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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations evaluation  
units and systems and timetable for review of evaluation  
programmes requested under General Assembly resolutions  
36/228 B and 37/234, section II

Report of the Secretary-General

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\* A/38/50.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

1. At its thirty-sixth session, following a discussion of the item on programme planning, the General Assembly, in paragraph 1 of its resolution 36/228 B of 18 December 1981, requested the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations evaluation systems and evaluation units by:

"(a) Specifying the responsibilities and tasks of the United Nations evaluation units;

"(b) Preparing for the General Assembly precise evaluation plans linked to the medium-term planning process and the budget cycle;

"(c) Developing guidelines for the planning and design of programmes and projects to make them more susceptible to evaluation;

"(d) Designing and issuing basic standards for the conduct, content and process of evaluation and assuring that the quality of the evaluation products is continually assessed;

"(e) Taking appropriate measures to ensure that evaluation findings shall be promptly and systematically utilized in the management decision-making process and that follow-up evaluation findings and recommendations shall be carried out."

In the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-eighth session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), on the implementation of paragraph 1.

2. The General Assembly, at its thirty-seventh session, adopted resolution 37/234 of 21 December 1982 on programme planning, and in section II, paragraph 8, of the resolution it requested the Secretary-General to submit, through CPC at its twenty-third session, to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, an evaluation programme and a timetable for intergovernmental review of evaluation studies, together with the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985. The annex to the resolution contained Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation; article 6 of the Regulations deals with evaluation.

3. The present report consists of three sections. Section II reviews steps that have been taken to strengthen the evaluation systems and units in accordance with resolution 36/228 B. It gives an indication of the current level of capacity of these units for developing basic evaluation functions through a review of their responsibilities, their ability to participate in the evaluation aspects of medium-term plans and budgets and their capacity to prepare guidelines and standards and to ensure feedback from evaluation findings. Section III contains a rationale and recommendations for systematically strengthening the evaluation capacity in the different organizational entities of the United Nations together

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with actual proposals for programmed activities taken from submissions by individual organizations for the 1984-1985 programme budget. These excerpts no longer appear in the programme budget text of the various sections concerned.

4. Section IV contains criteria for selecting programmes for evaluation and a suggested timetable for intergovernmental reviews in response to section II of resolution 37/234. Section V of the present document contains recommendations.

#### B. Scope and format of the report

5. The information and data in the report were based on the submissions of at least 16 organizational entities. 1/ In addition, specific proposals contained in the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 and in the programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985 were taken into account and individual programme managers consulted. Recent information and data on these and the other units covered in this report can also be found in two reports by the Joint Inspection Unit issued in 1981. 2/

## II. CURRENT STATUS AND FUNCTIONS OF UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION UNITS

### A. Background

6. A review of the current status of evaluation systems and units within the United Nations reveals that there is a three-tiered classification of resources and capacities according to stages or levels of development of organizational entities discharging evaluation functions. Before reviewing the functions and tasks of the various units and entities it may be useful to consider the work being performed in the light of the following classification.

7. At the first stage or level of development are those organizational entities with established evaluation units which have functioned for approximately two years and have at least one full-time staff member. These units also have clearly identified and defined responsibilities and tasks in the programme planning and evaluation area which they carry out on a routine basis. 3/ Six units are included at this level: the Programme Analysis and Evaluation Unit of the Office of Financial Services of the Department for Administration and Management (DAM/OFS), the Evaluation Unit of the Programme Planning and Co-ordination Office of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA/PPC), the Planning, Programming and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Public Information (DPI/PPE), the Programme Development and Evaluation Branch of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Fund Policies and Evaluation Section of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Evaluation Section of the International Trade Centre (ITC).

8. At the second stage or level are eight organizational entities which have made some progress towards defining the evaluation needs of the entity. They have been using resources on a part-time basis for carrying out routine, ad hoc or specific evaluation tasks; however, they have neither a full-time evaluation officer nor a

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distinct evaluation unit as such. 4/ This group comprises four of the regional commissions: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In ESCAP, a small Operations Evaluation Unit was established in 1980 which was wholly funded by extrabudgetary sources and which undertook various ad hoc evaluation analyses on extrabudgetary-funded projects only. As none of these activities were part of an ongoing evaluation system designed to feed back information for management purposes, the unit is about to be expanded to include broader functions.

9. Three organizational entities are still at what can be defined as a third stage or level of development. They have not yet devoted any but the minimum resources to the evaluation function, such as preparing evaluation plans and means of evaluation statements as part of the medium-term plan and budget cycle, but are not necessarily carrying out these plans systematically. These include the Centre for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the World Food Council (WFC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In the case of the latter, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board decided in September 1982, at its sixth session, to postpone until later in 1983 a discussion on the establishment of an evaluation function. It should be noted, however, that although UNCTAD has no formalized capacity some evaluation-type functions have been carried out in the past in the field of training. One example of this, evaluation of training courses in post management, was cited in paragraphs 87 to 107 of document A/10035/Add.1. UNCTAD also considers that certain evaluation exercises are carried out in the field of non-fuel mineral resources (TD/B/C.1/226) and its reviews of the commodities programme have in the past contained an evaluation dimension.

10. The following illustrates the classification:

<u>First level</u>	<u>Second level</u>	<u>Third level</u>
DAM/OFS	ESCAP	CSTD
DIESA/PPC	ECLA	WFC
DPI/PPE	ECA	UNCTAD
UNIDO/PDE	ECWA	
UNEP	DTCD	
ITC	UNCHS	
	UNCTC	

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## B. Responsibility and tasks

11. Of the units in the first category, the Programme Analysis and Evaluation Unit in the Office of Financial Services (OFS) is the oldest. Since 1974 it has been responsible for the introduction of the programme planning and budgeting system in the United Nations and for most evaluation work. In 1978, however, as part of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 32/197 on restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system and the emphasis by intergovernmental bodies on integrating an internal evaluation system with the programme planning process, responsibilities for evaluation functions were reorganized. Some remained with the unit in OFS, which continues to be responsible for programme planning, programme performance and monitoring and evaluation at the central level for programmes in political, legal, humanitarian and common services.

