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TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Organizational and substantive arrangements for the
high-level meeting to review technical co-operation
among developing countries, to be held in 1980

Report of the Administrator of the United Nations
Development Programme

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, the General Assembly, taking note of the report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and endorsing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, 1/ inter alia, decided to entrust the over-all intergovernmental review of technical co-operation among developing countries within the United Nations system to a high-level meeting of representatives of all States participating in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to be convened by the Administrator of the Programme in accordance with the provisions of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The Assembly further requested the Administrator to report to the thirty-fourth session on the organizational and substantive arrangements for the first meeting, to be held in 1980.

II. FUNCTIONS OF THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

2. In paragraph 62 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, Recommendation 37 prescribes that the High-Level Meetings should carry out the following functions:

(a) Reviewing the progress made in implementing the tasks entrusted to the United Nations development system by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action;

1/ A/CONF.79/13/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11).

(b) Ensuring that efforts to strengthen technical co-operation among developing countries are sustained within the United Nations development system;

(c) Supporting new policies and innovative approaches to further the development of technical co-operation among developing countries;

(d) Considering the availability of financial resources and their effective use by the United Nations development system, without prejudice to existing programmes;

(e) Ensuring co-ordination of the promotional and operational technical co-operation among developing countries activities of the United Nations development system.

3. In paragraph 64, the Recommendation states: "These meetings shall report to the General Assembly through the UNDP Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council."

4. Bearing the foregoing in mind, together with other relevant provisions in the Plan of Action which will be cited as appropriate, the Administrator proposes the following arrangements.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Secretariat services for the Meeting

5. In accordance with the General Assembly decision cited in paragraph 1 above, and taking also into account Recommendation 34 (paras. 58-59 of the Plan of Action), the Administrator will be responsible for all secretarial arrangements for the High-Level Meeting. The UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries will act as the substantive secretariat of the meeting, with the collaboration of the UNDP Division of External Relations. Conference services for the meeting will be provided by the United Nations Department of Conference Services, while the United Nations Department of Public Information will provide the usual press coverage of the meeting.

Participation in the meeting

6. In his designated capacity as convenor of the Meeting, the Administrator will issue invitations to participate in the meeting in accordance with the provisions of the General Assembly resolution 33/134 and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, as follows:

(a) All States participating in the United Nations Development Programme;

(b) The United Nations Council for Namibia, in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 32/9 E of 4 November 1977;

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(c) Representatives of organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices, to participate in that capacity in the Meeting in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976;

(d) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized in its region by the Organization of African Unity to participate in the Meeting in the capacity of observers in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3412 (XXX) of 28 November 1975;

(e) The specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the regional commissions and other interested organs of the United Nations to participate in the Meeting in accordance with paragraph 63 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action;

(f) Interested subregional, regional and interregional intergovernmental organizations to participate in the Meeting in accordance with paragraph 63 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

7. The Administrator further proposes that, in view of their capability to assist in the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries as recognized in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, interested non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be invited to be represented by observers. In addition, in view of the importance of non-governmental professional and technical organizations, particularly in developing countries with special expertise to help implement the Recommendations of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the Administrator proposes that all States participating in the Meeting should consider including representatives of these organizations in their delegations whenever possible.

Rules of procedure

8. The Administrator is preparing provisional rules of procedure for submission to and adoption by the Meeting. These provisional rules which are based on the standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences, in particular those of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, will be circulated prior to the Meeting. They will provide, inter alia, for election by the Meeting of a President, 18 Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur.

9. Based on previous practice, it is recommended that Governments should start consultations early on the nomination of candidates to fill these elective posts with a view to agreeing on a slate of candidates equal to the number of positions to be filled, thus allowing all officers of the Meeting to be elected by acclamation and dispensing with the requirement of a secret ballot.

Languages

10. The Administrator has taken note of the decision of the General Assembly in paragraph 11 of its resolution 33/134 pursuant to which Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish will be the official languages of the Meeting.

