed out that the general approach and methodology was based on that approved by the Committee at its eighteenth session. There were certain new elements in this study, including the extensive use of questionnaires and the identification of key issues within the subprogrammes. He also informed the Committee of the new internal evaluation unit that had been established in the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, as part of the new organizational structure emanating from the recommendations on restructuring. A new central feature in the evaluation machinery, established in connexion with this initial exercise, was the creation of a high-level Steering Committee, whose responsibility was to set up the over-all guidelines for the present evaluation and, based on this experience, for future evaluations of this kind. 17/

90. The Assistant Secretary-General also indicated that, while it was the intention of such evaluations to cover the whole programme under review, including those aspects covered by other units of the United Nations, this had not proved feasible in the present case owing to the lateness in establishing the evaluation unit within his Office. It was expected that in future it would be possible to include in the evaluation report an analysis of all the activities of the United Nations relevant to the programme under evaluation. In each of the substantive chapters of the report, conclusions and recommendations were set out for the

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16/ Document E/AC.51/98/Add.2 was officially withdrawn by the Secretariat as it could be issued only in English at the time the Committee considered the item. Further, the note by the Secretariat on the activities of the United Nations system relating to the programme on transnational corporations (E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.2) was also withdrawn for the same reason.

17/ The high-level Steering Committee is chaired by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the membership consists of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration, Finance and Management, the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination and the head of the programme under evaluation, in this case, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations.

Committee's consideration. In concluding his introductory remarks, the Assistant Secretary-General pointed out that no evaluation could be meaningful without the full involvement of the programme being evaluated; the Centre had co-operated fully throughout the process. Although there were naturally some differences of opinion, he was certain that these differences would be frankly discussed during the Committee's review of the item and that the conclusions reached would be faithfully implemented by the Centre.

91. The Executive Director of the Centre, in his remarks, welcomed the evaluation exercise and assured the Committee that the recommendations made by the Committee would be followed up expeditiously. He indicated that he was pleased to note that, although he did not fully share some of the conclusions and recommendations, the report on the whole gave a rather positive assessment of the Centre's activities. In the area of research, he considered it difficult to establish priorities among the three areas mandated. Regarding the subprogramme on the formulation of a code of conduct, he considered it premature to move into the implementation stage as the code would only be completed within a year's time. He disagreed with the conclusions drawn on the subprogramme on comprehensive information systems. In conclusion, he expressed his support for the recommendation on the widening of the mandate of the joint units.

B. General comments

92. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the high quality of the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/98 and Add.1) and commended the Secretariat for its honesty in this undertaking. One delegation, however, considered that in some places the language of the report was too apologetic on evident shortcomings in programme execution and that this was to be avoided in future evaluation exercises. Several delegations indicated that the evaluation methodology and machinery now developed was useful and should be applied in future evaluation exercises. In discussing the appropriateness of evaluating a programme that had only become operational within the past three years, the Committee concluded that there were good reasons for evaluating new as well as old programmes. Whereas new programmes had not been able to produce outputs whose impact could be assessed, as should be the case with older programmes, an evaluation exercise could serve to direct and determine the orientation of the programme at an early stage in its development. Delegations also emphasized that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should continue to address itself to evaluation procedures as well as substance and that it was important to assure that the evaluation unit was provided with the proper expertise to undertake this important work.

C. Organization of the programme

93. One delegation raised the question of the definition of a transnational corporation, as it was not contained in the documents before the Committee. The Centre responded that there was no unanimously agreed definition of a transnational corporation at the present time. However, as a pragmatic approach, the main criteria used by the Centre in its documentation on the subject included: size, ownership, structure, number of countries of operation, number of foreign affiliates and foreign content.

94. The Committee noted that the programme formulation and review process for this programme was being conducted in a way in which the planning and programme budget instruments were not being appropriately utilized. In this case, the process by which the Commission on Transnational Corporations established the Centre's programme of work did not involve reference to the medium-term plan and budget documents. The Committee recognized that the Commission naturally had an important role to play in establishing goals and priorities for the programme· but it was also essential that this not be done in isolation from the central planning and budgeting processes of the United Nations. Furthermore, several delegations specifically noted that the Commission had not established priorities among the subprogrammes other than the code of conduct.

95. One possible solution suggested was that the Commission should review and comment on the objectives and strategies contained in the draft medium-term plan and, as appropriate, in the programme narrative contained in the programme budget proposals, and should recommend what priority should be accorded to the subprogrammes. The Commission should also comment on the future programme elements of the programme budget proposals, with special attention to those elements accorded the highest and lowest priority. These comments would then be transmitted to the General Assembly in accordance with the usual planning or programming process for programme budget proposals.

D. Regional activities

96. In the discussion of the subprogramme on regional activities, most delegations approved recommendation (b) in paragraph 242 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/98/Add.1). 18/ However, with respect to recommendation (a), the Committee requested further information on the precise nature of the present mandate of the joint units and the activities to be undertaken in the event the Committee agreed to the recommendation for the widening of the mandate of the joint units, including the possible resource implications involved. Other delegations agreed with the recommendation contained in the report concerning the widening of the mandate of the joint units.

97. In response, the Secretariat provided the members of the Committee with an informal paper showing current activities which were being undertaken by the joint units and the proposed activities planned in the event the mandates are widened.

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18/ Paragraph 242 of E/AC.51/98/Add.1 read as follows:

"242. Bearing in mind that the regional joint units are already undertaking activities beyond those of providing information inputs and other support and liaison functions to the Centre itself, consideration should be given to:

"(a) Providing the regional joint units with a wider mandate to enable them to carry out at the regional level those parts of the over-all programme which can best be implemented or supervised at this level.

"(b) Clarifying the division of responsibilities between the Centre and the joint units in the medium-term plan and programme budgets by specifying a programme of work for each of the joint units at the subprogramme and programme element levels with clear statements of output, expected completion dates and resource requirements."

The Secretariat also informed the Committee that, in the event that the Committee recommended an expanded mandate, a statement of financial implications would be submitted which would almost certainly include a request for significant additional resources over and above those provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981. It was pointed out, however, that these financial implications should be considered in the light of possible reallocation of resources deriving from the implementation of other recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report accepted by the Committee.

98. The Committee agreed that the division of responsibilities between the Centre and the joint units should be clarified in the medium-term plan and the programme budget as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. In that regard, some delegations further suggested that, in order to avoid any conflicts arising from differing tasks assigned to the joint units by the Commission and the regional commissions, the latter, when assigning special activities to the joint units, should submit them in their programme budgets together with a clear listing of priorities.

99. On the question of the activities of the joint units, the Committee noted that some had gone beyond their mandates as presently constituted. Those past activities which had been on a limited scale were not called into question. One delegation pointed out that it would be premature to expand the mandates of the joint units, since the Committee was given utterly insufficient information on the activities carried out by those units at the present time. Debate centred on whether or not and to what extent the revision of those mandates was necessary for the future.

100. Some delegations believed that the Commission on Transnational Corporations should widen the mandates of the joint units by ratifying the existing state of affairs. That ratification should include a clear delineation of the respective roles of the Centre and the joint units and emphasize the necessity to remain within currently approved expenditure levels. It was stressed by those delegations that the joint units should not become independent regional centres on transnational corporations. Their role should remain one of support for the global aims of the Centre and any work given to them by the regional commissions should neither duplicate nor substitute for work which should rightly be carried out by the Centre itself.

101. Other delegations favoured increasing the mandates of the joint units. They argued that, if the joint units were not empowered to perform matters related to transnational corporations in their respective regional commissions, the regional commissions would be forced to resort to other mechanisms, which would result in costly duplication of effort. Co-ordination would thus be seriously hampered. It was further argued that the joint units had de facto carried out some tasks assigned to them by their regional commissions. This they had done without detailed work programmes with fixed deadlines for every output. The expansion of their mandates would both regularize their position and also make it possible to establish fixed deadlines within well defined mandates for their activities. Those delegations made it clear that this growth in the joint units could not be at the expense of the Centre. They stressed that increased mandates for the units should establish beyond any doubt the central position of the Centre in all matters related to transnational corporations in the United Nations system, leaving the units only as focal points of such matters in their respective regions.

E. Policy analysis (research)

102. In its discussion on research being carried out by the Centre for Transnational Corporations and its joint units, many members agreed with the conclusions and recommendations set out in chapter VI of the evaluation report (E/AC.51/98/Add.1) and summarized in chapter II of the main report (E/AC.51/98). However, other members felt that the analysis was not based on data sufficient for unequivocal support of its conclusions. In particular, the analysis of the responses to questionnaires, as presented in the report, was not sufficiently comprehensive, since no responses had yet been received from Governments. 19/ Other Committee members felt that it may be premature to make long-range judgements on the value of different parts of the research programme at this early stage in its development. However, several members strongly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report, since they were quite consistent with the findings in documents submitted to the Commission on Transnational Corporations (E/C.10/47, para. 31; E/C.10/49, para. 21; and E/C.10/50, para. 1), that is, that Governments gave higher priority to research efforts which (a) strengthened the negotiating capacity of Governments of host countries, in particular the developing countries, in their dealings with transnational corporations, and (b) assisted in securing effective international arrangements concerning the operation of transnational corporations designed to promote their contributions to national development goals and world economic growth while controlling their negative effects. Others pointed out that although (a) and (b) had hitherto received too little emphasis and should receive more, it was not possible to say that they should become the principal guidelines for the selection of future research projects. One delegation indicated that it might not be appropriate for the Committee to indicate research priorities, since this function more appropriately belonged to the Commission on Transnational Corporations.

F. Comprehensive information 20/

103. Chapter VII of the evaluation report (E/AC.51/98/Add.1) presented a somewhat critical analysis of the Centre's subprogramme on the comprehensive information system. The analysis, conclusions and recommendations in chapter VII and the relevant section of chapter II in the main report (E/AC.51/98) led to an extensive discussion on this item. While all members of the Committee felt that the information on transnational corporations was extremely important and useful, particularly to developing countries, there were differing views on the nature of the information that should be collected and disseminated by the Centre and on the usefulness of different elements in the existing subprogramme.

19/ In connexion with the questionnaires, it was pointed out by the Assistant Secretary-General that, although the responses received at the time the report was prepared were limited, additional responses received after completion of the report corroborated the earlier findings.

20/ At the request of the Committee, the representative of the Centre provided a slide presentation on the development of the Centre's comprehensive information system. The presentation was well prepared and was appreciated by members of the Committee.

104. In the discussion on this subprogramme, the Committee focused on three main themes. First, the utility or effectiveness of the subprogramme, including the prospective effectiveness of the computerized part; second, its compatibility with other information systems in the United Nations system; and third, the importance of obtaining user feedback and comments. A major conclusion of this discussion was that the main thrust of the Centre's work in the development of the information system did not appear to be fully consonant with the expressed needs of Governments. Although the largest proportion of resources and staff time was allocated to the computerized part of the system, the output from those elements did not appear to be commensurate with its cost and as useful to Governments as outputs from other non-computerized elements of the system. Some delegations pointed out that this information will be useful when the code of conduct enters into force, when it will be needed to verify the implementation of the code of conduct by the transnational corporations. The Committee's review suggested that a reallocation of the resources of this subprogramme might be advisable to permit the Centre to respond more quickly to requests from Governments in those areas to which they had given the highest priority. Those areas included (a) information on policies, laws and regulations affecting transnational corporations, (b) contracts and agreements between transnational corporations and Governments of host countries and (c) in-depth analyses of specific corporate or industrial areas.

105. It was acknowledged in the evaluation report that parts of the comprehensive information system were still in the developmental stage and for this reason the evaluation could not be based purely on the results or impact of the system's output. With this in mind, the evaluation also focused, where appropriate, on the design of the system itself and drew conclusions on this aspect of the system's development (E/AC.51/98/Add.1, paras. 88-94). In reviewing these sections of the report, a number of delegations agreed that insufficient attention had been given to building into the system means of obtaining and utilizing user-feedback in a continuous process. The need for careful cost analyses was pointed out. The Committee reiterated that Member States should be the main users of the information system and that it should be developed keeping in view their expressed needs. Moreover, much greater effort should be given to establishing mechanisms to obtain their views as to the effectiveness of the programme's output as well as to determine their own needs on a priority basis.

106. With regard to the system's compatibility with other information systems in the United Nations family, there was a difference of view as to existing compatibility and to the additional costs that would be involved in making the system compatible with those used by the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. The Committee regretted that the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems had not been consulted at the outset with a view to ensuring, inter alia, that this system would be compatible with the others. The Committee noted that the system was fully compatible only with that of the United Nations Library; nevertheless, it had already produced very useful information on other information systems as well as on bibliographic and documentary sources. One delegation expressed doubts on the need for compatibility if other technical considerations were to be satisfied.

107. The attention of the Committee was drawn to other documentation which had been presented to the Commission on Transnational Corporations and which presented

a more favourable view of the comprehensive information system. 21/ Nevertheless, it was pointed out by some Committee members that the same documentation supported the major conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report regarding the priority needs of Governments, particularly those in developing regions, for information on contracts and agreements and laws and regulations which could assist them in negotiating with transnational corporations, and not general corporate information generated by the computerized part of the system.

108. At the request of the Committee, information was provided on resources allocated to the subprogramme as a whole and on elements within the subprogramme. It was noted by the Committee that the subprogramme absorbed the largest proportion of the Centre's resources (40 per cent in the 1978-1979 budget, 46 per cent in the proposed 1980-1981 budget). Within the subprogramme, the computerized elements, particularly that part dealing with corporate profiles, received a much larger proportion than other programme elements. It was noted, however, that many of these elements were interdependent. The information on corporate profiles was basic to other programme elements also.