12. Other functions were assigned to the Evaluation Unit in the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs which was not established until January 1980. Its functions include the development of the necessary methodology and techniques for the establishment of an internal evaluation system, preparation of a manual of guidelines on the use of the system and executing regular in-depth evaluation studies in the economic and social sectors requested by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. In addition, it conducts regular reviews of evaluation plans and means of evaluation statements in connection with the plan and budget cycle and other ad hoc assignments such as assistance to other units in establishing an evaluation system, and briefings of senior staff both within and outside of the Department.

13. In UNIDO in mid-1976, a central evaluation unit was assigned responsibility for the design of a comprehensive and appropriate evaluation system, including policies, procedures and standard formats; and assistance in the testing and installation of major components of the system. The unit was also charged with monitoring system components for Secretariat compliance, adequacy and improvements and for conducting or participating in specific evaluations. At that time an Advisory Committee on Evaluation was also established to assist and advise the Division of Policy Co-ordination in recommending evaluation priorities and subjects and serving as a communication and co-ordinating mechanism.

14. In April 1981 the central evaluation function in UNIDO was transferred from programme development to the Office of the Director, Division of Policy Co-ordination, was given new responsibilities and authorities, and assumed the de facto status of an independent unit or section. In addition to the earlier tasks and duties mentioned above, the unit provides staff support to project operations for self-evaluation and UNIDO participation in tripartite reviews and evaluations; undertakes quality control reviews of evaluation programmes and reports; participates in specific project, programme and process evaluations, both internal and external, recurring and ad hoc; examines selected project proposals for evaluation plans and adequacy of design elements (quality control); provides orientation, training and guidelines in project design and evaluation to headquarters and field staff; and designs and operates a management information system on project effectiveness for implementation and similar reviews.

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15. In the International Trade Centre, an evaluation system was introduced in 1975 for the purpose of evaluating projects and was approved by the Joint Advisory Group. An Evaluation Section comprising one staff member was then established to implement the system. Approximately five project evaluations of projects costing over \$US 200,000 each are executed annually with the help of senior staff other than those who have implemented the particular project being evaluated. A representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or a trust fund donor and of the recipient Government also form part of the evaluation team.

16. In 1980, the Planning, Programming and Evaluation Unit in DPI was established within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, for planning, programming and evaluation of programmes of information undertaken by the Department. The Unit also acts as a focal point within the Department for liaison and co-operation with UNESCO on activities related to the new world information and communication order and particularly the International Programme for the Development of Communication.

17. In UNHCR selective evaluation of existing policies and strategies is undertaken by the Policy Planning and Research Unit. In addition, the Programme Management Bureau has two extrabudgetary posts for project evaluation on a full-time basis.

18. In the second developmental category are four of the five regional commissions (ESCAP, ECLA, ECA and ECWA). These commissions have recognized the importance of using evaluation as a management tool and of establishing and strengthening current evaluation systems. Lack of resources is a common constraint on all four in carrying out the mandates of the General Assembly.

19. ECA indicated that it was about to define the roles and responsibilities of the proposed unit, while in ESCAP and ECWA this task had already been partially accomplished. Initiatives have already been made in all three to integrate the evaluation system with the medium-term planning and the budget cycle.

20. A number of proposals on the development of evaluation procedures to maximize the effectiveness of activities through programme analysis and evaluation are to be discussed by the ECWA Standing Committee for the Programme at its session in May 1983. The proposed procedures ensure that all the elements appearing in resolution 36/228 B are covered by the terms of reference of the central evaluation unit which was established in March 1983. They include, namely, coverage, improved design, development of methodologies and feedback mechanisms, identification of evaluation needs at the regional level and assistance to Governments, on their request, in strengthening their own evaluation efforts.

21. The ESCAP unit, Operations Evaluation, has functioned since 1980 without full-time resources. Its main focus has been on operational activities, including the formulation of a work plan to evaluate selected ESCAP services to member countries and to ensure that evaluation activities are in harmony with those of other bodies throughout the United Nations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also has a small two-person evaluation unit to review projects only.

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22. In the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) there is currently no organizational capacity for handling evaluation activities, although certain of those activities are carried out on a part-time basis by a staff member in the Office of the Executive Director. The basic responsibility is to develop impact evaluation techniques and criteria for human settlements activities, with particular reference to field projects, and to undertake impact evaluations of selected projects both in research and in technical co-operation.

23. Other organizational entities having no unit specifically devoted to evaluation include the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development. In the case of the Centre, evaluation activities are the responsibility of its Division on Co-ordination, Monitoring and Review. The Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development takes up the matter of evaluation chiefly in terms of its review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and its decisions regarding procedures for evaluating the operations of the financing system.

24. The Centre on Transnational Corporations also has no specific evaluation unit. It conducts evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of programme activities in terms of the medium-term plan at the programme, subprogramme and programme element levels. Evaluation at the programme and subprogramme levels is conducted annually by the directors based on observations made in their dealings with senior government officials of Member States, senior officers of transnational corporations, senior officers of other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations and the academic community.

