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Agenda item 19. Co-operation and co-ordination
within the United Nations system

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION
FOR 1978/79

Addendum

II. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. In its second report on the restructuring of the intersecretariat co-ordination machinery, submitted to the resumed Economic and Social Council at the second regular session, 1978, ACC identified the tasks to be performed by its subsidiary machinery in respect of operational matters and indicated that those tasks would be entrusted to its new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ (OPS)). (E/1978/144, paras. 23-25 and 35-38).

Work of CCSQ (OPS)

2. At the first regular session of 1979, CCSQ (OPS) formulated its work programme on the basis of the mandate approved by ACC and in the context of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/197, particularly section V of the annex to that resolution, dealing with operational activities for development, and paragraph 28 thereof, setting out the objectives of restructuring measures in this area. The Committee considered that its main function was to provide support to ACC in preparing relevant intergovernmental discussions and to contribute to the consultative process leading to the definition, in operational terms, of recommendations of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with a view to their effective implementation. A complementary objective would be the harmonization of policies and practices in order to improve the effectiveness of the activities carried out by the system as a whole. This would include specific operational issues having system-wide implications which may be referred to CCSQ (OPS) through, *inter alia*, the consultative arrangements set up by the executive heads of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

3. The Committee agreed that it would concentrate on those tasks requiring inputs into the decision-making process for intergovernmental organs and on those leading to increased cohesiveness of the system. The Committee would limit its future agenda as far as possible to substantive discussions of specific issues requiring

interagency consideration and deal, where possible, with other matters by correspondence, ad hoc meetings of agencies directly concerned or by other arrangements.

4. The Committee gave preliminary consideration to the following matters: the outline of the report on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities to be presented to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation; enhanced responsiveness of operational activities of the system to national policies and priorities, as well as to the requirements of the New International Economic Order; the utilization of the country programming process as a frame of reference for operational activities; designation and practical arrangements for the exercise of the function of resident co-ordinator; linkages between pre-investment activities and investment; and technical and economic co-operation among developing countries.

5. Members of the Committee indicated their support for the substantive and methodological approach being followed in the preparation of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, as reflected in the outline of the report called for under General Assembly resolution 33/201 previously submitted to ACC by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. The Committee gave the highest priority to the question of resources available for operational activities for development and acknowledged that the system itself had to demonstrate its capacity to handle increased resource flows with maximum efficiency. The Committee also stressed the need for the report to give proper weight to social development elements, to address the issue of the harmonization of global economic and social strategies with national planning objectives, and to include recommendations for specific actions as well as alternative options. Consultations on the report will continue with, among others, CCSQ (OPS) itself and ACC.

6. The Committee agreed to review the experience of the system in programming non-UNDP resources in order to formulate guidelines for utilizing country programming as a frame of reference. In that connexion, the Committee would draw upon a study on the subject being undertaken by the UNDP which would examine the response of UNDP and of the agencies through country programming to the requirements of self-reliance and the implementation of "New Dimensions" in technical co-operation, including government execution and technical co-operation among developing countries.

7. The Committee decided that the agenda of forthcoming sessions should include items relating to multi-agency and multidisciplinary action; intercountry programming and improvement of its linkages with country programming; and the exchange of experience between agencies on multilateral arrangements. It decided that those issues should be examined within the continuing debate on enhancing the system's responsiveness to national priorities and the requirements of the New International Economic Order. It also decided to examine at future sessions such matters as the modalities of co-operation with regional commissions in operational activities, linkages between technical co-operation/pre-investment activities and investment, and provision of special assistance to countries.

8. Furthermore, the Committee decided to convene a meeting before the end of the year to discuss technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) and economic co-operation among developing countries (ECDC) on the basis of a preliminary agenda that will review the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for promoting technical co-operation among developing countries and

the implementation of decisions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its fifth session and of other bodies concerning economic co-operation among developing countries, and will contain suggestions on combined ECDC/TCDC activities at the operational level, where appropriate.

9. Finally, the Committee reviewed the procedures for consultation which the Secretary-General intends to undertake for the designation of resident co-ordinators of the United Nations system's operational activities for development, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 34 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, and considered practical arrangements for the exercise of the function of resident co-ordinator, in the light of the understandings reached in ACC (E/1978/107, paras. 29-31) and the text of the standard letter of designation approved by ACC at its April 1979 session (E/1979/34, annex II).