109. The Committee generally accepted the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report (E/AC.51/98/Add.1, paras. 88 to 94). It acknowledged the unique character of the system as the only one in the United Nations dealing exclusively with transnational corporations and emphasized the importance of preserving the programme's over-all effectiveness. The Committee felt that the need for a possible reallocation of resources and redeployment was indicated. However, the importance and usefulness of the subprogramme to Member States, particularly the developing countries, should not be underemphasized and the resources allocated among the various components of the subprogrammes should therefore be commensurate with the tasks assigned to the Centre by the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

110. In response to a number of queries with respect to how many State trading corporations were listed in the corporate profile file and their geographic distribution, the representative of the Centre pointed out that this question should be answered at various levels. At the level of general information, the Centre collected information on various companies from sources such as press clippings, company directories and commercial data banks. Those sources did not usually differentiate between private enterprises and State enterprises and thus almost all State enterprises were covered as well as private enterprises. He said that at the analytical level, the Centre processed such information in connexion with specific studies on particular industries or issues. In that connexion, the Centre was aware of the fact that the Commission on Transnational Corporations had not decided on a precise definition of transnational corporations. Opinions of Governments differed as to whether State enterprises fell within the scope of transnational corporations. While it would not be appropriate for the Centre to prejudge the issue of definition, he continued, the Centre had included relevant information on State enterprises in industry analyses for comparative purposes or for consideration as possible alternatives to private corporations. Similarly, in studies on issues such as that on the question of definition, some State enterprises had also been included to illustrate the implications of various criteria in drawing the boundary line.

21/ See particularly the "Progress report on the information system on transnational corporations" (E/C.10/47).

G.   Formulation of a code of conduct

111. Chapter VIII of the evaluation report (E/AC.51/98/Add.1) provided the Committee with an analysis of the Centre's work in assisting in the formulation of a code of conduct and other international agreements and arrangements. This subprogramme had been given the highest priority by the Commission on Transnational Corporations. The evaluation report had concluded that, in carrying out this subprogramme, the Centre had met all of the requirements of the intergovernmental working groups on the formulation of a code of conduct and on international agreements on illicit payments, as had the Commission itself.

112. In considering the recommendations proposed, the Committee felt that it might be premature for the Centre to begin to shift the emphasis from the formulation of a code of conduct to its implementation and monitoring. However, the Committee agreed that the latter aspect would soon become the more important one and considered that, at an appropriate time, careful preparatory work should be started on ways and means to implement the code of conduct. Similar views were expressed with regard to the promotion of the understanding and acceptance of the code of conduct through wider public information activities. On the question of the distribution system for documentation related to the code of conduct, however, the Committee fully agreed that the system should be revised to include methodology for assessing the quality and quantity of the documentation as well as the methodology and ways to achieve the over-all objective of the code of conduct.

H.   Subprogramme on advisory services

113. In the discussion on this item, the Committee in general concurred with the recommendations contained in the evaluation report (E/AC.51/98, para. 17 and E/AC.51/98/Add.1, para. 180). Several delegations expressed serious concern over a statement made by the Executive Director of the Centre when he referred to the establishment of the Centre as executing agency for the United Nations Development Programme. According to those delegations, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was established as the sole executing body for the United Nations as an executing agency. One delegation drew the attention of the Committee to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, in which the role of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was highlighted. Concern was expressed by other delegations that the establishment of the Centre as an executing agency would infringe on the authority of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and violated the guidelines established by the General Assembly. It was further pointed out that, in response to Assembly resolution 32/197, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had been established "to manage the United Nations regular programme of technical co-operation and implement UNDP projects and projects financed from extrabudgetary resources for which the United Nations is an executing agency" (ST/SGB/162 of 23 March 1978). Consequently, the Committee wished to be assured that the practical arrangements at present being negotiated between the Centre and UNDP should in no way infringe on the mandate of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

114. The representative of the Centre responded by pointing out that the arrangements currently being worked out would not lead to the Centre's becoming a separate executing agency for UNDP. He stated that modalities were being defined with a view to ensuring the prompt and effective execution of UNDP projects

on matters related to transnational corporations which are addressed to the United
Nations in its capacity as executing agency. The representative of the Centre
pointed out that the Director-General for Development and International Economic
Co-operation, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the
Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development, and the
Executive Director of the Centre on Transnational Corporations had agreed that the
interests of the United Nations as an executing agency would be best served if UNDP
projects related to transnational corporations were forwarded directly to the Centre
on Transnational Corporations for action, while keeping the Department of Technical
Co-operation for Development fully informed at all times. He added that the
specific procedures were being worked out between the Centre and the Department
which would ensure that the Department's over-all responsibilities for technical
co-operation activities in the United Nations would be ensured.

115. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations appear in chapter VIII,
paragraphs 307 to 323 below.

CHAPTER IV

CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL PROGRAMME ANALYSES

A. Introduction

116. The Committee considered agenda item 5, entitled "Cross-organizational programme analyses", at its 580th to 585th and 598th meetings, on 15 to 17 and 25 May 1979.

117. At its eighteenth session, the Committee had decided to carry out at its nineteenth session cross-organizational analyses of the energy programme and resume its cross-organizational analyses of information systems in the United Nations system of organizations. 22/

118. In its resolution 33/118 of 19 December 1978, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation should be associated in the preparation of the cross-organizational programme analyses, and that aspects that had policy implications should be prepared under his guidance. 23/

119. In its resolution 33/142 B, entitled "Administrative and budgetary co-ordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency", the General Assembly transmitted the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the administrative co-ordination of electronic data processing and information systems (A/33/304) to the Committee, bearing in mind the decision of the Committee to consider in depth the question of information systems in the United Nations at its nineteenth session. 24/

120. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

22/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), para. 5. For the recommendations of the Committee at its eighteenth session on information systems within the United Nations system, see paragraphs 29 to 41 of the Committee's report. A summary of the discussion on the subject by the Committee is contained in paragraphs 238-256 of that report. At that session, the Committee decided to pursue, at its nineteenth session, the cross-organizational analyses of information systems within the United Nations system, notably in the light of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

23/ Ibid., para. 28.

24/ Ibid., para. 41.

(a) Administrative co-ordination of electronic data processing and information systems: report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/304);

(b) Report on the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems, prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/153);

(c) Cross-organizational analysis of the energy programmes of the United Nations system: report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1); 25/

(d) Co-ordination of information systems within the United Nations system: report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (E/AC.51/102); 26/

(e) Supplementary information on cost of information systems: note by the Secretariat (E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.3).

B. Information systems in the United Nations
system of organizations

121. The Committee concentrated its discussion on the following main themes: role and mandate of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems (IOB), including the identification of information needs, the co-ordination and harmonization of information systems, and the costing of information systems activities; the question of strengthening the mandate of IOB; membership of and participation in IOB; work programme of IOB, and the Interagency Project Register (CORE).

122. Representatives of the organs, organizations and bodies within the United Nations system participated actively in the consideration of this item. At the invitation of the Committee, the Executive Secretary of the Joint Inspection Unit also participated in the meetings on this subject.

1. Role of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems

123. The Committee agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that IOB should be charged, under the direction of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) with identifying common needs for information among the members of the United Nations system and the intergovernmental bodies concerned. It should play a more

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25/ The addendum to that report was officially withdrawn by the Secretariat as the document could be issued only in English at the time the Committee took up consideration of the item. The addendum (E/AC.51/99/Add.1) was subsequently issued in all languages for the resumed session of the Committee.

26/ the report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination contains also the comments of the Committee on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/153).

active role in initiating measures to ensure the co-ordinated development of the information systems and services of the organs, organizations and bodies within the United Nations system so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, to promote the presentation of system-wide consolidated information and to keep costs to the minimum.

124. The Committee considered that the reaction of ACC, as indicated in its report (E/AC.51/102), to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit was overly negative. A number of delegations stated that the reaction of ACC raised doubts about the willingness of the agencies to co-operate in making their information systems compatible. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination and the representatives of the specialized agencies, however, expressed the willingness of ACC to co-operate in the co-ordination of the information systems of interorganizational interest, despite the technical difficulties they had encountered.

2. Identification of information needs

125. The Committee recognized the importance of identifying information needs, both of intergovernmental bodies and of organizations of the United Nations system. It noted that, under the restructured ACC machinery, it would be the task of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions to define cross-organizational requirements for information. The Board would only advise the consultative committees on whether and how the cross-organizational requirements which they had identified called for information system efforts. The Committee urged that representation on IOB should be strengthened to enable it to play a much more active role than heretofore.

126. A number of delegations suggested that all organizations of the system should refer proposals for the development of their information systems to IOB for identifying system-wide implications and to suggest harmonization, where necessary. The view was expressed, however, that this would swamp IOB and that it might be necessary to forward to IOB only those proposals which had co-ordination implications. Some delegations questioned whether IOB, as presently constituted, would be able to perform this task effectively. One delegation reserved its position on that question.

127. The Committee noted that ACC had proposed that, in order to clarify intergovernmental requirements for cross-organizational information, consideration should be given to a mechanism for associating governmental and secretariat expertise. The Committee was informed that the ACC proposal was that there should be ad hoc consultations between intergovernmental experts and the experts of organizations in an attempt to clarify the specific requirements of intergovernmental bodies and to discuss ways and means of meeting such requirements without incurring inordinate costs.

128. The Committee felt that the proposal by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination deserved further consideration and suggested that this could be discussed at the forthcoming Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in July 1979, at Geneva.

3. Co-ordination and harmonization of information systems

129. The Committee reiterated the need for co-ordination and harmonization of information systems. The Committee noted that progress in this regard was extremely limited and agreed that IOB had not been forceful enough in the past in carrying out its responsibilities in this respect.

130. The Committee considered that organizations should consult IOB well in advance of their plans for the development of all systems of interorganizational interest. In addition, organizations should refer to IOB, on a regular basis for comment and advice, systems which could be used by other organizations for similar purposes or which would be of interest to other organizations. Feasibility studies should, in all cases, precede the development of new information systems and IOB should be consulted on them. The Committee questioned the statement by ACC that it was not feasible for IOB to collect from organizations the details of new systems specifications, feasibility studies or plans for amendments and revisions of systems and that, within its present resources, IOB was not in a position to advise on the technical development of systems.

131. The Committee noted that there was a difference between the Joint Inspection Unit and ACC on the question of whether IOB should have the power, under over-all control of ACC, to initiate co-ordination measures. It was generally felt that IOB should have this right, although some members of the Committee doubted whether it was feasible to harmonize existing information systems. They felt that emphasis should rather be placed on the harmonization of future information systems as they are developed. It was recognized that the provision of the basic blocks for harmonization was an important element of the work of IOB.

132. The Committee was informed that a joint IOB-Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions programme had been set up for the exchange of information in the administrative area and that a joint IOB/UNISIST programme would be concerned with certain aspects of substantive systems co-ordination.

4. Costs of information systems

133. The Committee expressed regret that, in spite of repeated requests, it still did not have before it adequate information on the costs of organizations' information systems activities. In accordance with a request at its eighteenth session, the Committee had before it a note by the Secretariat (E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.3) which contained information on costs of information systems. In the absence of a standardized system for estimating costs, however, that paper had not been prepared on the basis of common criteria.

134. The Committee notes that the Joint Inspection Unit had attempted to gather information on costs to organizations of developing and operating their present information systems, but the task had proved impossible partly owing to lack of full co-operation from some of the organizations and partly owing to the fact that common standards for costing of information systems had not yet been developed. Some organizations had been unable to give even approximate figures, while others could give estimated costs for only part of their work.

135. The Committee accordingly considered that the development of a standardized system for costing information systems should be a priority for IOB. It noted with satisfaction that the establishment of standards and guidelines for costing information systems would be one of the medium-term objectives of IOB. It strongly supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit that more attention should be given to preparing cost estimates for information systems. In future, when the cost of participating in any major information development programme is calculated, both IOB costs and costs of the organizations involved in any project should be quoted.

5. Question of strengthening mandate of IOB

136. The Committee noted that ACC had decided not to change the terms of reference of IOB at the present time, but had reoriented IOB towards increased support for economic and social programmes.

137. The Committee, while approving this new orientation, expressed regret that ACC had not gone further in strengthening the mandate of IOB, as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit. Attention was drawn to the distinction between the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit on the policy role to be played by IOB as compared to the view of ACC that it should carry out a technical advisory function. The Committee was informed that the newly constituted Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions would provide the policy link in this regard.

138. The Committee noted that ACC intended to formalize its decisions relating to the functions of IOB in due course through revised terms of reference and urged that ACC should bear in mind the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit at that time.

139. The Committee did not support the Joint Inspection Unit recommendation that IOB should have, in addition to its regular budget, a special-purpose budget financed by voluntary contributions. It agreed with ACC that the individual governing bodies would need to consider what budgetary arrangements would be appropriate to support interorganizational requirements.

6. Membership and participation in IOB

140. The Committee reaffirmed the view expressed at its eighteenth session that it was essential that IOB should be fully representative of all the organizations

of the system if it were to carry out its role effectively. It expressed regret that, in spite of its recommendation at its eighteenth session, several organizations had still not become members of IOB. The Committee accordingly reiterated its recommendation that all members of ACC should become members of IOB. It also reiterated the importance it attached to the active participation of all organizations in IOB through commitments by organizations to support the activities of IOB.

141. With regard to the level of representation at IOB, the Committee concurred with the Joint Inspection Unit that this should be at the level of a senior official concerned with programme and policy-making and questioned why ACC had not found it necessary to make a specific decision on this point.

7. Work programme of IOB

142. Most members of the Committee agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that, although the 1978 work programme had been modest, useful work had been accomplished. The Committee felt that in the new IOB programme of work proposed in the ACC report there was too much emphasis on the preparation of guidelines, directories, etc., and not enough on the development and implementation of co-ordinated information systems. It was further noted that the work programme did not make provision for examination by IOB of proposals for new information systems.

8. Interagency project register (CORE)

143. The Committee expressed considerable concern that the attempt to implement CORE/1 in 14 organizations in 1978 had not met with success. The Committee recalled that the mandate for CORE/1 had been clearly stated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1889 (LVII) of 31 July 1974. Questions were raised as to why so few organizations had been able to participate in the CORE/1 project or to supply details of the costs entailed in participating in and providing inputs to CORE/2.

144. The Committee noted that the cost of CORE/1 would be $150,000; questions, however, were raised about the basis of the broad cost estimate provided by IOB, which indicated that the implementation of CORE/2 would cost about $10 million.