25. The desirability of establishing programme evaluation functions in UNCTAD has also been discussed by the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget of the Trade and Development Board at its fifth and sixth sessions in March and August/September 1982, respectively. At the latter session the discussion was based on a progress report prepared by DIESA/PPCO on results achieved in developing a general methodology for programme evaluation and offering suggestions for a more satisfactory approach to, and methodology for, programme evaluation, taking into account the particular characteristics of UNCTAD's activities (TD/B/WP/23). Although a thorough discussion took place on techniques to be applied, views differed significantly and the Board is to consider the matter again at its seventh session to be held in the latter part of 1983. 5/

C. Precise evaluation plans linked to the medium-term planning process and the budget cycle

26. One of the basic elements of an evaluation system is the development and implementation of the evaluation plan. It includes a statement on the purpose of future evaluation, the kinds of change which need to be measured, which hypotheses have to be verified or clarified, methodology frequency and timing as well as extent of participation of Member States in the evaluation; nature of performance and impact indicators, means and sources of information collection and findings. For the first time in the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, an evaluation plan became a requirement at the subprogramme level. In the case of some entities,

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the exercise of preparing evaluation plans for each subprogramme was a very thorough one in which all substantive divisions participated. In others, scarce resources dictated a less thorough product. Almost all units covered by this report prepared and submitted the necessary plan. However, owing to need to limit the length of the plan, it was decided not to issue these evaluation plans as part of the medium-term plan. 6/

27. In the UNIDO secretariat objectives were established at the subprogramme level for the medium-term plan for 1984-1989. For field projects evaluation plans were also established in accordance with requirements laid down by UNDP for its tripartite reviews and with UNIDO's own guidelines on self-evaluation.

28. The internal evaluation system currently being designed and installed in UNIDO provides for the evaluation of programme effectiveness and impact of all recurring programme elements and will be ready for implementation by the beginning of the next programme budget period, 1984. The essential elements include:

(a) Annual self-evaluation by programme managers of group training programmes and industrial studies and research;

(b) Periodic self-evaluations by programme managers of centrally funded programmes according to a schedule which fits the peculiar requirements of a subprogramme (e.g., at the end of each major subject consultation);

(c) Annual internal evaluation of random samples of recently completed projects financed by Special Industrial Services (SIS), the United Nations Industrial Development Fund (UNIDF), and technical co-operation under the regular programme and Trust Fund;

(d) Special ad hoc internal evaluations of selected programme areas or topics conducted at the request of intergovernmental bodies or at the secretariat's initiative covering, for example, investment co-operation, system of consultations, technical co-operation among developing countries, special measures for the least developed among the developing countries, technology development and information services.

29. The findings of these evaluation activities will be important inputs in determining and revising programme strategies, programme development and programme budgeting.

D. Guidelines for the planning and design of programmes and projects

30. A growing tendency among various organizational entities to standardize programme and project proposals has been noted by the issuance of formal guidelines or informal instructions. In some cases standardization instruments have been prepared but are still being tested.



31. In this regard, UNIDO has long recognized the close relationship between design and evaluation. In terms of field projects, the steps taken in 1982 by UNIDO have been significant and include:

- (a) Issuance of a handbook for desk use on project design and self-evaluation;
- (b) Revision of format for project proposals;
- (c) Revision of guidelines on the design and appraisal of technical co-operation projects;
- (d) Required use of single project objective, capable of achievement within five years, with one, clearly predominate purpose or function;
- (e) Introduction of output-oriented work plans utilizing "milestones", performance, and end-of-project-status indicators;
- (f) Initiation of action to clarify objectives and redefine intended results of ongoing projects through annual performance self-evaluation exercises;
- (g) Required use of a checklist on project design and preparation of design matrix as part of the project formulation and appraisal process;
- (h) Required clearance by the Evaluation Unit of large-scale project proposals to provide a quality control on design standards and evaluation plans;
- (i) Provision of orientation and training in project design to secretariat and field staff involved in project formulation.

32. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development notes that it participates on a regular basis in the Interagency Task Force regarding the elaboration of guidelines and standards concerning activities funded by UNDP.

33. In the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific it has been decided that all project proposals should have the following features:

- (a) A specific and tangible output;
- (b) A specific time schedule of implementation;
- (c) A clear enunciation of the role of other agencies, the relevant institutions in the member countries and the various divisions of ESCAP engaged in the entire process of implementation;
- (d) Biannual and terminal reports.

In addition, all these aspects are reviewed by the ESCAP Project Review Committee before any project proposals are cleared for implementation under the regular budget or for submission for extrabudgetary funding.

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34. In the International Trade Centre, while no specific guidelines have been developed so far to make programmes more susceptible to evaluation, the Evaluation Section reviews project documents to ensure that requirements, such as clear statement of project outputs, immediate objectives and development objectives in accordance with the logical hierarchy, are respected. UNEP also has no set guidelines but is testing a new format for the design of project documents and proposals to be submitted to its Project Screening Committee. The emphasis increasingly being placed in that body on outputs should make projects more susceptible to evaluation. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, on the other hand, has precise guidelines for the design, monitoring and evaluation of technical co-operation projects in the form of its Project Management System document.

35. With regard to guidelines for programme activities, UNIDO is preparing a second volume of guidelines on self-evaluation of subprogrammes and programme elements which is to include guidance on establishing programme objectives, developing and revising programme strategies, preparing long-term programmes and developing work plans and indicators.

36. The DIESA/PPCO unit is preparing a manual of guidelines in the programme area which will be based on a taxonomy of work in the area of research and policy formulation.

E. Basic standards for the conduct, content and process of evaluation

37. In its resolution 36/228 B the General Assembly had expressed concern that the quality of evaluation products be continually assessed.

38. On the project side, UNIDO has initiated a number of significant steps, some of which are parallel and complementary to UNDP requirements, to assure the quality and maintain the standards of evaluation products. These steps ensure that:

(a) All project self-evaluation reports are first reviewed by the central Evaluation Unit which prepares a quality control check, with appropriate comments and suggestions, for use by the responsible technical branch or section;

(b) Project self-evaluation reports which are below acceptable standards are returned to the field with appropriate instructions and suggestions for re-evaluation;

(c) All secretariat participants in tripartite reviews and evaluations have to consult the Evaluation Unit for assistance on drafting the terms of reference, proper purpose and scope, development of issues, methodology to be used and type of report required;

(d) In special circumstances, professional evaluation staff represent UNIDO on evaluation missions.