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Structure and duration

11. Proposals for the structure and duration (and therefore dates) of the Meeting are set out hereunder at paragraphs 31 to 40 so that these may be judged in relation to the Administrator's observations and recommendations regarding substantive arrangements for the Meeting.

Location

12. In accordance with Recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which states, inter alia, that "These meetings should be held in the same place as, and prior to, sessions of the UNDP Governing Council", and bearing in mind the assumptions and understandings expressed in the financial implications statements (see A/C.2/33/L.34 and A/C.5/33/107) submitted to the General Assembly when it considered the draft resolution which became resolution 33/134, the Administrator will convene the High-Level Meeting in 1980 at Geneva.

IV. SUBSTANTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

13. In considering substantive arrangements for the first Meeting in 1980, the Administrator has been guided by the purposes and functions prescribed in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action already cited in paragraphs 1 and 3 above. These clearly combine review of progress to date in implementation of the Plan with forward-looking examination of possible new initiatives, policies, and procedures based upon that experience and upon the studies and analyses referred to in Recommendation 34, paragraph 59 (b) and (h). The following proposals have been evolved to respond to these two broad functions of the Meetings.

Preparatory activities

14. Final preparations will be made by the Administrator, bearing in mind any views expressed by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

15. The Administrator proposes that final preparation by Governments for their participation in the Meeting may be assisted by an informal pre-Meeting consultation and briefing, as practised in connexion with other bodies. For this first High-Level Meeting, and in order to ensure ample time for reporting to their Governments, it is proposed that the Administrator meet with delegations of all States participating in UNDP on 2 April 1980, at New York, for these purposes.

16. In addition to various technical consultations with UNDP on papers for the Meeting, all organizations of the United Nations development system will consult together on their preparations for the 1980 High-Level Meeting during a forthcoming subject-oriented session of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operations) of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), on Co-operation among Developing Countries.

17. In collaboration with the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) of ACC in response to Recommendation 32, paragraph 56 (f) and Recommendation 34 (c) of the Plan of Action (paragraphs 56, 58 and 59 of the Plan of Action), the UNDP Division of Information will carry out special pre-Meeting support-information activities; will provide specialized information facilities at the Meeting additional to the press coverage by the United Nations Department of Public Information referred to in paragraph 5 above; and will ensure post-Meeting information support, as part of its intensified programme mandate to promote the technical co-operation among developing countries.

Progress reporting

18. It is proposed that the major substantive item on the agenda of the Meeting will be review of implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. In this connexion, the Administrator wishes to note an important question of clarity as to the scope of his responsibilities in reporting on progress in implementation of the Plan, as between a total survey which would encompass actions by Governments of developing countries, and of developed countries in support, by bilateral or other means not seeking direct support of the United Nations development system; and action by the United Nations development system on the tasks entrusted to it by the Plan.

19. The Administrator interprets Recommendation 37 and its subparagraphs (a) to (e) as clearly calling for the submission of a progress report on implementation by the United Nations development system of those tasks entrusted to it in the Plan of Action. The progress report will be prepared by the UNDP Special Unit for technical co-operation among developing countries in full collaboration with organizations of the system. As regards action by Governments to implement the Plan, not requiring the direct support of the system, while a perspective on all such activity is clearly also essential if a total assessment is to be made of the breadth and intensity of the whole international development community's response to the Plan, the Administrator does not find that he has been expressly mandated to carry out such a survey.

20. UNDP will therefore concentrate on a progress report by the United Nations development system. However, and especially in order to obtain insights into "new ideas, concepts and approaches" and "suggestions to expedite progress through new actions and initiatives" as urged in Recommendation 34, paragraph 59 (b) and (h), the Administrator will seek the co-operation of Governments through the UNDP Resident Representatives in receiving any information that Governments may wish to provide for purposes of further informing the High-Level Meeting, but without in any way undertaking a monitoring function or a formal survey.