145. Representatives of several organizations pointed out the difficulties involved for their organizations in coping with demands connected with CORE in the light of their other commitments and the workload called for by their governing bodies.

146. The Committee recommended that ACC should arrange without delay for the implementation of CORE/1 by 1 June 1980.

147. As far as CORE/2 was concerned, the Committee raised questions over the very considerable delays that have occurred, in spite of the fact that this had initially been described as a fairly limited exercise. It also felt that insufficient information had been provided to it on what progress had been achieved.

148. The Committee noted that the Joint Inspection Unit had recommended that a pilot study of CORE/2 information relating to the least developed countries should be undertaken. The Committee discussed this proposal at some length and questioned why ACC had not reacted definitively to it. The Committee requested that a paper be prepared for consideration at its twentieth session in 1980, which would set forth the input requirements for CORE/2, describe the type of output that could be obtained and establish a time frame for its inauguration.

149. The Committee also urged that a further attempt be made to obtain from organizations their estimated costs of implementing CORE/2 under various alternatives, as well as their views on its utility for their own programme and planning purposes and for the information of their individual governing bodies. In this connexion, the representative of the United Nations Development Programme stated that UNDP was currently systematizing its institutional memory concerning its own activities through the Information Systems Improvement Programme (ISIP). This system was being designed so that it could also provide the requisite information for CORE/1 and CORE/2. With the experience acquired in this work, UNDP felt that it could make a useful contribution to CORE/2 as a lead organization working in co-operation with IOB, subject to review by the Governing Council when it considered the ISIP programme at its next session.

150. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations appear in chapter VIII, paragraphs 324 to 333 below.

C. Energy programmes

151. The Committee considered the item on the cross-organizational analysis of the energy programmes of the United Nations system at its 598th meeting, on 25 May 1979. It had before it a report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1). The addendum to that report was officially withdrawn by the Secretariat, as the document could be issued only in English at the time the Committee considered the item. 27/

152. In introducing the report, the representative of the Secretariat indicated that, within the time available for its preparation, every effort had been made to follow the guidelines issued by the Committee at its eighteenth session, as summarized in paragraph 2 of the report. In accordance with the wishes of the Committee, the report had followed the same basic format which had been utilized in a similar report on water resources prepared for the United Nations Water Conference in 1977 (E/CONF.70/CBP.4 and Add.1-2).

153. He further explained the methodological approach taken in the report and its limitations, particularly with respect to the need for further in-depth analysis of some apparent gaps or overlaps. Although follow-up inquiries had been possible in some cases, it had not been possible to do so in all; thus, few firm conclusions could be reached at this time. He further indicated that, in the area of new and renewable sources of energy, the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy as well as the work of the Conference itself would, undoubtedly, provide a pragmatic framework for increased co-ordination. Ideally, a cross-organizational analysis would provide the means for evaluating the activities of the system in relation to the needs of Member States; in the absence of any authoritative statement of these needs, the present report could not discuss the programmes in that perspective.

154. In a preliminary general discussion of the report, several delegations expressed the view that the report constituted a very good inventory of the activities of the system in the field of energy, which had not been available before, but did not provide the in-depth analysis which they had expected. They agreed, nevertheless, that it constituted a useful first step for a further in-depth analysis. Some delegations suggested that such an analysis could be undertaken in the next two or three years.

155. Some delegations felt that a subsequent analysis could be carried out in the area of conventional resources, as co-ordination in the field of new and renewable sources of energy would, undoubtedly, be covered within the preparatory work for the Conference. Others felt that the distinction between conventional and new and renewable sources was artificial and that, in view of the importance of the subject, it would be necessary to have an in-depth analysis of energy as a whole.

156. Some delegations, referring to the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, stressed the importance of effective co-ordination of substantive inputs. In that respect, they pointed out that the Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport, as the lead unit for those sectors within the United Nations, should play a full part in the preparation for the Conference.

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27/ The addendum (E/AC.51/99/Add.1) was subsequently issued in all languages for the resumed session of the Committee.

157. The Committee agreed that a further in-depth analysis should be undertaken at a future date and that it should provide guidelines for this purpose. One delegation expressed the view that such an evaluation should be undertaken in relation to the capability of programmes to provide policy-making organs with the tools for studying the problems involved in the transition from an oil-based energy mix to one based on more permanent and renewable sources of energy. That delegation felt that the analysis should measure the ability of programmes to intensify activities concerning the collection and interpretation of national energy statistics for the improvement of forecasts of future world supplies and economic growth; to encourage and monitor research and development of new technologies; to assist developing countries in all aspects of energy development and planning; and to collect and disseminate information on technologies of interest to developing countries.

158. A number of delegations indicated that they were unable to participate in the debate in view of the fact that the addendum to the report, which they considered to be essential for a thorough discussion, was not available in the official working languages. Accordingly, the Committee decided to postpone further discussion of this item until its resumed session in September so that all of its members would have access to the full documentation.

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159. Owing to constraints of time, however, the Committee was unable to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the cross-organizational analysis of the energy programmes of the United Nations system (E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1 and Add.1) at its resumed session. The Committee decided to conduct that analysis in 1980, on the understanding that the Secretariat would provide supplementary information to that provided in the above-mentioned document.

CHAPTER V

REPORTS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION AND JOINT MEETINGS
OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION

A. Introduction

160. The Committee considered agenda item 6, entitled "Reports of the Administrative
Committee on Co-ordination and Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and
Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination", at its 595th to
597th meetings, on 24 and 25 May 1979.

161. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following
documents:

(a) Annual report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for
     1978/79 (E/1979/34);

(b) Progress achieved in the field of nutrition under the new institutional
     arrangements: report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
     (E/1979/43);

(c) Interagency action in rural development: report of the Administrative
     Committee on Co-ordination (E/1979/44);

(d) Letter dated 23 April 1979 from the Secretary-General to the Chairman of
     the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (E/AC.51/103);

(e) Costs of public information activities in the United Nations system:
     note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/104);

(f) Activities of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions
     (Operational activities): note by the Secretariat (E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.7).

162. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination,
introducing the annual report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
(E/1979/34), recalled that, as part of its decisions relating to restructuring, ACC
had agreed on new reporting procedures under which it would prepare separate reports
on issues of a system-wide scope in connexion with individual agenda items rather
than present a single report as in the past. In addition, there would be a brief
annual statement providing an overview of the work carried out by the ACC machinery
over the year and an indication of the major developments in respect of interagency
co-ordination and co-operation, which would provide a basis for a dialogue with
intergovernmental bodies on policy issues of mutual concern. Since ACC had dealt
with more general policy issues in some detail in the two reports which it had
submitted to the Economic and Social Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution
32/197 on restructuring, the present annual report (E/1979/34) was limited to a very
brief summary of the results of meetings of ACC and its subsidiary bodies held over
the past few months. The Assistant Secretary-General noted that this was the first

time that the work actually carried out by ACC had been identified, since past reports had covered the work of ACC in a more general way, not differentiating between what was done by ACC itself and what was done by its subsidiaries. It was hoped that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination would consider this to be a valuable innovation.

163. The Committee concentrated its discussion on the following themes: the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme), dealing with programme and related matters; the question of the resident co-ordinator of the United Nations system's operational activities for development; questions related to the restructured interagency machinery; the study of the feasibility of establishing a single administrative tribunal; the financial situation of the Development Forum; the report of ACC on interagency action in rural development (E/1979/44); the report of ACC on progress achieved in the field of nutrition under the new institutional arrangements (E/1979/43) and the report of the Secretary-General on the costs of public information programmes in the United Nations system (E/AC.51/104). In addition, a statement was made on behalf of a number of delegations concerning the report on the policy review of operational activities called for in General Assembly resolution 33/201 of 29 January 1979. While fully agreeing to the need to give a prominent place in the report to the question of resources available for operational activities, those delegations considered that the report should also concentrate on questions relating to the capacity, effectiveness and structures of the system, pursuant to the relevant recommendations contained in the annex to Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977. The implementation of the provisions of the resolution with regard to coherence and integration of activities at the country level should also be covered. One delegation requested information on the activities to be carried out by ACC in conformity with the Action Plan of the United Nations Water Conference. 28/

164. A number of delegations raised questions about the relevance of the topics chosen for future meetings of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities). They questioned whether those topics would ensure the responsiveness of the system to national policies and priorities and to the new international economic order. One delegation suggested a number of topics which were of more direct concern to Governments. In that regard, reference was made to the Consensus of 1970 29/ and to the new dimensions. 30/ Several delegations expressed particular concern at the extremely slow progress in giving operational content to those concepts during the past nine years. The Committee agreed that operational activities should be considered within the ambit of its role of ensuring the implementation of intergovernmental mandates. In that context, the Committee agreed that the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on a comprehensive policy review of operational activities, which was to be submitted to the General Assembly in 1980, should also be considered by the Committee at its twentieth session.

28/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.II.A.12, chap. I.

29/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 3A (E/4884/Rev.1), chap. V, para. 94, annex.

30/ See ibid., Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 2A (E/5703/Rev.1), para. 94.

165. The Committee stressed that the existing differences between technical and economic co-operation among developing countries, as established by the General Assembly and relevant United Nations conferences, should be properly reflected in the activities of ACC related to technical co-operation among developing countries and economic co-operation among developing countries.

B. Questions relating to the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme)

166. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, introducing the section of the ACC report dealing with the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme), stated that the Committee had made a good start with its work, concentrating on three questions: the planning process (which had already been reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination under the relevant agenda item), joint planning and cross-organizational programme analyses.

167. In connexion with joint planning, the Consultative Committee had agreed on preliminary measures to be taken in order to lay the basis for a "general framework" for "identifying areas amenable to joint programming and planning". It had considered that joint planning exercises should be undertaken selectively and should be confined to a small number of well-defined areas. One possibility for identifying such areas was provided by General Assembly decisions on subjects for intensified international attention, such as world conferences.

168. With regard to cross-organizational programme analyses, the Committee had devoted considerable attention to methodology and agreed on procedures for the development of a conceptual framework for their preparation. Such analyses made it possible to look beyond the individual activities of Organizations and gain a picture of activities being carried out in specific areas where several organizations were interfacing their work. For the 1980 cross-organizational programme analysis, the Consultative Committee had been aware that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had provisionally selected the areas of rural development and statistics; however, since the Joint Inspection Unit was currently evaluating the United Nations Statistical Office and a report on co-ordination of activities was to be submitted to the Statistical Commission in 1981, the Consultative Committee had felt that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination might wish to select an alternative area. It had suggested that such an alternative could be either marine affairs or youth activities. As topics for cross-organizational programme analyses in 1981, the Consultative Committee had suggested public administration and new and renewable sources of energy.

169. The Committee noted the conclusions of the Consultative Committee on the questions of joint planning and cross-organizational programme analyses. It agreed that a clear definition of the scope of each cross-organizational analysis was desirable. However, the lack of such definitions should not prevent cross-organizational programme analyses from being undertaken in areas where there was interfacing of activities and therefore benefit to be gained from such analyses. Some delegations pointed out that the scope of the analyses should not be narrowed. Too narrow a scope, they felt, would restrict the usefulness such analyses may have for Governments.

170. The Committee agreed that, in view of the importance attached by Governments to youth activities and the need to promote co-operation in that area, as well as the General Assembly's decision in principle to proclaim an international youth year, it would be useful to undertake a cross-organizational programme analysis in this area in 1980, instead of in the area of statistics, in view of the fact that the Joint Inspection Unit was currently evaluating the United Nations Statistical Office. Some delegations raised doubts regarding interagency co-ordination of youth activities and progress of work in this area. The Committee also reaffirmed its previous proposal for the selection of rural development for cross-organizational programme analyses in 1980.

171. Bearing in mind the heavy work-load during the limited time available at its twentieth session, the Committee agreed that the area for a cross-organizational programme analysis for 1980 should be rural development, on the understanding that the Secretariat should also prepare the necessary documentation for a cross-organizational programme analysis of youth activities, which the Committee would carry out at an appropriate time. 31/

172. In response to the concern expressed by some delegations as to whether the Secretariat, in 1981, would be able to provide the necessary documentation for a cross-organizational analysis on new and renewable sources of energy when it would be engaged in producing documentation for a world conference on the same topic later in the same year, the Assistant Secretary-General assured the Committee that, in so far as the requisite intergovernmental guidance for the extended analysis on new and renewable resources had been formulated in time, the Secretariat would be capable of producing the analysis requested.

C. Question of the resident co-ordinator of the United Nations
system's operational activities for development

173. The Committee considered a number of questions related to the status and functions of resident co-ordinators in the light, inter alia, of the text of the standard letter of designation for these officials (E/1979/34, annex). Doubts were expressed as to whether the following concerns were fully reflected in the letter of designation approved by ACC. In this connexion, members of the Committee attached great importance to a strict and full implementation of the relevant provisions of paragraph 34 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197. In the same context, the Committee stressed that the co-ordination of operational activities was the responsibility of the national authorities concerned, and noted that individual agencies had constitutional responsibilities vis-à-vis national authorities which should be fully respected. Within that framework, it was important that the resident co-ordinator should be enabled to play effectively his role of ensuring that the needs and priorities of countries were fully reflected in the operational programmes carried out by the system. In order to play this role, the resident co-ordinator should be a highly qualified team leader and should be able to command the confidence of both the Government and the organizations of the system. Members of the Committee also considered it important that the responsibilities of the resident co-ordinator should be strictly confined to operational activities and that the resident co-ordinator should not therefore function as, or have the status of, a "United Nations ambassador". Concern was expressed that those posts should be filled by persons with expertise in multilateral assistance programmes whose professional qualifications for the

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31/ At its resumed session, the Committee decided to carry out a cross-organizational analysis of youth activities in 1981.

responsibility of those positions were beyond dispute. It was urged that the designation of resident co-ordinators should be made in consultation with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and with the agreement of the Governments of host countries. A question was raised as to whether the designation of resident co-ordinators would lead to a new layer of bureaucracy or a new round of appointments above the present UNDP resident representative. The Committee felt that the designation of the resident co-ordinator should not have the effect of adding a new rung to the bureaucratic ladder. Some delegations also indicated their understanding that the designation of a single official would not imply that local governments should only communicate with other officials representing agencies in the field through the resident co-ordinator.