39. With regard to programme and process evaluations, a set of definitions has been developed which differentiates the scope, intensity, methodology and frequency of reviews, assessments and evaluations. As this evaluation system component is further elaborated and installed over the next biennium, 1984-1985, means for assuring the quality of evaluation products will be taken into account.

40. In 1985, after UNIDO's comprehensive system is fully installed at all levels, an expert group meeting is planned for the purpose of obtaining an outside assessment of the quality and usefulness of the evaluation products being produced by the system.

41. The basic standard which is used by ITC for the conduct, content and process of evaluation is document ITC/AG(VII)/40. Maintenance of quality is the responsibility of the Evaluation Section. Evaluation reports are also reviewed by ITC management and it takes a position on them before they are sent to recipient Governments or funding agencies.

42. A basic standard format for project evaluations was designed by UNEP in March 1982. The format has two parts: (a) a series of basic issues in the form of questions which the project evaluation must cover, and (b) an outline of a standard format for project evaluation mission reports.

43. Procedures for the evaluation of all meetings and training courses organized by ESCAP have been established. With the assistance of a consultant, Operations Evaluation has recently undertaken a model evaluation of the activities of ESCAP for trade promotion. The recommendations arising from this study are being examined and will assist in the establishment of procedures for the evaluation of the ESCAP activities other than meetings and training courses.

#### F. Utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations

44. One of the basic purposes of the programme planning and evaluation process is that its findings, conclusions and recommendations would be utilized to improve future planning, programme formulation and design. Programme managers and programme review bodies have a responsibility for ensuring that future plans and budgets reflect those findings. Some of the programmes reviewed by CPC in the context of its mandate under paragraph 2 (a) (iv) of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976 included self-evaluations on ocean economics and technology, social development and humanitarian affairs and public administration. The first formal review of steps taken to implement the Committee's recommendations arising from an in-depth evaluation took place in 1980 at the Committee's twentieth session. This evaluation study, the subject of which was the programme on transnational corporations (E/AC.51/1980/CRP.4), was also the first to be conducted under the auspices of DIESA/PPCO, with the involvement of the High-level Steering Committee on Evaluation.

45. A review of implementation of the recommendations derived from the study of the activities of UNCTAD and UNIDO in the field of manufactures took place in 1981 (E/AC.51/1980/2 and Add.1 and A/35/38, 7/ paras. 341-356) and in 1983 its review

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will focus on implementation of recommendations arising from the evaluation of the mineral resources programme (E/AC.51/1982/5 and A/37/38, 8/ paras. 360-374).

46. At its twenty-second session, CPC further formalized this follow-up review by instituting triennial reviews. The first such review will be held in 1985 (A/37/38, 8/ para. 362).

47. Feedback mechanisms vary according to the evaluation tasks and according to the unit concerned. For example, in certain units such as ESCAP the results of internal evaluations are brought to the attention of the substantive divisions concerned and of the Executive Secretary. Implementation of recommendations is closely monitored and evaluation results are taken into account in the formulation of further programmes and projects.

48. In the International Trade Centre and other units such as UNEP where evaluations primarily concern technical assistance, reports are made available to all senior staff concerned. Reports are also circulated to the funding agency and recipient Government through UNDP. This is also the case with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. Subsequent project documents are also reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the conclusions and findings of preceding evaluations. Implementation of evaluation recommendations is appraised every two or three years.

49. A synthesis of project evaluation findings is presented annually to senior staff of the International Trade Centre for their review. In UNEP project findings are disseminated in a bimonthly "Report to Governments". The follow-up of previous evaluations is also considered on a regular basis.

50. In UNIDO, project review committees, which are internal high-level groups used for reviewing programmes and projects, are also concerned with feedback and follow-up and often identify the need for appropriate action.

51. In their review and endorsement of self-evaluation reports, implementing branch heads and section chiefs in UNIDO are assigned the specific responsibility for seeing that remedial and follow-up actions, as recommended in the project evaluation reviews, are carried out. The Evaluation Unit on a periodic basis provided programme managers with information on the utilization of the evaluation function for management purposes. On an ad hoc basis, programme managers are alerted to problem projects and suggestions are made on required actions.

52. The division directors and programme managers concerned also assume overall responsibility for ensuring the use of evaluation results in decision-making in their respective areas. As evaluation data become more available on a systematic and usable basis, this can be expected to increase. For example, beginning in late 1983, computer-produced information on progress in producing outputs and potential project effectiveness will be available for the first time in reviews by the Executive Director and at the divisional level.

53. In the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, reactions to the technical co-operation programme are sought from the recipients of its services at

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the completion of each project. In the case of advisory projects, letters are sent to the relevant officials requesting critical comments on the long-range effects of the assistance provided as well as on the project inputs, for example, on quality of expertise, usefulness of information and project expediency. Participants in training workshops and correspondent government officials are also asked to complete a detailed questionnaire relating to the conduct and context of the workshops. Comments on anticipated derivation of benefits are also solicited. A further service of feedback on the effectiveness and impact of the Centre's work programme is provided by its governing body, the Commission on Transnational Corporations, which receives annual reports on the activities of the Centre. The Commission reviews these reports and makes decisions and recommendations concerning future work.