21. The progress report document from the United Nations development system will proceed most especially from the tasks requested of the system in paragraph 45, Recommendation 22, and Recommendations 32, 33, 34 and 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (paras. 45, 56-59, 62) with additional reference to the many requests relating to the interregional and regional levels in the Plan. Since the reporting period will be constrained essentially to calendar year 1979 by reason of the considerable advance time required to enable the translation and

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distribution of documents to Governments, the Administrator will endeavour, in consultation with the organizations of the system, to provide updated information to the Meeting on subsequent action to help implement the Plan during the first half of 1980.

Other substantive documentation

22. It will be appreciated that for this first High-Level Meeting the Administrator has not had direction by participant Governments as to the studies and analyses envisaged for the attention of High-Level Meetings, in particular in Recommendation 34, paragraph 59 (b) and (h), to be prepared by the UNDP Special Unit for technical co-operation among developing countries. Nor by definition can there be adequate time to act on recommendations for such studies from the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. The Administrator has therefore used his own judgement in selecting a number of studies which it is hoped can be completed in time to form additional documentation for the 1980 Meeting, all of course in close consultation with and drawing upon the work of the organizations of the United Nations development system.

23. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action clearly states in paragraph 15 that technical co-operation among developing countries is "a key instrument" for economic co-operation among developing countries and establishes that one of the objectives of technical co-operation is "to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to identify and analyse together the main issues of their development and to formulate the requisite strategies in the conduct of their economic relations". The close relationship that exists between technical co-operation among developing countries and economic co-operation among developing countries, the former being an important means for achieving national and collective self-reliance and the latter being an important objective of such self-reliance, has also been recognized by a number of international fora including the General Assembly and recently held fifth session of UNCTAD. The Administrator will, therefore, endeavour to report on the special potential of technical co-operation among developing countries in promoting certain specific aspects of economic co-operation among developing countries within the context of the New International Economic Order.

24. Equally because it is "a necessary condition if technical co-operation among developing countries is to become a major element in the development process", the strengthening of transport and communications among developing countries will be the subject of another study. This will in no way attempt to undertake those actual technical studies which it is for Governments of developing countries to request, but will rather attempt to summarize the state of and already identified need for development of transport and communications among developing countries as of 1979, including of course proposals and plans for the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa.

25. The Administrator may also endeavour to report on the special potential of technical co-operation among developing countries in evolving alternative development strategies and techniques to tackle some other development problems common to many developing countries, including strengthening networks among

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development institutions and professional and technical associations in developing countries. The subject-matter of any eventual study to be undertaken will be determined later and reported on orally by the Administrator to the General Assembly.

26. In view of Recommendation 37, paragraph 62 (d), which describes a function of the High-Level Meetings as "considering the availability of financial resources and their effective use by the United Nations development system, without prejudice to existing programmes", and further in view of the special attention given to financial arrangements of all kinds and sources for technical co-operation among developing countries in Recommendation 38 (para. 65 of the Plan of Action), the Administrator has judged that he should tender a special paper on this subject to the Meeting.

27. Given the limited time available since adoption of the Plan of Action, and subject to the even more limited time available to effect the proper strengthening of the UNDP Special Unit for technical co-operation among developing countries following decisions of the UNDP Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session in June-July 1979, it is hoped that the foregoing additional papers will constitute a first, indicative fulfilment of the provision of studies and analyses to the Meetings referred to in Recommendation 34.

28. The Administrator further proposes to seek the guidance of the 1980 High-Level Meeting as to the subjects it would wish UNDP to address in special studies and analyses for the next Meeting, in 1981.

Provisional agenda of the Meeting

29. The Administrator will submit an annotated draft provisional agenda for the Meeting in advance to all participating Governments. At present the following provisional agenda is envisaged:

1. Opening of the Meeting by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.
2. Election of the President of the Meeting.
3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
4. Adoption of the agenda.
5. Organization of work.
6. Election of officers other than the President.