174. The representative of the United Nations Secretariat stated that the United Nations fully shared the importance attached by the Committee to the strict and full implementation in the near future of paragraph 34 of General Assembly resolution 32/197. It was not the understanding of ACC that the resident co-ordinator was intended by Member States to be a "United Nations ambassador" or to have responsibilities outside of operational activities for development. The resident co-ordinator would have the following basic responsibilities: over-all co-ordination and team leadership at the country level in respect of operational activities for development and encouragement of multidisciplinary dimensions in sectoral development programmes. It was not intended that the resident co-ordinators would constitute a separate set of new appointments. As ACC had informed the Council, the resident representatives of UNDP would normally be designated as the resident co-ordinators. In countries where there was no resident representative but there were agency representatives, the matter would need to be handled on a case-by-case basis. As regards procedures, it was envisaged that the Administrator of UNDP would propose to the Secretary-General the names of resident representatives whom he would wish to be designated as resident co-ordinators and that the proposal for the designation of a resident co-ordinator would be discussed informally with the Government concerned before a designation was formally made. The role of the Director-General in ensuring that the designation of the single official commanded the confidence of the system as a whole and in providing orientation for the application of appropriate procedures for the selection of that official and for the general functioning of the relevant interorganization arrangements at the country level had been clearly spelt out in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/33/410/Rev.1, para. 30). Practical arrangements for the exercise of the function of resident co-ordinator were in the process of being worked out and full information would be provided on those arrangements as soon as they had been agreed.

D. Questions relating to the functioning
of the restructured machinery

175. Questions were raised regarding the co-ordination of the environmental aspects of water activities following the merger of the former Environment Co-ordination Board and ACC, as part of the new arrangements pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/197. It was explained that, in accordance with those arrangements, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened meetings of designated officials of the organizations for consultations on interagency questions relating to the environment, particularly thematic joint programming, and that such questions included activities relating to water. As regards other water activities, a proposal for an interagency water board made by ACC, pursuant to the recommendations

of the United Nations Water Conference, had been postponed by the Committee on
Natural Resources at its third special session, held recently. Co-ordination
of water activities would meanwhile come within the framework of the Consultative
Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme).

E. Question of a single administrative tribunal

176. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, pursuant to General Assembly
resolution 33/119, ACC was undertaking a study of the feasibility of establishing
a single administrative tribunal for the common system. Inquiries were made as to
the progress that had been made in carrying out this study.

177. The Committee was informed that immediately after the adoption of the General
Assembly resolution, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations had circulated a
discussion paper, including the tentative draft statute of a single administrative
tribunal. A joint working group of the Consultative Committee on Administrative
Questions and the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations had met
at Geneva in February to frame a programme of work and to make arrangements for the
collection and analysis of the necessary information. A consultant had been
appointed to co-ordinate the preparation of documentation and to draft a detailed
discussion paper on the requirements to be met for the more effective administration
of justice and alternative ways of meeting them. That paper was expected to be
submitted to the working group for consideration at the beginning of summer and the
working group would report subsequently to the Consultative Committee on
Administrative Questions (Personnel). At the same time, arrangements had been made
for a meeting of legal advisers of the organizations of the United Nations system to
consider the matter, including the conclusions of the working group, probably in
September 1979. The question was to be considered by ACC itself in October 1979,
following which it would report to the General Assembly.

F. The financial situation of the Development Forum

178. The Committee noted that ACC had recommended that the organizations of the
United Nations system should make such financial contributions to the general edition
of the Development Forum as their respective policy and financial resources
permitted, in order to solve the liquidity problem of the periodical and to guarantee
its continuation during 1979.

179. Some delegations raised questions about this action and requested clarifications,
referring to what seemed to be becoming a growing practice of financing through
regular budgets activities originally funded from extrabudgetary sources. Attention
was also drawn to the very considerable funds now spent on public information
activities. Some delegations asked whether budgetary recommendations actually fell
within the competence of ACC at all.

180. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination pointed
out that the recommendation of ACC had been addressed to the short-term liquidity
problem and that members of ACC had not made specific commitments, but had asked the
Joint United Nations Information Committee to study the matter. He added that this
action had been taken based on the view that this was a very valuable publication,
which covered important economic and social development issues.

G. Interagency action in rural development

181. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), introducing the report of ACC on interagency action in rural development (E/1979/44), stated that progress had been made in three areas of activity: joint action at the country level; monitoring and evaluation; and harmonization of programme proposals. It was expected that the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, to be held in July 1979, would, inter alia, suggest specific lines of further interagency action.

182. The Committee noted that the interagency exercise in rural development had been under way for five years, and expressed concern as to whether the amount of concrete progress at the country level justified the long effort. It was felt by some members of the Committee that the work which had been done was rather abstract and theoretical and did not concentrate sufficiently on the pressing concerns of hunger, malnutrition and poverty in rural areas. The Committee was informed that the emphasis throughout the exercise was on action at the country level, but that it was difficult to assess the actual impact of the interagency role in the country-level exercises, which were largely the responsibility of Governments concerned. However, particularly in two countries, where activities were most advanced, definite results had been achieved in helping Governments and in evaluating critically ongoing activities, in planning major national reforms which would lead to fundamental changes in the patterns of investment and in allocating public resources towards rural development objectives. Questions were raised as to how multi-agency projects in rural development could be formulated and approached. It was explained that exercises to date had shown that such projects could be successfully formulated jointly by the Government and the resident representative, supported by the concerned agencies, with decisions on approach and the choice of executing agencies, in the light of their competence and mandates, being taken by the Governments and UNDP. Several members of the Committee expressed a concern with the definition of poverty groups arrived at in the exercise, and one member expressed the hope that this was not designed to develop a "basic needs" approach. The representative of the United Nations Secretariat noted that definition of fundamental terms was considered necessary as a prerequisite for system-wide monitoring and evaluation. The working definition of "poverty-group" had been elaborated simply as a criterion for classifying activities, and efforts had been made to ensure that both social and economic variables were included and that the definition was not rigid.

183. In response to a query as to why the medium-term plans had not been utilized in the effort to harmonize programmes involved in rural development, it was explained that not all organizations had medium-term plans, and that the existing plans were not sufficiently comparable or detailed to provide a good basis for such an exercise. Attention was called to the progress made in this area, particularly the elaboration by the organizations for the first time of joint objectives in a multisectoral field.

184. The Committee requested that further progress in the interagency effort, especially on the effects of the exercise at the country level, would be reported in the context of the cross-sectoral analysis of rural development to be presented to the Committee at its twentieth session. It was noted that this analysis would be based on the classification of programme budget proposals in terms of the eight categories of activity agreed upon and using the criterion of intended beneficiary to determine the programme elements which should be included in the classification.

H. Progress achieved in the field of nutrition under the new administrative arrangements

1.5. The Committee had before it a report on progress achieved in the field of nutrition under the new institutional arrangements (E/1979/43), which had been called for by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2107 (LXIII). Members of the Committee inquired about several matters covered in the report, including the role of the Advisory Group on Nutrition vis-à-vis that of the Sub-Committee, and the purpose of the Resource Identification Facility. It was explained that the Advisory Group, which consists of individual experts, provides a general scientific input on which many of the Sub-Committee's conclusions were based. It was further clarified that the Resource Identification Facility, which was not computer assisted, was intended to provide general information on funding sources, and that the Secretary of the Sub-Committee acted as the focal point for this exercise.

186. The Committee agreed with ACC that an increase in food production alone would not solve the nutrition problem, but that increased production needed to be associated with a more equitable distribution of benefits and the alleviation of disease. One delegation noted that the issue of sufficient nourishment could not be divorced from that of the increase in population, a factor tending to negate progress in food production and distribution. That delegation therefore observed that a proper consideration of nutrition should include the problem of family planning versus population growth. Another delegation referred to the importance of associating increased food production with improving the means of distribution of that production. Another delegation emphasized that the problem of the elimination of hunger could be solved only in the context of far-reaching progressive social and economic changes in the interests of the broad masses of the people.

I. Costs of public information activities

187. The Committee had before it a report by the Secretary-General on the costs of public information programmes in the United Nations system (E/AC.51/104). Members of the Committee raised a number of questions and pointed out various lacunae and inaccuracies in the report. Clarification was provided on a number of points, including questions connected with regular budget and extrabudgetary funds, which were not clear from the presentation in the report. The Committee asked that the report should be revised in the light of its comments and submitted to it at its twentieth session. The suggestion was also made that the report should be referred to the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities.

J. Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

188. The Committee considered the suggestions made by ACC (E/AC.51/103) to consider at the forthcoming Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and ACC: (a) Programme planning in the United Nations system; and (b) Evaluation in the United Nations system.

189. While the Committee welcomed the suggestions made by ACC, it felt that, in view of its consideration of information systems and the role of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems during its current session, which was begun at its eighteenth session, it would be most useful to exchange views on the subject with ACC.

190. The Committee therefore decided to recommend to ACC the following two items for the provisional agenda for the forthcoming Joint Meetings of the two Committees: (a) Programme planning in the United Nations system; (b) Information systems and the role of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems.

191. The Committee felt that the question of evaluation could be discussed as an element of programme planning.

192. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations are given in chapter VIII, paragraphs 334 to 339 below.

CHAPTER VI

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981

193. The Committee considered agenda item 8, entitled "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981", at its 606th to 614th meetings, from 24 to 28 September 1979.

194. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 32/ and the report of the Secretary-General on the identification of activities that have been completed, are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective (A/C.5/34/4 and Corr.1). An informal paper, containing supplementary information on subprogrammes and programme elements within programmes of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, was also made available to the Committee.

195. At an informal organizational meeting, on 20 September, the Committee agreed to hold first a general debate on the proposed programme budget as a whole, including the methodology used, the co-operation within the Secretariat and the role of the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination. The Committee also agreed that, owing to the constraints of time, it would consider only sections 6, 7, 9, 15, 17, 19 and 21 to 23 of the proposed programme budget, and the transport and water programmes of the regional commissions.

196. Owing to constraints of time, the Committee could only review section 6 (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) and the transport and water programmes of the regional commissions which are in sections 10 to 14.

197. In view of the fact that the Secretary-General was to submit a revised programme budget for section 7 (Department of Technical Co-operation for Development), the Committee held only a brief discussion on this section, as contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981.

198. Some delegations made brief comments on other sections of the proposed programme budget: section 22 (Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), section 23 (Human rights) and section 28 (Administration, Management and General Services: Security Section at Geneva).

199. In his introductory statement, the Director of the Budget Division described the structure and presentation of the proposed programme budget for the 1980-1981 biennium, as well as the underlying basic concepts and methodology. Although these were largely the same as those used in the current biennium, several significant refinements were introduced with regard to the interpretation of the concept of "non-recurrent activities", the description of proposed activities and related resources, requirements in absolute amounts for each subprogramme and an identification, where possible, of the highest and the lowest priority

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32/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/34/6, vol. I and Errata, and vol. II, and Add.1).

programme elements, representing in each case 10 per cent of the resources requested. A detailed analysis of the methodology and the refinements introduced could be found in the foreword and the addendum to the proposed programme budget.

200. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 33/118 of 19 December 1978, the proposed programme budget had been prepared within the framework of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983. Although the General Assembly did not specifically endorse the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the relative real growth rates for the major programmes covered by the plan, as contained in paragraph 53 (a) of its report on the work of its eighteenth session, 33/ they remained the only available intergovernmental guidelines for resource allocation during the forthcoming biennium, and had been applied with a measure of discernment, as recommended by the Committee. The proposed programme budget provided for a real growth rate of 0.8 per cent reflecting a determined policy of budgetary restraint, in accordance with the committment made by the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its thirty-third session. Considerable efforts had been made to formulate the proposed budget within this limit.

201. With regard to activities which had been completed, were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, such information was provided, where possible, in the proposed budget and in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/34/4 and Corr.1), which had been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 33/204.

202. The Committee deplored in the strongest terms the failure of the Secretariat to provide the necessary documentation on time, thereby forcing the Committee to schedule a resumed session and then again forcing a rescheduling of the resumed session at a time when the General Assembly was in session. The Committee could not accept such a serious failure on the part of the Secretariat, which had prevented the Committee from effectively carrying out its mandate. The untimely submission of the proposed programme budget had also forced the Committee to meet at a time when the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had already concluded its work on the proposed programme budget, without the benefit of the views of the Committee. The Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should direct the Secretariat to take urgent and corrective measures to prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate and unacceptable conditions of work for intergovernmental bodies. The Committee reiterated that all documentation should be submitted on time and in accordance with the rules of procedure, that is, six weeks in advance of the meetings concerned.

203. With regard to the identification of activities that had been completed, were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, it was generally felt that the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/34/4 and Corr.1) was clearly inadequate. It was stressed that the identification of such activities should be prepared by the Secretariat where the necessary programme information which would support intergovernmental programme review was available.

204. Some delegations found that the format of the programme budget represented an improvement over previous ones, particularly with regard to its references to

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33/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38).

the medium-term plan. It was noted, however, that there was still considerable room for improvement, particularly in connexion with an identification of priorities, and that many programmes did not provide indications of time-limits for completion of activities. It was also noted that there was no attempt to identify and analyse relationships among programme elements planned in the various organizational entities within the Secretariat, that performance indicators were lacking and that there should be an attempt to obtain the opinion of users to assert the usefulness of studies prepared by the Secretariat.

205. A number of delegations stressed the need to maintain close collaboration between all organs and agencies of the United Nations system, such as the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in order to avoid duplication of work.

206. Some delegations expressed satisfaction with the efforts made by the Secretary-General to restrict the growth rate of the budget and stated that they should be continued. However, other representatives pointed out that financial constraints should not impair the programmes of interest to the developing countries and should be carried out by the redeployment of resources on the basis of the priorities set.