Action by ACC

10. The results of the Committee's consideration of the arrangements for the exercise of the function of resident co-ordinator were discussed in ACC in its July 1979 session. A text setting out these arrangements is reproduced in the annex below. As noted in paragraph 3 of that text, the arrangements should be considered as provisional, and subject to revision in the light both of experience and of further decisions on the modalities of implementation of paragraph 33 of General Assembly resolution 32/197, as well as other related provisions of section V of the annex to that resolution.

Annex

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE FUNCTION OF RESIDENT CO-ORDINATOR

(General Assembly resolution 32/197, annex, para. 34)

1. The purpose of the present note is to develop, in the light of paragraph 28 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 a/ and the understandings reached in ACC, the broad framework within which the responsibilities entrusted to the resident co-ordinator, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/197, will be exercised. The relevant paragraph (34) of the annex to that resolution states,

"On behalf of the United Nations system, over-all responsibility for, and co-ordination of, operational activities for development carried out at the country level should be entrusted to a single official to be designated taking into account the sectors of particular interest to the countries of assignment, in consultation with and with the consent of the Government concerned, who should exercise team leadership and be responsible for evolving, at the country level, a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes. These tasks should be carried out in conformity with the priorities established by the competent national authorities and with the assistance, as necessary, of joint interagency advisory groups. Subject to the requirements of individual countries, steps should be taken to unify the country offices of the various United Nations organizations."

2. As agreed in ACC, in respect of all matters connected with the management of the UNDP programme, the resident co-ordinator of the United Nations system's operational activities for development, in his/her capacity as UNDP resident representative, will be directly responsible to the Administrator of UNDP. He/She will be responsible to the heads of those organizations that utilize the UNDP resident representative as their field representative in matters concerning their respective activities. ACC further recognized that these arrangements, which aim at better co-ordination of operational activities for development by the

a/ This paragraph reads as follows:

"28. Restructuring measures in respect of the operational activities of the United Nations system for development should serve to promote the achievement of the following objectives:

"(a) A real increase in the flow of resources for such activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;

"(b) The assistance provided should be in conformity with the national objectives and priorities of the recipient countries;

"(c) The orientation of these activities and the allocation of available resources for the activities to fully reflect the over-all strategies, policies and priorities of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

"(d) The achievement of optimum efficiency and the reduction of administrative costs with a consequent increase in the proportion of resources available to meet the assistance requirements of recipient countries."

United Nations system, do not affect relations between Governments and individual organizations of the United Nations system or the direct lines of authority and communication between the representatives of these organizations at the country level and their own executive heads.

3. The arrangements proposed below should be considered as provisional, and subject to revision in the light both of experience and of further decisions on the modalities of implementation of paragraph 33 of General Assembly resolution 32/197, b/ as well as other related provisions of section V of the annex to that resolution.

Functions

4. Paragraph 34 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 specifically identifies three separate, though interrelated, sets of responsibilities for the resident co-ordinators as follows: "[to be entrusted] on behalf of the United Nations system [with] over-all responsibility for and co-ordination of operational activities carried out at the country level"; "to exercise team leadership"; and "to be responsible for evolving at the country level a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes".

5. The exercise of the above functions should be based on the principle that co-ordination of operational activities at the national level is a prerogative of the recipient Government. The main aim of the resident co-ordinator, in promoting the proper harmonization of the United Nations system's inputs into such activities, should thus be to facilitate and support the exercise by the Government of its own co-ordination responsibilities.

6. The provisions of paragraph 53 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, which states that "in the field, [interagency] co-ordination should be pursued in conformity with the objectives and priorities of the Government concerned and should be supportive of the local co-ordination arrangements established by that Government", are also directly relevant in this connexion and place the resident co-ordinators' functions outlined above in their proper perspective.