54. Several other units such as the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, ECLA and ECWA, for example, co-operate with central units at Headquarters to ensure that plans and programmes reflect relevant findings. A special attempt was made, at the request of CPC during its twenty-second session (A/37/38, 8/ para. 370), to indicate those programmes for which the findings of the minerals evaluation and the recommendations on those findings might have programme implications. Five chapters were identified (12, 15, 16, 17 and 23) and the Programme managers concerned were informed of the relevant findings and recommendations and requested to report as to whether any subsequent adjustments to medium-term plan or proposed programme budget submissions would be contemplated as a result.

55. This was an attempt by CPC to integrate the evaluation process into future programming and planning while at the same time overcoming the constraints of programme scheduling which provided that both the medium-term plan and evaluation would be prepared and considered at the same time rather than sequentially with the evaluation considered first. This problem was also alleviated in part by the fact that the minerals evaluation was prepared in very close collaboration with the units concerned, namely the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs/Ocean Economics and Technology Branch, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the regional commissions. Moreover, in the case of that particular evaluation, the process coincided with the period during which the plan was being prepared.

56. Internally, within the Secretariat, programme review officers routinely take into account any findings of recent evaluation.

### III. RATIONALE AND PROPOSALS FOR SYSTEMATICALLY STRENGTHENING THE EVALUATION CAPACITY OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 1984-1985

#### A. Rationale for systematically strengthening evaluation units

57. In order to estimate the resource strength required in terms of proposals made in section B below, an attempt has been made to match the levels of Professional staff resources with essential evaluation functions. In doing so, the scope and

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diversity of United Nations programmes and activities should be taken into account. For clarity the relevant functions have been divided into one-year periods. While this "standard" may be applied generally, much depends on the state of readiness of the particular organizational entity or component. The required state of readiness can be interpreted as the amount of work which can be performed in accordance with the tasks outlined in paragraph 66 below, the level of commitment to effective evaluation among high-level policy-makers and the level of understanding of evaluation purposes and techniques among evaluation system users. If it is agreed that all organizational entities should take positive steps towards establishing an evaluation capacity either in the form of a central evaluation unit or focal point, then each of those entities should have the minimum resources for performing certain basic ad hoc tasks essential to the development of an evaluation system. At a minimum with one Professional for 12 work-months these tasks should include:

(a) Consultations and reviews with decision-makers and programme managers of programme and project structure and content to determine specific evaluation needs and priorities;

(b) Exploration of approaches, including some programme and project design with related evaluation methodologies and preparation of interim instructions for participation in an evaluation system;

(c) Guidance to programme managers in the preparation of evaluation plans or descriptions of means of evaluation as a first step towards integration of evaluation into the regular medium-term planning and programme budgeting cycle;

(d) Preparation of an outline for one self-evaluation programme study and guidance to the substantive unit in preparation of an actual study similar to that given by DAM/OPS prior to 1979;

(e) Regular contacts and exchange of information on common approaches and solutions with the Joint Inspection Unit and other units having established evaluation mechanisms such as UNDP, UNIDO and DIESA/PPC.

58. Over a period of time, priorities among these tasks may change; for example, the work plan would not have to be revised regularly and emphasis might then be placed on working with programme managers to find the most effective means of meeting evaluation requirements. Nevertheless, only with the addition of a second staff member can the scope of a unit be broadened and further tasks taken on. These additional tasks might include:

(a) Some programme and project design and the adaptation of related interim guidelines; 9/

(b) One evaluation study per biennium for an intergovernmental body focussing on programme effectiveness.

These tasks with the others mentioned above would amount to approximately 24 work-months per work year.

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59. Workload and capacity will remain fairly stable with perhaps greater grasp of evaluation techniques and methodology and better performance but little increase of scope or systematic coverage if this staff complement of two is maintained.

60. At the third level, the size of the programme and the related programme staff becomes a key variable in decisions on the ultimate size and composition of the evaluation unit. If the level is increased to three or four Professionals, it should be possible to lay the groundwork for a more systematic approach to evaluation. Additional tasks would vary only in degree of depth and level of coverage depending on whether there were three or four Professionals. At a lower degree of depth these tasks could be:

- (a) Initial conceptualization of the internal evaluation system;
- (b) Increased attention to building evaluation elements into programme and project design;
- (c) Follow-up on implementation of previous evaluation studies;
- (d) Second in-depth evaluation study per biennium still focussing only on programme effectiveness;
- (e) Greater assistance with application of evaluation techniques and methodology.

61. At a greater level of depth and coverage, functions could be:

- (a) Establishment and functioning of internal evaluation systems at minimal level; e.g. procedures for ensuring that findings are fed back to policy-makers and programme managers, ultimately leading to full integration of the findings into policy, programme and operational levels of management;
- (b) Triennial reviews of implementation of recommendations on previous evaluation;
- (c) Quality control introduced into programme design;
- (d) Evaluation studies focussing not only on effectiveness but on impact;
- (e) Technical evaluation support for units so requiring it.

These functions would only be expected to be achieved fully over a two- or three-year span.

62. For greater clarity the functions set out above with corresponding minimum resource levels have been put in tabular form and appear in table 1 below.

63. As previously stated, the evaluation units in the first group have progressed beyond the suggested minimum in terms of staff resources and activities undertaken. It is at this point that optimum strength of such units is dictated by the roles and responsibilities that they are expected to carry out routinely in the

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Table 1. Suggested basic functions for evaluation units and corresponding staff resources as discussed in section III A of the present report

		3rd or 4th Professional	
		Greater assistance with application of evaluation techniques and methodology	Technical support for other units and assistance with adaptation
		Follow-up on implementation of findings of previous evaluation studies	Triennial reviews of previous evaluation studies
	2nd Professional	Initial conceptualization of internal evaluation system	Establishment and functioning of evaluation system
	Initial programme and project design and related guidelines	Increased evaluation elements in programme design	Quality control in programme design
	1st Professional	One in-depth evaluation study per biennium	Second in-depth evaluation study per biennium with two-year lead
			Studies focussing on effectiveness and impact
Review with programme managers of programme structure and content to determine evaluation needs and priorities			
Exploration of approaches, including evaluation methodologies and relation to management functions			
Assistance to programme managers in preparation of evaluation plans for medium-term plan and programme budget			
Regular contact and information exchange with JIU and other United Nations units on evaluation systems and techniques			
Minimum workload with one Professional post (12 work-months) 1st year	Workload with two Professional posts (24 work-months) 2nd year	Workload with three or four Professional posts varying in degree of depth and level of coverage (36-48 work-months) 3rd and 4th years and beyond	

Notes: (a) Arrows indicate continuance of activities at more rigorous levels.