207. The Committee raised a number of questions regarding the method of calculating the real growth rate. It was pointed out by some representatives that methods other than those used by the Secretariat could also be studied.

208. The Committee criticized the proposed programme budget because of the deficiencies in programmatic content and analysis and indicated that, in the future, the process of programme budget preparation should ensure that full account was taken of this criticism, in order to enable intergovernmental bodies to carry out a programme review of that process. Some delegations suggested that the Secretariat submit to the Committee, at its next session, a report setting out the precise procedure for the preparation and review of the proposed programme budget; such a procedure could be examined and approved by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

209. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination informed the Committee that, as a result of its recommendations, a number of studies had been made. The Secretariat had collected information at the programme element level through the programme element information sheets, which had been received from most of the units of the Secretariat, including the regional commissions. Programme analysis had been carried out by a few units on the basis of the information provided by those sheets.

210. He recognized, however, that more internal programme analysis would be required in the future and that his Office had not actually begun the procedure of monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. As for the questions raised by some delegations concerning the process followed by the relevant intergovernmental organs in setting priorities, he responded by stating that it was the responsibility of the Secretariat to assist the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in its analysis of programmes for the setting of priorities.

1. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (section 6)

211. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination, in his introductory statement, stated that the proposed resource requirements had been determined by the scope and substance of the programme activities, as well as by the need for budgetary restraint, and that the relative rates of real growth recommended by the Committee at its eighteenth session had been used as guidelines. He noted that the proposals might be modified as a result of the decentralization of activities to the regional commissions, as called for by General Assembly resolution 32/202 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/64; consultations on that subject had been held and were in the process of being completed and the Secretary-General would submit his proposals in that respect to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

212. Some members of the Committee stressed that it should be given detailed information about programmes planned within the framework of extrabudgetary resources. Such resources would exceed the proposed regular budget appropriations during the forthcoming biennium. There was a real danger that the priorities established by intergovernmental bodies might be altered or even reversed by the execution of programmes funded by extrabudgetary resources; stringent monitoring of those programmes and the costs resulting from them was essential.

213. Several delegations raised questions regarding the sources of extrabudgetary funds and the authority and the criteria for their apportionment among the programmes. They stated that extrabudgetary resources should not be used to finance activities of a permanent nature and that posts financed by extrabudgetary funds should not be transferred to the regular budget. They also pointed out that the utilization of extrabudgetary funds could distort the programme priorities set by the General Assembly.

214. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs stated that the apportionment of extrabudgetary funds was generally determined by the purpose set, for which such funds were made available to, and accepted by, the United Nations. While the Department had tried to avoid financing regular programme activities from extrabudgetary resources, it was, however, a fact that, during the past several years, some such activities in the statistics programme had been supported by extrabudgetary funds.

215. The question was also raised of a possible duplication between the activities of the Department and those of the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs assured the Committee that there was no such duplication. The Director-General, under the authority of the Secretary-General, provided over-all leadership, guidance and co-ordination for the concerted execution of relevant policy and programme recommendations emanating from the central intergovernmental bodies. In so doing, the Director-General drew upon the various parts of the United Nations, including the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

(a) Development issues and policies

216. The question was raised of a possible duplication between programme elements 1.2 (Direct governmental support for economic activities, trade-related adjustment assistance and protection policies in developing countries) and 1.4

(International financial flows and policies and the promotion of structural change), on the one hand, and certain activities of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), on the other hand.

217. The representative of UNCTAD stated that the subprogrammes were dealt with in a different context by UNCTAD. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs stated that complementarity existed between the programme activities of the Department and UNCTAD; UNCTAD was more oriented towards the support of negotiations it was requested to conduct, whereas the Department was more oriented towards research activities and assistance to Governments on a general level. He assured the Committee that the Department had taken fully into account the ongoing activities of UNCTAD when preparing its own programmes and would continue to do so with regard to new activities that might be proposed as a result of the fifth session of UNCTAD.

218. The Committee sought clarifications as to where in the development issues and policies programme the activities redeployed from the social development and humanitarian affairs programme were included. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs indicated that the activities relating to rural development and global aspects of popular participation were reflected in programme elements 2.3 (Rural development in the context of over-all development) and 2.4 (Assessment of institutional factors affecting development patterns through enhanced technological capability and other qualitative determinants of the development process).

219. One delegation asked why follow-up studies to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development 34/ were proposed under programme element 2.3 inasmuch as the recommendations of that Conference had yet to be considered by the General Assembly. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs explained that the Conference, in its conclusions, placed emphasis on the need for undertaking research relating to rural development within the context of global research. The Department had a major contribution to offer in this respect and, if provision were not made for such studies in the 1980-1981 biennium, the Department would have to wait until the subsequent biennium to follow up on the recommendations of the Conference.

220. One delegation questioned the continuation of work relating to international taxation, pointing out that the Group of Experts on Tax Treaties between Developed and Developing Countries was supposed to complete that work in 1979. A deadline had to be set for the completion of its work. The representative of the Office for Development Research and Policy Analysis replied that the Economic and Social Council had decided that further work on tax evasion and avoidance should be carried out and, therefore, the programme element had to be continued in the next biennium.

221. With regard to programme element 3.5 (Exploration of possible budgetary procedures for placing official development assistance on a more predictable basis), several delegations objected to the study form the standpoint of its usefulness and that it constituted

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34/ The report of the Conference, held at Rome from 12 to 20 July 1979, was circulated to members of the General Assembly under the symbol A/34/485.

interference in the internal affairs of the donor countries; moreover, the legislative authority for such a study was not clear. It was also pointed out that there was duplication of work, since a study on the same subject was being carried out at present by UNDP.

222. Several other delegations expressed support for the study and pointed out that the need for making official development assistance more practicable had been stressed by the General Assembly at its seventh special session and that the study could be useful for this purpose. The donor countries would, nevertheless, have the discretion to use or not use the results of that study.

223. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination stated that the legislative authority for the study was indicated in the relevant paragraph of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983, and assured the Committee that consultations with UNDP would be held to ensure that there would be no duplication.

224. Some delegations recommended the deletion from the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 of the activities for which no legislative authority had been given by intergovernmental bodies, such as, for example, in programme element 2.3, (The study of the interrelationships of socio-economic policies for rural and urban development, including localization of activities, internal migration, trade and price policies, and development of co-operatives).

(b) Ocean economics and technology

225. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, despite the small size of the programme, a programme element had been terminated as it was considered to be of marginal usefulness.

226. In reply to a question raised, the representative of the Ocean Economics and Technology Branch stated that activities of technical co-operation had been retained within the programme because programme element 3.3 (Substantive support for technical co-operation) was too small a component at the present time to warrant the establishment of a special unit within the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

227. Responding to a query about the limitation to island countries of the study in programme element 3.1 (Economic and environmental criteria for coastal area management in developing island countries), he explained that the study was a logical continuation of the previous one, which had been of broad application.

(c) Population

228. The usefulness of programme element 1.1 (Mortality analysis) and of programme element 5.6 (Population policy and the International Development Strategy of the 1980s) was questioned. The representative of the Population Division explained that mortality analysis had become of particular interest to the developing countries, especially in Africa, where the mortality rate had not declined as rapidly as expected. Mortality studies were also needed in the analysis of fertility and population growth. He stated that the report on the relationship between population policies and an international development strategy for the 1980s was meant to be an assessment of the impact of the strategy on population policies.

229. In response to questions regarding the extrabudgetary resources of the Division, he stated that such resources were provided by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and were thus subject to a control by an intergovernmental body. He further stated that, with regard to the magnitude of requirements for travel and consultants, those estimates arose mainly from the fact that the related projects had country components and that consultants' costs were intended to provide for the use of local experts and institutions to carry out specific aspects of the work.

(d) Science and technology

230. Since this programme was to be revised to take into account the results of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, it was decided not to review its present programme budget proposals, which were tentative.

(e) Social development and humanitarian affairs

231. Several delegations expressed strong support for the objectives of this programme, but they pointed out that the presentation appeared vague and general. The programme elements were lacking in specificity and seemed, in many instances, to contain the same type of studies that could be found in the same programme during previous biennia, and were not action-oriented. The Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs pointed out that the general nature of the programme content might be attributable to the need to provide, in the proposed programme budget, information in an abbreviated manner, which did not permit elaboration on the details of the programme elements and their related output.

232. Strong protests were expressed because the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 referred to a large number of publications, intended for a public audience, which were issued in a single official language, English, a practice which was discriminatory, and hence contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, and which confined the usefulness of those publications to English-speaking countries.

233. A number of delegations referred to the possibility of duplication between this programme and those of the ILO and WHO with regard to activities in the field of rehabilitation of the disabled, and they stressed the need to maintain close collaboration to ensure that no such duplication occurred.

234. The study on the social welfare problems of widowhood proposed under programme element 5.4 (Assessment of the situation of the elderly and the aged) was objected to on the grounds that it lacked legislative authority. It was proposed that the deletion of that study from the proposed programme budget be recommended.

235. One representative objected to the postponement to 1980 of the transfer to Vienna of staff working in the field of crime prevention and control. The Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs explained that the General Assembly, at the time it adopted resolution 33/181 of 21 December 1978, concerning accommodation at the Vienna International Centre, took into account the stated intention of the Secretary-General to retain temporarily in New York a small number of those staff involved in the completion of the preparatory work for the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

236. A number of representatives expressed regret that the statement of the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons was not available to the Committee for its consideration of the programme content of the statement. It was not even available at the present late stage of the preparation of the activities, which should have been undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/133.

237. Some delegations recommended that the Secretary-General should comply with the General Assembly resolutions concerning the transfer to Vienna of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs as a whole, and that he should take all steps necessary to accelerate the transfer of the Section for Crime Prevention and Control, so that it could rejoin the Centre not later than January 1980.

238. Some delegations recommended the inclusion in subprogramme 3 (Participation of women in international co-operation and peace) of the measures provided for in the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Women (E/5894, chap. II.C, paras. 1 and 2 (a) and (d)).

(f) Statistics

239. Several delegations raised questions relating to the following: the need to keep revising the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) under programme element 1.4 (Standards, methods and classifications of international trade statistics) and to undertake programme element 4.7 (Statistics of the environment), when it was within the realm of UNEP; the basis of assigning lowest priority to programme element 6.1 (Co-ordination of statistical programmes of the United Nations); the use of both consultants and an ad hoc expert group in the preparation of the output of programme element 4.3 (Demographic statistics methods); and, in general, the need for consultants and groups of experts in view of the large number of staff employed by the programme, and the fact that the Statistical Commission was composed of experts.

240. The Director of the Statistical Office prefaced his response to the queries with the statement that the Statistical Commission had approved the activities in the proposed programme. With regard to programme element 1.4, the periodic revision of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) was needed in order to keep up with the changing nature and increasing number of items covered by it. The work being undertaken by the Statistical Office related to environmental statistics was being done in collaboration with UNEP, which had the corresponding extrabudgetary support.

241. In assigning the lowest priority rating to programme element 6.1, he pointed out that account had been taken of the relationship among the programme elements whereby the output of one or several programme elements constituted an input to other programme elements of a higher priority.

242. As regards the need for both a consultant and an expert group for the same output in programme element 4.3, he explained that the task of the consultant would be to prepare the report on the basis of his highly technical expertise, while the task of the expert group, which would be composed of national statistical officials from different systems and regions, would be to infuse the report with the element of practicability in order to facilitate the application of its conclusions and recommendations to the operation of the national statistical systems. These national officials were expert practitioners in the specific field

treated in the report, whereas the members of the Statistical Commission were usually the heads of national statistical agencies and possessed much broader expertise. Thus, the ad hoc expert group would have the competence to give the required detailed review to the consultant's report that the Commission members would not necessarily possess.

(g) Programme planning and co-ordination

243. Questions were raised concerning the inclusion in this programme of the subprogrammes on water resources and transport development. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination explained that these were two types of activities which fell within the responsibilities of the programme to provide substantive co-ordination throughout the United Nations system. Since the different aspects of the Plan of Action adopted by the United Nations Water Conference required implementation by various organizations of the United Nations system, the programme, free of any sectoral interest in this matter, was given the co-ordinating role.

244. With respect to transport development, it was recalled that the Committee had recommended, at its seventeenth session, the decentralization of the land transport aspects of that subprogramme to the regional commissions and that Headquarters should retain the function of over-all co-ordination in matters involving several organizations, the responsibility for new transport technologies and for questions of transport institutions and technologies concerning more than one region and the responsibility for information storage and retrieval, providing an inventory of transport economics and technology studies and reports within the United Nations system.

245. In view of the limited resources left at Headquarters to undertake these wide-ranging activities, it had become difficult to formulate a programme that would effectively meet the requirements of the mandate. He therefore suggested that the Committee might wish to look into the question of the future of this subprogramme at one of its forthcoming sessions.

246. Two delegations inquired whether the maintenance of the computerized data bank mentioned under programme element 3.3 (Information services) meant the establishment of a separate computer system. The Assistant Secretary-General explained that the establishment of a separate system was not involved. It merely referred to the utilization of the procedures established within the Department for information storage and retrieval.

247. One delegation requested the Assistant Secretary-General to clarify an inconsistency in his comments: if the proposed information system activity involved merely the loan of procedures already established, then there would apparently be no activity that would require funding from the programme budget. If, on the other hand, the activity involved the further development of an information system for the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, then funding for that activity had already been specifically limited by a decision of the General Assembly on the extrabudgetary sphere, and hence funding must not appear in the regular budget.

248. In response to a question concerning the need for the output under programme element 8.1 (Liaison with regional commissions), the Assistant Secretary-General confirmed that the regional commissions had not outposted staff to Headquarters and that the Regional Commissions Section, which undertook this function, was expected to be separated from this programme, in accordance with a decision taken at the recent meeting of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions.