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7. Credentials of representatives to the Meeting: 2/
 - (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee;
 - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.
8. Review of progress made in implementing the tasks entrusted to the United Nations Development system by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (Recommendation 37 (a)):
 - (a) Action by the governing bodies of the system (Recommendation 32);
 - (b) Progress in promotional activities of the system (policies and procedures; educational, training and information activities; etc.) (Recommendations 26, 32, 33, 34);
 - (c) Progress in operational activities of the system, including use of the capacities of developing countries (Recommendations 31, 32, 34, 37);
 - (d) Co-ordination of the promotional and operational activities of the system (Recommendations 34, 37 (e)).
9. New policies and innovative approaches to further the development of technical co-operation among developing countries (Recommendation 37 (c)):
 - (a) Role of technical co-operation among developing countries in promoting economic co-operation among developing countries (para. 15);
 - (b) Role of technical co-operation among developing countries in strengthening transport and communications among developing countries (Recommendation 30);
 - (c) Role of technical co-operation among developing countries in strengthening networks among development institutions and professional and technical associations in developing countries (Recommendation 11);
 - (d) Role of technical co-operation among developing countries in evolving strategies and techniques to tackle some other development problems common to many developing countries. 3/

2/ According to established practice, the provisional rules of procedure will provide that the credentials of the representatives to the High-Level Meeting should be issued either by the Head of the State of Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and that a Credentials Committee shall be appointed at the beginning of the Meeting with the same membership, as far as possible, as that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

3/ See para. 25 above.

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10. Financial resources and arrangements for technical co-operation among developing countries (Recommendations 37 (d), 38).

11. Work programme for the 1981 High-Level Meeting:

(a) Preparation of progress reporting to and studies for;

(b) Organization of work.

12. Adoption of the report of the Meeting.

30. Within the above tentative provisional agenda, there will be progress-reporting on and opportunity for review of technical co-operation among developing countries measures in favour of least developed, land-locked, island and most seriously affected developing countries; newly independent countries; and national liberation movements.

Structure of the Meeting

31. On the basis of the foregoing proposals, the structure of the 1980 High-Level Meeting may next be considered. In examining this question, the Administrator has taken into account the obvious intention of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in adopting the Buenos Aires Plan of Action including Recommendation 37, and of the General Assembly in endorsing that Recommendation, that there should be adequate provision at each High-Level Meeting for a plenary debate, by high-level representatives of all States participating in UNDP, on implementation to date of the Plan of Action.

32. In addition, taking into account the General Assembly's endorsement of paragraph 63 of Recommendation 37, ^{4/} and the fact that it is primarily the work of the United Nations development system in helping to implement the Plan of Action that is the focus of review of the High-Level Meeting; and that the role of other intergovernmental organizations is of critical importance in implementing the Plan according to Recommendations 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, paragraph 43, and Recommendation 22 in particular, adequate time should be reserved for statements by representatives of the organizations of the United Nations development system and of other intergovernmental organizations.

33. This clearly requires estimating for a plenary debate requiring not less than eight meetings or four days, and most probably five days. In the circumstances, faced with an extremely limited time for the general debate and a great number of participants, it is strongly recommended that, in accordance with the practice followed by recent major United Nations conferences, the High-Level Meeting should adopt a time-limit for statements in the general debate, which should normally be 15 minutes for the representative of each State and 10 minutes for other

^{4/} Para. 63 reads as follows: "United Nations organs, organizations and bodies, including the regional commissions, and other subregional, regional and interregional intergovernmental organizations should participate actively in the work of these meetings." (emphasis added).

participants. Other measures to accommodate the large number of speakers in the limited time available for the general debate might be recommended, such as the presenting of statements on behalf of several States or groups of States sharing common positions.

34. The Administrator does not believe that there is need for a formal parallel committee process, since in the stated functions of at least the first, 1980, Meeting no special report or plan or other instrument is envisaged as requiring extensive debate and drafting in committee.