(b) The fact that posts and their proposed functions are shown separately for greater clarity does not imply that two or more posts could not be established simultaneously.



areas of planning and evaluation. Certain units have been identified as having special centralized responsibilities for evaluation systems and methodology and as being in the forefront of the development of systems design, and as such, these units assume the additional pivotal responsibility of serving as resource centres for other units as they develop. As noted, UNDP's work to improve project design and establish relevant guidelines, and to some extent that of UNIDO, have served as the basis for planning and evaluation of technical co-operation projects. As the application of systems development within this area widens, so the demands increase. Methodologies for programme evaluation are not as yet as far advanced. However, one unit, DIESA/PPC, has begun work in this area in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 32/197, 36/228 B and 37/234, section II, and the rules and regulations governing programme planning and evaluation and of related documents such as A/35/527, paragraph 57, on responsibilities for carrying out evaluation studies in the economic and social sectors. In the next biennium it is expected to make significant progress in conceptualizing and initiating appropriate approaches in this field. It can be seen from these examples that where innovative research in support of central evaluation functions must be undertaken in addition to fairly extensive evaluation activities, more than minimal resources are required.

64. The second category of those which have made some progress in defining evaluation needs and which may even have part-time resources, such as ESCAP, UNCHS and ECWA, should have a staff complement of at least one or possibly two (e.g. ESCAP, indicated in para. 8 above, and ECWA). Organizational entities such as UNCTAD which have no assigned resources at all and only marginal participation in external evaluation exercises should have at least one Professional post to enable them to undertake the first basic steps as described in paragraph 66 below.

#### B. Proposed evaluation activities

65. The proposed evaluation programmes should be viewed in the light of the General Assembly's request at its thirty-sixth session, in resolution 36/228 B, to the Secretary-General to strengthen United Nations evaluation units and systems and of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in 1981 which recommended that evaluation systems must be clearly established and a firm commitment made by governing bodies, top management and staff steadily to improve evaluation quality (see A/36/182). The report of JIU also expressed concern with the slow pace of the development of evaluation throughout the system.

66. In reviewing the evaluation programmes and work plans proposed for the period 1984-1985, it is clear that organizational entities intend to maintain the momentum so far achieved and in several cases to increase it. The basic evaluation functions which any unit should have the ability to perform broadly cover the development and management of an internal evaluation system, carrying out actual studies, and reporting evaluation findings. Actual tasks would be:

- (a) Developing and installing an internal evaluation system;
- (b) Formulating regular evaluation plans which are fully integrated into the medium-term plan and budgeting cycle;

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- (c) Establishing guidelines for design and for quality control and standards;
- (d) Carrying out in-depth evaluation studies as well as regular programme reviews;
- (e) Developing effective feedback mechanisms for disseminating evaluation findings to intergovernmental bodies and to programme managers;
- (f) Monitoring the implementation of evaluation findings.

67. In keeping with the view of intergovernmental bodies and JIU that central evaluation units can serve as valuable focal points for the internal evaluation system and have an important leadership and support role for overseeing that the quality and performance of the system is ensured, there appears to be an increasing trend for organizational entities to plan for the establishment of such units. For example, in the context of their submissions for the 1984-1985 programme budget three entities (ESCAP, ECA and UNCHS) propose to strengthen their evaluation capacity by establishing new units or expanding existing ones. Others, such as UNIDO, are proposing more intensive evaluation activities without requesting additional commensurate resources.

68. The following briefly summarizes some of the proposed activities in the evaluation area together with additional posts, where they occur in the 1984-1985 budget submissions.

69. In the case of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, even with the present staffing (D-1, P-5 and P-3) work towards setting up an internal evaluation system and guidelines for its use has been slow, as existing resources had to be devoted to competing assignments. The main thrust of the new activities to strengthen the evaluation capacity of the Secretariat would be to facilitate completion of the system as well as to guide and assist other units within the economic and social sectors to establish a capacity for self-evaluation in keeping with resolution 36/228 B. The outcome of the development of regular evaluation activities in the units thereby assisted will be a stronger all-round evaluation system throughout the United Nations.

70. The evaluation capacity of the units in the Office of Financial Services (with two Professional posts) and the Department of Public Information (with three Professional posts) is more limited as both units are also responsible for other functions, mainly programme planning and programme performance monitoring. The unit in the Office of Financial Services has continued to work closely with the PPCO/DIESA unit to ensure that a consistency of pattern and methodologies in evaluation is maintained. It deals with the development and management of an internal evaluation system and continues to provide assistance and guidance in the establishment of a self-evaluation system to departments or offices in political, legal, humanitarian, public information and common services areas. In order for the unit to continue its leadership and support role in evaluation and to discharge its functions more effectively, its capacity needs to be strengthened, especially as the absence of evaluation units in the non-economic and social sectors means heavier workload for the unit in the Office of Financial Services.

71. ESCAP, which currently has only part-time evaluation functions for projects in the Office of the Executive Director and no unit for overall evaluation, is proposing the following measures:

(a) Establishment of a small evaluation unit within the Office of the Executive Secretary;

(b) Taking over the work of the former Operations Evaluation Unit, which studies only projects funded from extrabudgetary sources: 10/

(c) Development of appropriate techniques for evaluating the ongoing ESCAP work programme and mechanisms for feedback of results into the management process.