249. The point was made, to which the Assistant Secretary-General agreed, that programme element 5.1 (Preparation of medium-term plans) should be revised in light of the decisions taken by the Committee that the medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983 should be brought up to date, that a model medium-term plan in two programme areas should be prepared and that a draft calendar of preparation for the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 should also be prepared. In response to questions raised, the Assistant Secretary-General indicated that those tasks, which replaced the preparation of a new medium-term plan for 1982-1985, would not result in a reduced work-load under this subprogramme that could free resources for redeployment to the subprogramme on evaluation. He described the output that could be produced from alternative resources under subprogramme 7 (Evaluation of programmes in the United Nations system), and emphasized that the level of the quality and quantity of evaluation studies of United Nations activities was directly related to the capabilities of the unit assigned to perform those tasks. A single substantive staff member could hardly be expected to deliver the kind of evaluation studies required by the Committee.

250. Some representatives stated that adequate resources should be provided to subprogramme 7 in order to enable the Programme Planning and Co-ordination Office to carry out effectively its substantive support services to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

251. Some other representatives, however, stated that whatever resources might be necessary should be provided through the redeployment of existing resources.

2. Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (section 7)

252. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, the Secretary-General had stated that, since the structure of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had not yet been finally determined when the proposed programme budget had been prepared, a separate report containing the revised 1980-1981 programme and budget proposals for the Department would be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

253. The Committee regretted the non-availability of the proposed programme budget for the Department, even at this late stage, and requested information on progress made towards the final determination of the Department's structure in order to implement the relevant section of General Assembly resolution 32/197, when the revised programme budget would be available for intergovernmental review, how that revised budget would relate both to the resources in funds and posts allocated to the Department in the programme budget for 1978-1979 and to the medium-term plan for 1980-1983 and whether any overlap or conflict would exist between the activities proposed and those of other organizational units of the United Nations.

254. The Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development expressed his thanks for the Committee's concern and assured the Committee of his Department's readiness to co-operate in providing the necessary information. He explained that the Department's budget had been in preparation over the past several months in the context of proposals for the Department's realignment. Since assuming his post on 1 June 1979, he had been involved in the ongoing realignment plans designed for improving the system of support for technical co-operation project implementation and better service to developing countries. Within one month of assuming that post, he had submitted the Department's realignment proposals to the Secretary-General. However, since the realignment related to matters concerning other departments and bodies within the United Nations, consultations with them had been necessary. The time required for those consultations and other meetings in which the parties were involved in July, August

and September had led to a situation in which the Department did not yet have the approval necessary for action. Consequently, the Department did not have a budget for presentation to the Committee at this time. In view of the efforts currently under way to expedite a discussion on realignment and with budget preparations already started in the Department and taking into account the time required for review by the Secretariat, translation and reproduction of the documentation, he hoped that it would be possible for the revised budget proposals to be available by early November.

255. The Committee welcomed the presence of the Under-Secretary-General and emphasized the importance of the Department's work for the benefit of developing countries. Some delegations stated that the Secretary-General would have to confirm as soon as possible decisions on departmental realignment, in order to make it possible for the work of the Department to be carried out in a normal fashion, and hope was expressed that the Secretariat as a whole would support the activities of that Department for the benefit of the developing countries. The Committee expressed concern that answers had not yet been provided to a number of questions raised concerning the level of regular budget funding to be proposed, the amount of extrabudgetary resources expected to be available, the current number of regular and extrabudgetary posts, the intention of the Secretariat to propose new posts and to transfer posts from extrabudgetary to regular budgetary funding, the criteria employed in deciding on the use of extrabudgetary resources, the locus of such decision-making in the Department and, finally, the possibility of an overview of the total of programmes of activity envisaged by the Department.

256. The Under-Secretary-General replied that decisions on departmental realignment were still in process and had yet to be confirmed by the Secretary-General. He was therefore not yet in a position to provide the answers to many of the questions raised. He indicated that he was most willing to provide complete answers after the approval of the realignment and was taking full note of the questions raised. With regard to the budget as a whole, the Under-Secretary-General felt that there might be some modifications to that previously proposed. In connexion with current posts, he drew the Committee's attention to table 7.4. Concerning decisions on the use of extrabudgetary resources, he reported that for priorities in allocating resources to substantive backstopping of technical co-operation activities, country requests were the determining factor; the Department then provided support in accordance with requests. Within the Department, decisions on the managerial aspects of extrabudgetary resource allocations were his responsibility.

257. Some delegations expressed concern that the questions on total resources, post transfer and the relation of the eventual budget of the Department to the over-all level and growth rate of the United Nations budget remained unanswered. The Committee recognized that the absence of documentation on the Department's programme activities meant that there was no context within which finances could be discussed. The Committee expressed its regret at that situation, which had left it unable to fulfil its task of reviewing programmes and their co-ordination. The Committee urged that action be taken as soon as possible to place the necessary information before the intergovernmental bodies concerned.

258. Some delegations recommended that the reorganization of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development should take place within the financial resources allocated in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981.

3. Economic Commission for Europe (section 10)

259. No comments were made on the water programme. With respect to the transport programme, one delegation expressed the view that the importance given by the Commission to its transport programme could perhaps be reduced; she felt that the description of programme elements could be more precise and singled out programme elements 1.2 (Co-operation with Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments on the over-all economic perspective for the ECE region to 1990), 2.9 (Problems of special interest to member countries of the ECE region which are developing from an economic point of view), 3.1 (Selected technological problems in the development of operation of inland waterway transport) and 3.2 (Selected problems of technological and economic aspects of urban transport systems, in co-operation with other principal subsidiary bodies). She questioned the usefulness of frequent reviews of conventions and agreements, and she raised the question of possible duplication of work between the Commission and individual Governments in the case of programme elements 1.3 (Development of a coherent navigable inland waterway network in Europe), 1.7 (Road traffic censuses) and 1.8 (Maps of inland waterways used in international traffic). She noted that no priorities had been set among the various studies listed in subprogramme 2 (Traffic facilitation) and that their wording was too vague; there might be a duplication of work between the Commission and UNCTAD in the case of programme element 2.5 (Convention on international intermodal transport and preparatory work on container standards (drafting work in co-operation with UNCTAD)). The Commission should proceed to an in-depth internal review of the programme and set priorities as well as time-limits for the completion of the work of various working groups and groups of experts.

260. The representative of the Commission stated that the States members of ECE did not view the importance granted to the programme as excessive; an internal review and re-evaluation was being carried out. Programmes were also carefully reviewed by Governments themselves. At the last session of the Commission, guidelines aiming at the reduction in the number of meetings had been established: meetings taking place at Geneva were compressed and serviced by limited interpretation services. Furthermore, when Governments had a special interest in specific seminars or meetings, an attempt was made to have the Governments host those seminars or meetings and thus defray most of the expenses.

261. Regarding programme element 1.2, the study had already been completed and the Inland Transport Committee had been required by the Commission to concentrate its work on economic problems in the region; with regard to programme element 2.5, consultations had been held with UNCTAD to avoid any overlapping or duplication of work. Wording of programme elements might seem to be vague, but their results were concrete, such as regulations which were adopted by Governments and incorporated in their own legislation. He stated that there was a built-in mechanism in the Commission to determine priorities. He stressed that the Commission had submitted a budget with a zero growth rate, and so it was necessary that all items of expenditure be kept under constant review and that resources be utilized in the most effective way.

262. Replying to a question on decentralization, he stated that a project on the establishment of a waterway link between the Danube and the Aegean Sea, which had been previously handled by Headquarters, was handled now by the Commission; negotiations were being held to obtain the redeployment of a post.

263. One delegation expressed appreciation to the Commission for having submitted a budget with a zero growth rate and, at the same time, having set deadlines for completion of its programme.

4. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (section 11)

264. One delegation drew attention to the fact that the water programme should take into account the proclamation of the Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in 1980-1990. She also suggested that all information activities contained in programme element 3.4 (General publications and exchange of information and experience) should be centralized by a clearing-house, in order to avoid proliferation of information institutions.

265. The representative of the Commission stated that the objective of programme element 3.4 (ii) (Promotion of an information exchange system) was to establish a system whereby member countries could be kept informed and also exchange information. The Commission had been requested by member countries to establish a better organizational clearing-house; a computer service had been set up and it was hoped to establish a computerized system covering all information activities.

266. In response to a question regarding studies on various economic aspects of air transport development in the ESCAP region, with emphasis on land-locked and island countries, listed under programme element 1.2 (Development of transport planning), the representative of the Commission stated that the International Civil Aviation Organization participated in those studies and was consulted on all activities involving air transport. The programme of work of the Commission had been drawn up with the active participation of a representative of ICAO.

267. Regarding the question of decentralization, the representative of the Commission informed the Committee that the activities transferred to the Commission were programme elements 1.2 (ii) (Promotion of integrated transport systems in countries of the ESCAP region), 1.3 (Technical assistance among developing countries in respect of transport development), 1.8 (ii) (Studies relating to rural transport planning and development with emphasis on improvement of rural transport equipment/vehicles and road construction technology) and 1.10 (Construction and maintenance of low-cost roads in arid, marshy and wet areas). One Professional and one General Service post had been redeployed from Headquarters.

268. One delegation observed that it might prove difficult to realize such a large programme comprising many significant studies and construction projects within a restricted budget; in his view, programme element 1.10 could hardly be handled by one Professional only. He noted with surprise the absence of recourse to consultants in projects requiring a high degree of specialization.

269. The representative of the Commission replied that programme element 1.10 did not involve the actual construction of roads; the initial step would be a survey of the problems involved in such construction in several countries of the region and an inventory of their capabilities in that regard. Part of the work would be carried out through redeployment of existing resources. She also indicated that the implementation of the four decentralized activities would require the use of extrabudgetary resources. Regarding the use of consultant services, she noted that a certain amount of extrabudgetary resources had been set aside for that purpose.

270. In response to a question concerning the studies to compare the options of freight transportation from the countries of the region to Europe via Turkey/Middle East and via the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics listed under programme element 1.14 (Trans-Asian railway, including intermodal aspect of integrated rural development), the representative of the Commission stated that the objective of those studies was mainly to increase the capacity of the railway system of the region and rehabilitate the existing system.

5. Economic Commission for Latin America (section 12)

271. In reply to a question raised, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination indicated that the vacant posts in the Water Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had been filled and that the Unit had become fully operational two months ago.

272. One delegation observed that, in compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2121 (LXIII), the creation of a water unit had been approved by the Economic Commission for Latin America; however, that unit did not appear in the proposed programme budget of the Commission. The representative of the Commission indicated that the proposed programme budget had been prepared in February; the decision creating the Water Unit had been adopted later, in April, and could thus not be reflected in the programme budget. One post had been requested from the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, which could not accede to the request in view of the importance of its own work on water. However, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had agreed to the redeployment of one post to the Commission. The Water Unit of the Commission was functioning and recruitment was being actively pursued; however, it was difficult to predict when the Unit would become fully operational, since the date of completion of recruitment as well as the date of availability of the post redeployed from the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development were not known.

273. In reply to a question regarding the date of completion of the programme, the representative of the Commission stated that programme elements 1.1 (Horizontal co-operation in water resources) and 1.4 (Support to ECLA/ILPES training and advisory programmes of water) were activities of a permanent nature and therefore had no date of completion; the date for the completion of programme element 1.2 (Environmental dimensions of water management) was September 1981, as indicated in the proposed programme budget; programme element 1.3 (River navigation within river basin management) would start in March 1980 and be completed by December 1981.

274. In response to an inquiry regarding the extent of the co-ordination between the Natural Resources and Environment Division in Santiago and the Natural Resources, Energy and Transport Unit of the Mexico Office the representative of the Commission stated that the programme of work had been approved by the Commission headquarters after review and close scrutiny by the Office for Programme Planning and Co-ordination of the Commission.

275. One delegation noted that resolutions 409 (XVIII) and 411 (XVIII) adopted by the Commission at its session held at La Paz from 18 to 26 April 1979, were adopted after the proposed programme budget of the Commission had been drawn up and asked whether additional appropriations would be requested to implement them.

276. In response to a question as to the extent of decentralization, the representative of the Commission stated that, among several projects suggested for decentralization, the Commission had chosen a project on river navigation, which was of particular interest to the region and which the Commission had the capacity to implement. The resources redeployed included one Professional post, one General Service post and a certain amount of funds for travel of staff and consultant services. In reply to a further question, the representative of the Commission indicated that the results of studies undertaken for projects of interest to several regions, such as those listed under programme element 1.2 (Transport network modelling), were made available by the Commission to other regions and that there was co-operation between regions in that respect.

277. In reply to a question regarding the date of completion of the study on intra-Caribbean air transport, listed as output of programme element 1.5 (Co-ordination of intra-Caribbean air transport), the representative of the Commission stated that no date for completion had been set. The study was a very complex one, since Caribbean island countries had more means of communications with the rest of the world than among themselves; however, phases had been established. He indicated that the study was carried out in co-operation with ICAO.

278. One delegation raised the question of a possible duplication between programme element 1.3 of the water programme (River navigation within river basin management) and programme element 1.3 of the transport programme (Integrated river basin planning).

279. The representative of the Commission stated that there was no overlapping, since the studies under each programme element were two different approaches to the same problem; one related to water resources and their impact on the environment, whereas the other related to transport problems.

280. One delegation asked whether the achievement of greater efficiency had motivated the establishment of ECLA offices in many different countries.

281. The representative of the Commission explained that experience had shown that it was difficult to view from Santiago the problems of all countries of the region. The Mexico Office was first created to deal with Mexico, Central America and Panama. The Trinidad and Tobago Office was created because the Caribbean countries had inherited a different structure within the frame of the Commonwealth. The Washington Liaison Office was created to establish a closer working relationship with the various intergovernmental organizations located in that city. The offices in Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Caracas and Montevideo, although they served several countries, were created at the request of their host Governments.

Other questions

282. In reply to questions raised regarding subprogramme 2 (Integration of women in development) of the social development and humanitarian affairs programme of ECLA, the representative of the Commission stated that the extrabudgetary funds allocated to the budget amounted to $400,000; those funds were used to assist countries in the implementation of specific projects.