Mechanisms for co-ordination and consultations c/

7. Consultations and co-ordination at the country level must be approached in a very pragmatic and flexible way, in view of the considerable differences that exist among countries, in terms of requirements for and approaches to operational

b/ This paragraph states that "At the country level, there should be improved coherence of action and effective integration, in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the Government concerned, of the various sectoral inputs from the United Nations system. The United Nations Development Programme country-programming process should be utilized as a frame of reference for the operational activities carried out and financed by the organizations of the United Nations system from their own resources."

c/ As regards the application of the arrangements set out in this section of the report, it is understood that agencies and programmes which do not have resident field representatives in the country or use the resident representative as their field representative would be associated in these arrangements, through this official acting on their behalf or through their project officers or through other appropriate means.

activities, and in terms of the actual modalities developed by national authorities for co-ordination and linkages among operational activities supported by the United Nations system and other external sources of assistance.

8. In this context, the responsibility of the resident co-ordinator for evolving a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance must be exercised taking fully into account the sectoral requirements of the countries concerned, and in the light of the priorities established by the competent national authorities. At the same time, it is recognized that the extent to which the programmes of the United Nations system can acquire a multidisciplinary dimension depends on the extent to which the programmes of the Government, of which they are an integral part, acquire the same characteristics. This should therefore be approached as a shared task of all parties engaged in operational activities for development in the country, involving on the one hand the Government and on the other hand the organizations of the United Nations system acting as a team under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator. The concept of team leadership involves a co-ordinating role and implies that agency representatives should, inter alia, act as the technical advisers in their respective fields to the resident co-ordinator, who should respect their specialized competence and take their advice into account.

9. The resident co-ordinator should, as part of his/her functions, endeavour constantly to strengthen linkages and co-operation with the Government's co-ordinating mechanism, so as to ensure that the contribution of the United Nations system makes the maximum impact on the development of the country. The resident co-ordinator should also ensure that the Government has access to information on available funds, expertise and facilities from the system as a whole.

10. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197, the tasks assigned to the resident co-ordinator might be carried out as necessary with the assistance of joint interagency advisory groups. The wishes of the Government concerned, as well as local circumstances and requirements, should guide the resident co-ordinator in developing, in co-operation with agencies, the interagency consultative arrangements which can most effectively support the Government in the performance of its responsibilities for the planning, programming, review and evaluation of the operational activities carried out in the country, and for promoting a multidisciplinary dimension in the sectoral development assistance received from the United Nations system. A main concern should be the promotion of an effective dialogue and interaction with the Government's authorities concerned, particularly the Government's co-ordinating mechanism. The successful operation of any such arrangements will clearly require the full participation of all United Nations organizations involved in operational activities in the country.

11. Consultations taking place with the Government, as well as at the interorganizational level, should aim at compatibility, complementarity and linkage among the development activities undertaken by the Government with the assistance of organizations and should serve to promote an effective integration, in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the Government, of the various sectoral inputs of the United Nations system. Joint periodic reviews of current and planned activities, giving particular attention to cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary activities, could be one important technique to be utilized for

this purpose. Such programme reviews should be so organized as to provide the Government, particularly when it is to determine its priority areas for assistance from various sources, with timely advice from the United Nations system, reflecting a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral assistance programmes.

12. Similarly, at the stages in which programmes are being formulated, executed and evaluated, as appropriate, arrangements will need to be made, with the agreement of the Government, which without affecting its responsibilities or those of the executing organizations concerned, would enable the resident co-ordinator to be kept effectively and closely informed in order to facilitate the discharge of his/her responsibilities under paragraph 34 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197.

Reporting arrangements

13. An annual country review report should be prepared by the resident co-ordinator, under his own responsibility but after consultation with the representatives of all the organizations concerned. This report as well as other ad hoc reports to the Secretary-General, where these concern matters falling within the responsibility of the executive heads of any organization of the United Nations system, will be copied to them for such consideration and consequential action as they may deem necessary. Such reports could be on matters relevant to the development situation of the country or in connexion with ad hoc assignments entrusted by the Secretary-General to the resident co-ordinator.

* * *

14. There are a number of principles already established by ACC d/ on relations and exchanges of information between resident representatives and United Nations organizations engaged in operational activities at the country level which should also apply mutatis mutandis to the relations between the resident co-ordinator and relevant United Nations organizations. The exercise by the resident co-ordinator of his/her co-ordinating and team leadership role will be greatly facilitated by the systematic application of those principles.

d/ See document E/4336.