In the case of this Commission it should be noted that additional activities include the fact that the staff will oversee projects which amount to approximately 55 per cent of the ESCAP budget for the 1980-1981 biennium.

72. ECA, which has no evaluation staff, proposes the following increased activities in evaluation:

(a) Collaboration with PPCO/DIESA in developing appropriate methodology for programme evaluation and in conducting evaluation of specific programmes identified by CPC;

(b) Collaboration with the ECA Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office to improve the formulation, implementation and evaluation of operational projects;

(c) Initiation of programme managers into the process of internal programme evaluation and promoting awareness of the value of evaluation in planning and programming;

(d) Preparation of reports to the ECA secretariat Programme Review Committee on evaluation studies - two in 1984 and two in 1985.

73. In the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements there is one part-time officer in the Office of the Executive Director. Functions to strengthen the Centre's capacity in evaluation would include:

(a) Expansion of evaluation to cover the regular programme as well as technical co-operation projects;

(b) Training of staff in the use of the new system;

(c) Introduction of specific evaluation reporting mechanisms and follow-up policies and procedures.

74. The UNIDO unit proposed no programme growth but two Professional posts, one at the P-4 level and one at the P-3 level, have recently been redeployed there. The current staff complement is therefore four Professionals: P-5, P-4, P-3 and P-2.

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The evaluation programme and projects for the 1984-1985 programme budget period included in programme element 1.2 of the UNIDO submission are:

(a) In the first half of the biennium, 1984, UNIDO staff would be trained on project design and evaluation principles, concepts and methodologies by outside consultants. By 1985, however, this activity would be taken over by regular evaluation staff;

(b) Specialist assistance in design and further development of the UNIDO internal evaluation system (group training, consultations, studies etc.);

(c) Regional development and implementation of training for field staff and government officials on project design and evaluation techniques in these regions.

75. Up to March 1983, ECWA had no evaluation staff. At that time two evaluation officers at the P-5 and P-3 levels were redeployed and an evaluation unit established in the office of the Executive Secretary. The Commission has proposed several new evaluation activities which are to be reviewed by the Standing Committee for the Programme, from 7 to 9 May 1983. The proposed activities include:

(a) Initiation of an evaluation programme;

(b) Development of output indicators, performance standards and systems for evaluation and feedback;

(c) Two in-depth evaluation studies on natural resources and industrial development by 1984.

76. Table 2 gives the current staff resources of each organizational entity.

Table 2. Existing evaluation staff resources by organizational entity

<u>Organizational entity</u>	<u>Professional and above posts Existing</u>
<u>First level a/</u>	
UN/DAM	2 (D-1, P-5) <u>b/</u>
UN/DIESA	4 (D-1, P-5, 2 P-3) <u>c/</u>
UN/DPI	3 (P-5, 2 P-4) <u>d/</u>
UNIDO	4 (P-5, P-4, P-3, P-2)
UNEP	2 (P-4, P-3) <u>b/</u>
ITC	1 (1 P-5)
<u>Second level a/</u>	
DTCO	0 <u>e/</u>
UNCHS	0 <u>e/</u>
ESCAP	0 <u>e/</u>
ECLA	0 <u>e/</u>
ECA	0 <u>e/</u>
ECWA	1 (P-5, P-3) <u>f/</u>
CTC	0
UNHCR	2 <u>g/</u>
<u>Third level a/</u>	
CSTD	0
UNCTAD	0 <u>c/</u>
WFC	0

a/ Groups are defined in paragraphs 7-9 above.

b/ Other functions besides evaluation performed.

c/ One P-3 post will be redeployed during the course of 1983.

d/ One full-time evaluation officer (P-3) supported by part-time Professional staff.

e/ Some evaluation work done but only on a part-time basis by staff in other units.

f/ Two local level posts are also included.

g/ On project evaluation only. Posts funded from extrabudgetary resources.

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#### IV. PROGRAMME FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF IN-DEPTH EVALUATION STUDIES AND TIMETABLE

77. It has not been possible at this stage to respond fully to the request of the General Assembly, in section II of its resolution 37/234, for a specific set of evaluation programmes and a corresponding timetable for intergovernmental review because so many of the organization entities concerned still do not have the capacity to carry out any but minimal evaluation functions as discussed above.

78. Nevertheless proposals for evaluation activities made by DIESA, UNIDO, ESCAP, ECLA, ECA, ECWA and UNCHS do in fact constitute an evaluation programme over the period 1984 and 1985. Until these programme and resource submissions are discussed and decisions taken it would be difficult to draw up the specific timetable as requested.

79. Despite these constraints two evaluation units have conducted in-depth evaluations in the past and still have this capacity. As mentioned above, these units are in the first category, namely, DAM/OLS and DIESA/PPC. There is no reason, therefore, why an evaluation programme with a corresponding timetable should not be set for the work of these units. An important consideration relates to lead-time. As evaluation techniques and methodology have developed, it has become the practice for CPC to request the Secretary-General to prepare reports and present them two years after the initial request (e.g. the technical co-operation activities of manufactures, public information, minerals). The Secretary-General has benefitted by this two-year lead-time as it has enabled the Secretariat to carry out more thorough studies which more closely accord with the recommendations of CPC and the guidelines of the Joint Inspection Unit. It is strongly recommended that the two-year lead-time be maintained. It is also regarded as essential that the programme for in-depth review takes into account the work programme of JIU.

80. The following subsection suggests possible criteria for selecting programmes for review by the two main units engaged.