6. Economic Commission for Africa (section 13)

283. The Committee made no comments on the water programme. With regard to the transport programme, one delegation inquired whether the two additional Professional posts were new, or were posts redeployed as a result of decentralization. The representative of the Commission informed the Committee that they were new posts requested for the implementation of activities relating to the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. In reply to a question raised, the representative of the Commission stated that the document containing the global strategy of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa would be distributed shortly (E/CN.4/726, vol. II).

7. Economic Commission for Western Asia (section 14)

284. No comments were made on the water and transport programmes of the Commission.

8. Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (section 22)

285. One delegation stated that his delegation did not support the proposal of the Secretary-General to transfer to the regular budget nine posts currently financed from extrabudgetary resources.

9. Human rights (section 23)

286. Some delegations stated that the section on human rights should be revised, taking into account that only intergovernmental organs were legislative bodies and that the list of legislative bodies in paragraph 23.4 and table 23.6 included several expert groups. It appeared, in fact, that the secretariat had prepared the proposed programme budget while taking into account the recommendations of expert bodies and not those of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That fact was reflected in the allocation of resources, whereby 44.5 per cent was envisaged for subprogramme 1 (Implementation of international instruments and established United Nations procedures in the field of human rights), 28.5 per cent was envisaged for subprogramme 2 (Standard-setting, research, studies and prevention of discrimination), 18.5 per cent was envisaged for subprogramme 3 (Advisory services and publications) and only 8.5 per cent was envisaged for subprogramme 4 (Implementation of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination).

287. Subprogramme 4 had received the highest priority in the work of the United Nations system, especially after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 33/99 and 33/100, in which it requested that a number of activities be carried out in pursuance of the recommendations of the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, held at Geneva from 14 to 25 August 1978. 35/ Four additional posts were requested, although not for subprogramme 4. In relation to that request,

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35/ For the report of the Conference, see United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XIV.2.

mention was made of General Assembly resolution 33/51, but paragraph 23.20 failed
to reflect the fact that, in that resolution, the Assembly had requested the
Secretary-General to take into account Assembly resolutions 3534 (XXX) of
17 December 1975 and 31/93 of 14 December 1976 on the medium-term plan and to
consider, therefore, the redeployment of resources. Nothing in paragraph 23.20
indicated that those two resolutions, adopted by the Assembly on the recommendation
of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, had been considered.

10. Administration, Management and General Services (section 28)

288.   One delegation expressed concern about the need to examine the proposals in
the programme budget related to the Security Section at Geneva.

289.   The Committee's recommendations are given in chapter VIII, paragraph 340
below.

CHAPTER VII

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTIETH SESSION

290. In paragraph 2 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/41 on the control and limitation of documentation, the Council decided:

> "That, in future, the provisional agenda for its subsidiary bodies, together with the list of requested documentation, should be submitted to the Council for its review in order, inter alia, to establish greater consistency between the documentation of those bodies and the over-all documentation requested by the Council and other subsidiary bodies and greater consistency between the requests for documentation and the medium-term plan and the programme budget."

291. At its 614th meeting, the Committee considered the provisional agenda and documentation for its twentieth session. The Committee had before it an informal paper prepared by the Secretariat.

292. The Committee's attention was drawn to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1979/1 of 9 February 1979, 1979/41 of 10 May 1979 and 1979/69 of 2 August 1979 and General Assembly resolution 33/56 of 14 December 1978 on the control and limitation of documentation.

293. The Secretary informed the Committee that the provisions of those resolutions were to be implemented without exception, including the provision of a 32-page limit to the length of Secretariat documents.

294. In the light of the heavy programme of work for its twentieth session, the Committee agreed to evaluate only the manufactures programme in 1980, on the understanding that it would be necessary to limit the scope of that study.

295. During the first part of its nineteenth session, the Committee had agreed to evaluate the programme on human settlements in 1980. However, in view of the recent establishment of that programme, it was agreed to defer evaluation to a later session.

296. With respect to cross-organizational analyses, the Committee decided to conduct an analysis of the energy programmes in 1980 on the understanding that the Secretariat would provide supplementary information to that provided in documents E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1 and E/AC.51/99/Add.1, which the Committee could not consider during its current session. The Committee also agreed to carry out, in 1980, a cross-organizational programme analysis in the area of rural development and, in 1981, to carry out a cross-organizational programme analysis in the area of youth.

297. Some delegations proposed that a cross-organizational programme analysis of the public sector be conducted. The Committee agreed to carry out such an analysis in 1981, on the understanding that, at its organizational session in 1980, the Committee would review that decision with a view to defining the scope of the documentation to be prepared by the Secretariat.

298. With respect to regional co-operation and development, the Committee agreed that the report to be prepared by the Secretariat on that item should be based on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and bearing in mind the new role of the regional commissions.

299. The Committee stressed the fact that the postponement of the consideration of items or reports did not imply that the Committee attached little importance to them, but rather that, owing to constraints of time, the Committee had to limit its work programme.

300. The Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination informed the Committee of the difficulties that would be encountered in producing documentation such as cross-organizational programme analyses and in-depth evaluation studies in the format and with the content decided upon by the Committee if there were to be strict adherence to the 32-page limit.

301. The Secretary of the Committee reiterated that the Secretariat had no choice but to implement the decisions taken by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in that regard.

302. The recommendation of the Committee appears in chapter VIII, paragraph 341 below.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Control and limitation of documentation 36/

303. The Committee adopted the following decision concerning the control and limitation of documentation:

The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination

(a) Deplores in the strongest terms the failure of the Secretariat to provide documentation on time in all the working languages, in accordance with paragraph 4 of rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, 37/ which literally paralysed the work of the Committee and prevented it from carrying out fully the work entrusted to it, particularly in its examination of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981;

(b) Expresses its deep appreciation to the Economic and Social Council for taking the necessary action required for the control and limitation of documentation in order to resolve the growing crisis in the timely provision of documentation to intergovernmental bodies;

(c) Recommends that the General Assembly should:

(i) Endorse Council resolutions 1979/1 of 9 February 1979, 1979/41 of 10 May 1979 and 1979/69 of 3 August 1979 on the control and limitation of documentation;

(ii) Take the necessary measures to apply the same provisions on the control and limitation of documentation submitted to the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs;

(iii) Request the Secretary-General to take all necessary steps for the strict implementation of the provisions of those resolutions, as well as of General Assembly resolution 33/56 of 14 December 1978.

36/ See chap. I, para. 12, and chap. VI, para. 202.

37/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.I.15.

B.   The process of programme planning in the United Nations 38/

304. During the consideration by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination of agenda item 3, entitled "The process of programme planning in the United Nations", the principles on which programme planning in the United Nations should be based were discussed at length. Among these, the relationship of the medium-term plan to development received particular attention. Bearing in mind its terms of reference, as contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) and the relevant sections of General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, the Committee agreed that the programme planning process should be based on the following principles:

(a)   The planning process, which is a part of the over-all management process, should be forward looking and dynamic. The medium-term plan should not be formulated primarily on the basis of projection of the past and present into the future, as has been the practice so far, but it should be deductive and its strategy and orientation as well as its specific goals and activities at all levels should be derived from the objectives and policy orientations set by the intergovernmental organs.

(b)   The medium-term plan should be a faithful translation of legislative mandates into programmes.

(c)   The medium-term plan remains a proposal by the Secretary-General until adopted by the General Assembly, when it becomes a principal policy directive.

(d)   The medium-term plan should be comprehensive and not staggered.

(e)   A longer time-horizon than four years is needed and a balance must be achieved between flexibility and continuity in the planning process.

(f)   While it may be desirable to lengthen the planning cycle to ensure continuity, it will be necessary to achieve flexibility through reviews by intergovernmental organs as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions adopted by intergovernmental organs and international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

(g)   There should be full involvement of intergovernmental organs in the formulation, consideration, review and evaluation of the plan during the regular cycle of their meetings. The effective participation of the central as well as sectoral, regional and functional bodies would require a longer preparation cycle for the plan and a greater co-ordination in their calendar of meetings than at present.

(h)   The introduction to the medium-term plan should constitute a key integral element in the planning process. It should highlight objectives and policy orientations of the United Nations system and indicate trends as deduced from the legislative mandates which reflect the priorities set by the intergovernmental organs.

(i)   In the medium-term plan, the emphasis should be on description of objectives and strategy; the presentation and format of the analysis should vary according to the type and nature of activities.

38/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. II, paras. 14 to 83.

(j)   The programme budget should be formulated within the framework of the medium-term plan, keeping in view its objectives and strategy.

(k)   There is a need to vary information density in relation to the time horizon as well as according to the information needs of the reviewing bodies.

(l)   The planning process should take into account the need for joint planning, programme co-ordination and harmonization within the United Nations system.   The Committee, however, could not agree that total synchronization of planning periods is thereby necessarily required.   Co-ordination is not an end in itself; its aim should be to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the system.

(m)   Performance reporting and evaluation are key elements in the planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation cycle; the evaluation mechanism should be strengthened; the ongoing process of developing and improving planning methods includes the refinement of evaluation techniques.   The use of achievement indicators as a tool for evaluation should be developed.

305. Regarding the manner in which the planning process should be scheduled, organized and conducted in the future, the Committee recommended to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly the following:

(a)   The medium-term plan should cover a period of six years.   The Committee did not reach agreement as to whether the plan should roll or have a fixed horizon.   The plan should, however, be brought up to date, as appropriate, no later than the end of the second year of its implementation.

(b)   The next proposed medium-term plan to be submitted should cover the period 1984-1989, and accordingly the submission of a 1982-1985 proposed medium-term plan currently scheduled for 1980 is no longer required.

(c)   The current medium-term plan should be reviewed at an appropriate time to take account of all decisions with programme implications during the first biennium.

(d)   The plan should clearly identify new activities, and the planning process should identify completed and obsolete activities.

(e)   The emphasis in the plan narrative should be on the objectives and strategy.   Objectives should be time-limited as far as possible and the plan structure should be objective-based in all programmes where it is feasible.

(f)   Financial indications should be shown in the plan along the lines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/33/345, paras. 7-11).

306. For its twentieth session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to provide model medium-term plan programmes on the basis of general principles and specific recommendations formulated by the Committee at its nineteenth session.   The preparation of the model medium-term plan programmes would help clarify, in particular, the questions of the programme structure of the medium-term plan and the various levels of detail of programme narratives required by various

reviewing bodies. The two programme areas for the preparation of models should be selected from the list of programmes identified by the Committee at its eighteenth session. 39/ The Secretariat should also submit to the Committee, at its twentieth session, a draft calendar of preparation for the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. 40/

C. Evaluation 41/

1. Programme formulation and the review process

307. The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Secretary-General that the Commission on Transnational Corporations should have the relevant parts of the proposed medium-term plan and the programme narrative of the draft programme budget placed on its agenda; that the programme of work presented to the Commission on Transnational Corporations should be derived from the medium-term plan and programme budget, should follow the format of these documents and should be cross-referenced to them so that what are now two processes can be made related stages of a common process; that the Economic and Social Council should formulate procedures to relate better what are now separate reviews of the same programme by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and its two sessional committees, the Economic Committee and the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee; and that the Commission should refer to the relevant parts of the medium-term plan and programme budget in assessing progress in the implementation of this programme's work.

308. As far as the setting of priorities within the Centre's work programme was concerned, the Committee recognized that all components of the work of the Centre were intimately related, but urged that a fuller definition of priorities be attempted.

309. The Committee noted from the report of the Secretary-General that some activities of the Centre carried out in co-operation with specialized agencies appeared to be supplementary to the programme of work approved in planning documents. The Committee believed that in the future the work programme should specify the division of labour between the Centre and the specialized agencies.

2. Policy analysis (research)

310. The Committee agreed that the Centre should develop a system of obtaining on a regular basis the views of Governments on the work of this subprogramme.

311. More information would be needed on the views of Governments before the Committee could endorse the statement in the report of the Secretary-General that the quality of documents ranged from good to excellent.

39/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/33/38), para. 10.

40/ For the model medium-term plan programmes selected, see para. 341 below.

41/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. III, paras. 84 to 115.

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312. The Committee recognized that, in its policy analysis work, the Centre had concentrated on the first of the three objectives with which it was mandated by the Commission at its second session in March 1976. The Committee considered that more emphasis could now be placed on the second and third objectives. 42/

3. Comprehensive information system

313. The Committee regretted that, when the Centre drew up plans for the establishment of a comprehensive information system, the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems (IOB) was not consulted or its views sought in order to advise on the co-ordination and compatibility of the system with related United Nations systems, such as, inter alia, those of the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme.

314. The Committee urged that the Centre on Transnational Corporations take action to effect the recommendations concerning IOB contained in paragraph 324 of the present report.

315. The Committee was unanimously of the opinion that development of the information system and the manner of its co-ordination with related United Nations systems should contribute directly to the role of the Centre as the prime authority on transnational corporations within the United Nations system, as well as to compatibility among such systems. In order for such a system to serve effectively the objectives defined by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, the Committee recommends that:

(a) The resources allocated among the various components of the information system should be commensurate with the tasks assigned to them according to the priorities assigned by intergovernmental organs;

42/ At its second session, the Commission defined the objectives of the transnational corporations programme as follows:

"(a) To further understanding of the nature and the political, legal, economic and social effects of the activities of transnational corporations in home countries and host countries, and in international relations, particularly between developed and developing countries;

"(b) To secure effective international arrangements for the operation of transnational corporations designed to promote their contribution to national development goals and world economic growth while controlling and eliminating their negative effects;

"(c) To strengthen the negotiating capacity of host countries, in particular the developing countries, in their dealings with transnational corporations." (Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 5 (E/5782), para. 6).

(b) Close co-ordination should be maintained and strengthened with related systems within the United Nations and duplication avoided;

(c) A feedback system should be established in order to monitor more effectively changing needs and user responses.

316. It was pointed out that careful analysis of the information collected by the Centre was necessary. In this respect the Centre should consider reallocating some of the resources at present committed to the computerized profile information part of the system to other information needs.

317. The Committee pointed out that Governments are the main users of the information system and that it should be geared primarily to their needs. A systematic method of obtaining their views on the system must be developed.