35. On the other hand, the need for two or more informal representative working groups should be taken into account in forecasting the structure and attendant conference-servicing needs of the Meeting. The Administrator would suggest, for example, that the Meeting may well decide that consideration of the question of financial resources and arrangements for technical co-operation among developing countries should be studied in the first instance in detail by such a working group, which would draft a recommendation for a decision by the plenary. Other questions concerning new policies and innovative approaches to further the development of technical co-operation among developing countries, including detailed consideration of substantive studies and drafting recommendations for future action by the United Nations development system, might require a second working group.

36. It is also suggested that the Meeting should decide on at least two important matters governing the scope and content of its future sessions, namely, the scope of progress-reporting by the Administrator as discussed in paragraphs 17 to 19 above; and the specific subject-matter or focus of studies and analyses for new policies and innovative approaches to further the development of technical co-operation among developing countries mentioned in paragraphs 22 and 28 above. These points, too, will require delineation and agreed drafting by a working group of participating States. The Meeting may decide to assign these planning and steering functions to the second working group.

37. Bearing the foregoing consideration in mind, the Administrator proposes a structure for the 1980 Meeting as follows:

(a) Plenary high-level debate on items 8, 9 and 10 of the tentative draft provisional agenda outlined in paragraph 29 above, in a maximum of 10 consecutive meetings (five days);

(b) Provision for two simultaneous working groups to meet for three to four days each, to examine and draft recommendations on substantive and financial aspects of the agenda and supportive documentation as well as on item 11 of the agenda concerning future Meetings;

(c) Provision for up to a further three (3) plenary meetings, over a sixth and/or seventh day, to consider and adopt the final report of the Meeting.

38. In making these estimations and calculations, the Administrator wishes to re-emphasize that the General Assembly has decided that the High-Level Meetings should be open to all States participating in the United Nations Development

Programme, numbering at time of submitting this report slightly in excess of the membership of the General Assembly itself; and that the need to allow for the consequent length of plenary debate on this manifestly important dimension of international development co-operation is proportionate to this intended size of the High-Level Meeting.

Duration and dates of the Meeting

39. Bearing in mind all of the foregoing, the Administrator recommends that the duration of the 1980 High-Level Meeting should be established as follows:

(a) Five (5) days of plenary meetings and simultaneous sessions of working groups as recommended in paragraph 37 above;

(b) Up to a further one and a half (1-1/2) days of plenary meetings, as may be necessary, over a sixth and/or seventh day.

40. As regards dates for the Meeting, there will be obvious advantages of economy for delegations, and of servicing and administrative efficiency for the secretariat, if the Meeting can be held as close to the date of the opening of the twenty-seventh session of the UNDP Governing Council as possible, which is scheduled for Monday, 2 June 1980. Taking due account of this and of all other factors set out in foregoing paragraphs, the Administrator proposes that the dates for the High-Level Meeting be established as follows:

(a) The Meeting to be opened on Monday, 26 May 1980, and to continue in plenary session (with relevant working groups as previously proposed) through Friday, 30 May 1980;

(b) The Meeting to resume session on Monday, 2 June 1980, and/or Tuesday, 3 June 1980, to debate and adopt its report. The opening meeting of the UNDP Governing Council would still take place on Monday, 2 June 1980, as decided, but with the possibility of its resumption on Wednesday, 4 June 1980, if there is need to accommodate Tuesday, 5 June, meetings of the High-Level Meeting.

V. CONCLUSIONS

41. In conclusion, in his capacity as the convenor, the Administrator wishes to re-emphasize that the General Assembly has endorsed the recommendation of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries that these Meetings should have high-level representation. Exceptional importance was thus assigned to the review and forward-looking deliberations of the Meetings, consonant with the significance which all States participating in the Conference manifestly attached to the heightened role and operative function of technical co-operation among developing countries in international co-operation for development. The Administrator invites the due consideration of all Governments of all States participating in the United Nations Development Programme to these points in their preparations for their participation in the first such High-Level Meeting in May 1980.