##### Possible criteria for selection of topics for in-depth evaluation studies

81. In order to assist CPC in its review a set of possible criteria for choosing programmes in the economic and social sectors for intergovernmental review has been prepared. These criteria in the form of questions are:

1. Has the programme ever been evaluated and if so was it reviewed within the last six years?
2. Has the programme been evaluated by other bodies, e.g. JIU, AMS, and if so, when?
3. Do special problem areas or achievements exist within the programme which are of interest to Member States?

4. What is the size of the programme; does it contain a large enough number of subprogrammes and wide enough coverage to justify a full-scale in-depth evaluation and is the subject-matter homogeneous enough to be definable?
5. Does the programme cover a sufficient number of organizational entities?
6. Is there some significant change in content or orientation as a result of an international conference or convention, for example?
7. Has the programme been in operation long enough for effectiveness and impact evaluations to be done?
8. Would an evaluation of the programme contribute significantly to programme design?

82. To illustrate the first criterion the following table shows a list of those programme areas which have been evaluated and when.

Table 3. In-depth evaluation studies reviewed by CPC since 1977

<u>Programme area</u>	<u>Year evaluated</u>	<u>Year implementation of recommendations reviewed</u>	<u>Secretariat unit responsible</u>
<u>Self-evaluations</u>			
1. Human settlements, 1974-1975 <u>a/</u>	1977	-	DAM/OPS and ESA/CHBP
2. Environment, 1974-1975	1977	-	DAM/OFS and UNEP
3. Public information, 1974-1975	1977	-	DAM/OFS and OPI
4. Transport, 1974-1975	1977	-	DAM/OFS and ESA/CNRET
5. Ocean economics and technology, 1974-1977	1978	-	DAM/OFS and ESA/OETO
6. Social development and humanitarian affairs, 1974-1977	1978	-	DAM/OFS and ESA/CHDHA
7. Public administration and finance for development, 1974-1977	1978	-	DAM/OFS and ESA/PAFD <u>b/</u>
<u>External-type evaluations</u>			
8. Transnational corporations, 1976-1978	1979	1980	DIESA/PPCO
9. Manufactures, 1976-1979	1980	1981	DIESA/PPCO
10. Mineral resources, 1976-1979	1982	[1983]	DIESA/PPCO
11. UNIDO's technical co-operation activities in manufactures funded by UNDP	[1983]	-	DIESA/PPCO
12. The work of the Department of Public Information	[1983]	-	DAFM
13. The work of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development	[1983]	-	- <u>c/</u>

a/ Report submitted but not reviewed by CPC.

b/ The "Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations public administration and finance programme, 1972-1976" (E/1978/42 and Corr.1) was also prepared.

c/ The JIU is preparing a report on this topic.



83. Programmes which have not yet been evaluated in depth by CPC in the economic and social sectors include population, development issues and policies, energy, science and technology for development and human settlements (see footnote a/ to table 3). In other sectors, they include political and Security Council affairs, human rights, assistance to and protection of refugees, legal affairs, special political affairs, international justice and law, trusteeship and decolonization, disaster relief, international drug control and common services such as conference services, administrative management service, personnel services, financial services and general services. The Committee may also consider that programmes which were submitted for review in 1977 (see table 3) are now due to be reviewed again. These are environment and transport. By 1984, three additional programmes may also have to be reviewed, namely, ocean economics and technology, social development and humanitarian affairs and public administration and finance for development. Since so many programmes have never been reviewed, the following timetable, prepared in accordance with resolution 37/234, section II, and covering the current plan period 1984-1989 and one biennium beyond 1990-1991, lists a selection covering both economic and social and other sectors:

<u>Programmes not yet evaluated in depth by CPC</u>		
	<u>Economic and social sectors</u>	<u>Other sectors</u>
June 1983-February 1985 (CPC, twenty-fifth session)	Population	Electronic data processing and information systems
June 1985-February 1987 (CPC, twenty-seventh session)	Human settlements <u>a/</u>	Drug control
June 1987-February 1989 (CPC, twenty-ninth session)	Development issues and policies	Legal affairs
June 1989-February 1991 (CPC, thirty-first session)	Science and technology for development	Human rights

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a/ See table 3, footnote a/.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

84. It is recommended that the Committee, after considering sections II to IV of the present report, may wish to approve the proposals for strengthening evaluation units and activities as set out in paragraphs 65 to 76 above.

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85. With regard to the General Assembly's request for programme for intergovernmental review of in-depth evaluation studies, the Committee may wish to recommend to the Assembly that it adopt the selected programmes and timetable set out in paragraph 83 above.

#### Notes

1/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA), Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD), Department of Public Information (DPI), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Trade Centre (ITU), and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

2/ Joint Inspection Unit, "Status of internal evaluation in United Nations system organizations" (A/36/181) and "Second report on evaluation in the United Nations system" (A/36/182).

3/ Only three of these units, DIESA/PPC, UNIDO and ITC, carry out full-time evaluation functions although the latter two are mainly concerned with the evaluation of technical co-operation activities.

4/ ECWA has been included as it has only just established a unit (March 1983). ESCAP established an operations evaluation unit in September 1980 funded by extrabudgetary resources to review projects.

5/ Trade and Development Board, "Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its sixth session" (IDB/928/IDWP/24).

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/37/6)

7/ Ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/35/38).

8/ Ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/37/38).

9/ In view of the initiatives currently being undertaken by UNDP to improve project design and evaluation, it is hoped that most units engaged in technical co-operation work can use UNDP's guidelines and standards so as to avoid duplication and devote scarce resources to other activities.

10/ Actual expenditure for the 1980-1981 programme budget period for ESCAP amounted to \$US 55.3 million. Of this amount 5 per cent or \$US 29.9 million was spent on operational projects, as appeared in miscellaneous supplemental schedules to General Assembly document A/37/5 and in schedule 1.4 (see Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/37/5), vol. I, "Accounts for the biennium ended 31 December 1981").