4. Code of conduct

318. The Committee was of the opinion that the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/98, para. 16) that, in anticipation of agreement on the terms of the code of conduct, emphasis should be shifted from formulation of the code to implementation and/or monitoring of it, was somewhat premature. The main function of the Centre over the next 12 months would be to support the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Formulation of a Code of Conduct for Transnational Corporations; it could then shift its attention to assisting in the implementation of the agreed code. The Committee was in agreement with the Secretary-General's recommendation that greater attention should be given to means of promoting understanding and acceptance of the code of conduct, but stressed that these activities could only be implemented as negotiations on the code drew to a close.

5. Advisory services

319. The Committee agreed that the Centre's initial efforts to organize the information and experience gained in the course of its advisory missions should be continued and strengthened and that this information should be made available in a systematic and accessible fashion within the limits of confidentiality; that the experience gained in advisory and training projects should be utilized as inputs to the decisions on objectives and activities of other programmes; and that direct consultations should be held with government officials whenever possible, in order to supplement the existing methods for obtaining user feedback.

320. The Committee was informed of arrangements being worked out which would result in UNDP projects related to transnational corporations being forwarded directly to the Centre for action. The Committee noted that these arrangements would not lead to the Centre's becoming a separate executing agency for UNDP. The Committee drew attention to the Secretary-General's Bulletin (ST/SGB/162 of 23 March 1978), in which it was stated that, in response to General Assembly resolution 32/197, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development was set up "to manage the United Nations regular programme on technical co-operation and implement UNDP projects and projects financed from extrabudgetary resources for which the United Nations is the executing agency". The Committee stressed that practical arrangements currently being worked out should in no way infringe on the over-all responsibilities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

6. Mandate of the joint units

321. With regard to the mandate of the joint units, the Committee recommended to the Economic and Social Council that:

(a)   The joint units should be the focal point of all matters specifically regional relating to transnational corporations, while the Centre on Transnational Corporations should continue as the focal point for all transnational corporations and related matters in the United Nations system. To this end, the role of the joint unit as it has resulted from various understandings reached under the authority of the Secretary-General by the Centre on Transnational Corporations and the regional commissions should be ratified. Such ratification should include a clear delineation of the respective roles of the Centre and the joint unit:

(b)   The Commission on Transnational Corporations should give precise guidelines on the role of the joint units;

(c)   It should request the Secretary-General to ensure that any other proposals for modification of the mandates of the joint units are submitted for the normal course of review and approval by the relevant specialized bodies and legislative organs;

(d)   It should call upon the regional commissions to assist and co-operate in the implementation of paragraph (c) above.

322. The Committee recommended to the General Assembly that the real growth in resources for the programme as a whole resulting from the implementation of the preceding recommendations should not exceed the percentage of real growth that may be decided upon by the Assembly for the budget as a whole for the duration of the medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983.

7. Programmes to be evaluated in 1980

323. The Committee decided to evaluate, at its twentieth session in 1980, the manufactures programmes and the programme on human settlements. 43/

D.   Cross-organizational programmes analyses 44/

1.   Co-ordination of information systems within the United Nations system

324. The Committee expressed its great concern that the various administrative and substantive information systems within the United Nations and the specialized

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43/ At its resumed session, however, the Committee decided to evaluate the programme on human settlements at a later stage. For the programme of work of the Committee, see the provisional agenda of the Committee for its twentieth session (para. 341 below).

44/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. IV, paras. 116 to 150.

agencies were generally not co-ordinated and were frequently incompatible. To ensure that all such information systems are not duplicative and that data of common interest is readily accessible to all interested bodies, the Committee urged ACC, through IOB, in particular to co-ordinate the development of information systems and to effect greater compatibility between systems. All steps necessary to realize the goals should be taken.

325. The Committee agreed that IOB should identify needs and formulate proposals for co-ordination of both administrative and substantive information systems.

326. The Committee further agreed that proposals for new information systems and major modifications of existing systems should, without exception, be referred to IOB for its information. Where such proposals might be of interest to more than one organization, IOB should comment and advise on them. The Committee urged that this recommendation be reflected in the terms of reference of IOB.

327. The Committee strongly supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit that all member organizations of ACC should also be members of IOB.

328. The Committee considered it important that the level of representation of IOB should ensure competent handling of issues both at the policy and technical levels.

329. To facilitate the task of co-ordination, the Committee stressed that continuing efforts must be made to formulate the basic building blocks of common terminology, classifications and systems elements and to obtain their acceptance by the United Nations system. It was noted that, in this respect, IOB had already made useful progress.

330. The Committee urged that there be rigorous cost-feasibility and cost-benefit analyses of any proposed information systems project. Both IOB costs and the costs to organizations involved in any co-ordination project should be quoted when the price of participating in any major system's development was estimated. The development of standard methods for costing information systems must be priority work for IOB.

331. The Committee urged that efforts should be made to ensure the compatibility of data processing equipment, hardware and software.

332. The Committee deplored the delay in implementing CORE/1. It recommended that implementation should be completed by 1 June 1980 and that a report should be submitted for the consideration of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in that year.

333. The Committee was of the opinion that no decision should be taken on the implementation of CORE/2 until ACC, through the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions, had been able to comment on the proposals contained in paragraph 65 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/34/153). A revised project document, which should spell out information outputs and inputs, costs, resources needed from and participation of the United Nations agencies, project organization and the implementation schedule, should be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twentieth session.

E. Reports of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
    and Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and
    Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on
    Co-ordination 45/

1. Review of operational activities

334. The Committee agreed that operational activities should be considered by the
Committee within the ambit of its role of ensuring the implementation of
intergovernmental mandates. Accordingly, the Committee recommends to the Economic
and Social Council and the General Assembly that the report of the Director-General
for Development and International Economic Co-operation on a comprehensive policy
review of operational activities, to be submitted to the Economic and Social
Council and the Assembly in 1980, pursuant to Assembly resolution 33/201 of
29 January 1979, should be submitted through the Committee at its twentieth session
(see paras. 163 and 164).

2. Designation of resident co-ordinators

335. The Committee considered a number of questions related to the status and
functions of the resident co-ordinators of the United Nations system's operational
activities for development. The Committee attached great importance to a strict
and full implementation of the relevant provisions of paragraph 34 of the annex to
General Assembly resolution 32/197. The Committee expressed doubts as to whether
its concerns, as outlined in paragraph 172 above, were adequately reflected in the
letter of designation approved by ACC. These concerns related, inter alia, to
(a) the role of the national authorities for the co-ordination of operational
activities, (b) the nature of the responsibilities of the resident co-ordinator
vis-à-vis both the Government and the agencies operating in a country and (c) the
requirements for the effective performance of his responsibilities for ensuring that
the operational activities of the system as a whole respond fully to the needs and
priorities of countries. The Committee recommended that these concerns should be
borne in mind in the further elaboration of the responsibilities of the resident
co-ordinator and the development of practical arrangements for the exercise of his
functions. The Committee felt that the designation of the resident co-ordinator
should not have the effect of adding a new rung to the bureaucratic ladder. Concern
was expressed that posts should be filled by persons with experience in multilateral
assistance programmes whose professional qualifications for the responsibility of
those positions were beyond dispute. It was urged that the designation of resident
co-ordinators should be made in consultation with the Director-General for
Development and International Economic Co-operation, and with the agreement of the
Governments of the host countries (see para. 173).

3. Question of a single administrative tribunal

336. The Committee recommended that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
should pursue energetically the study of the feasibility of establishing a single

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    45/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. V,
paras. 160 to 192.

administrative tribunal so that the General Assembly, at its thirty-fourth session, might give that matter due consideration (see paras. 176 and 177).

4. Cross-organizational analysis in 1980

337. The Committee noted the conclusions of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme) on the questions of joint planning and cross-organizational programme analyses. It agreed that a clear definition of the scope of each cross-organizational analysis was desirable; however, the lack of such definitions should not prevent cross-organizational programme analyses from being undertaken in areas where there was interfacing of activities and therefore benefit to be gained from such analyses (see para. 169).

338. The Committee agreed that the area for a cross-organizational programme analysis for 1980 should be rural development (see paras. 170, 171 and 184). 46/

5. Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

339. The Committee recommended to ACC the following two items for the provisional agenda for the forthcoming Joint Meetings of the two Committees: (a) programme planning in the United Nations system; (b) information systems and the role of the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems. The Committee felt that the question of evaluation could be discussed as an element of programme planning (see paras. 188-191).

F. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981 47/

340. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination recommended:

(a) That the activities for which no legislative authority has been given by intergovernmental bodies should be deleted from the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981;

(b) That the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983 and the report on the performance of the budget for 1980-1981 should include a clear identification of activities that have been completed, are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective.

G. Provisional agenda of the Committee for its twentieth session 48/

341. Pursuant to paragraph 2 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/41

46/ As indicated in the provisional agenda of the Committee for its twentieth session, the Committee decided to take up also the cross-organizational analysis of energy programmes in the United Nations system at that session (see also chap. IV, para. 159).

47/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. VI, paras. 193 to 289.

48/ For the Committee's discussion of the subject, see chap. VII, paras. 290 to 302.

of 10 May 1979, the Committee submitted to the Council for its review the provisional agenda for its twentieth session, together with the requested documentation:

1. **Process of programme planning in the United Nations**

    Documentation:

    Report of the Secretary-General on model medium-term plan programmes:

    (a) Commodities programme;

    (b) Transnational corporations programme;

    Report of the Secretary-General on a draft calendar of preparation for the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. 49/

2. **Evaluation**

    Documentation:

    Programme evaluation for the period 1976-1979: Manufactures programme: report of the Secretary-General.

3. **Cross-organizational programme analyses**

    Documentation:

    Cross-organizational analysis of the energy programmes of the United Nations system (E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1 and Add.1-2); 50/

    Cross-organizational programme analysis in the area of rural development;

    Report on the Interagency project register (CORE).

4. **Review of operational activities**

    Documentation:

    Comprehensive policy review of operational activities: report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation;

    Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on some aspects of backstopping of technical co-operation activities in the United Nations system (DP/302);

    Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the role of experts in development (DP/334 and Add.1-2).

49/ It was understood that the report would also contain proposals setting out the precise procedure for the preparation and review of the proposed programme budget.

50/ E/AC.51/99/Add.2 is to be prepared.

5. Regional co-operation and development

    Documentation:

    Report of the Secretary-General.

6. Reports of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

    Documentation:

    Annual report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for
    1979-1980;

    Revised report of the Secretary-General on costs of public information
    programmes in the United Nations system.

7. Medium-term plan

    Documentation:

    Updated version of the programmes of the 1980-1983 medium-term plan;

    Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1978-1979:
    report of the Secretary-General;

    Establishment of internal work programmes and procedures for reporting on
    programme implementation: report of the Secretary-General;

    The identification of programme outputs in the programme budget of the United
    Nations: report of the Secretary-General.

ANNEXES

Agenda for the nineteenth session

1. Election of officers for 1979.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. The process of programme planning in the United Nations.

4. Evaluation.

5. Cross-organizational programme analyses.

6. Reports of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.

7. Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

8. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee.

List of documents before the Committee at its nineteenth session

Document number	Agenda item	Title
A/33/6/Rev.1	-	Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983, vol. I, Part One, chaps. 2 and 3
A/33/304	5	Administrative co-ordination of electronic data processing and information systems: report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
A/34/6, vol. I and errata and vol. II and Add.1	8	Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981
A/34/84	3	Medium-term planning process in the United Nations: report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit
A/34/153	5	Report on the Inter-Organization Board for Information Systems, prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit
A/C.5/34/2	3	The identification of programme outputs in the programme budget of the United Nations: note by the Secretary-General
A/C.5/34/3	3	Establishment of internal work programmes and procedures for reporting on programme implementation: progress report of the Secretariat
A/C.5/34/4 and Corr.1		Report of the Secretary-General on the identification of activities that are completed, obsolete, of marginal value usefulness or ineffective
E/1979/34	6	Annual report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for 1978/79
E/1979/43	6	Progress achieved in the field of nutrition under the new institutional arrangements: report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

Document number	Agenda item	Title
E/1979/44	6	Interagency action in rural development: report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
E/1979/L.22/Rev.1	–	Documentation for the Committee for Programme and Co--ordination at its nineteenth session: note by the Secretariat
E/AC.51/97 and Adds.1 and 2	3	In-depth study on the planning process in the United Nations: report of the Secretary-General
E/AC.51/98 and Add.1-2	4	Programme evaluation for the period 1976-1978 – transnational corporations: report of the Secretary-General
E/AC.51/99 and Corr.1 and Add.1	5	Cross-organizational analysis of the energy programme in the United Nations system: report of the Secretary-General
E/AC.51/100	2	Provisional agenda and annotations thereto
E/AC.51/101	3	Statement made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation
E/AC.51/102	5	Co-ordination of information systems within the United Nations system: report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
E/AC.51/103	6	Letter dated 23 April 1979 addressed to the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination by the Secretary-General
E/AC.51/104	6	Costs of public information activities in the United Nations system: report of the Secretary-General
E/AC.51/INF.10	–	List of participants to the first part of the nineteenth session of the Committee
E/AC.51/L.96	–	Control and limitation of documentation
E/AC.51/L.97 and Add.1-17	–	Draft report of the Committee

Document number	Agenda item	Title
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.1	3	Summary of the discussion in the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme) of ACC on the in-depth study on the planning process in the United Nations
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.3	5	Supplementary information on cost of information systems: note by the Secretariat
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.4	7	List of recently completed Joint Inspection Unit reports not considered by the Committee
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.6	2	Agenda and organization of work
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.7	6	Activities of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational activities): note by the Secretariat
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.9	-	Provisional agenda for the twentieth session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.10	8	Draft conclusions and recommendations: informal paper submitted by the Rapporteur
E/AC.51/XIX/CRP.11	-	Draft decision proposed by the Chairman
E/AC.51/XIX/WP.1	3	Informal working paper prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to the request made by the Committee at its 572nd meeting, on 9 May 1979
E/AC.51/XIX/WP.2/Rev.1	3	Revised informal working paper submitted by the Rapporteur