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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
Second regular session of 1989  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND  
THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS SYSTEM IN THAT FIELD

Human resources development and the activities of the United  
Nations system in that field

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Secretary-General was requested to prepare a comprehensive report on human resources development and the activities of the system in that field by Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/81. The report discusses the concept of human resources development, makes reference to earlier United Nations reports and studies and describes the activities of individual United Nations organs and organizations in the field of human resources development. A final section of the report contains conclusions and recommendations. The Secretary-General notes that one of the challenges of the coming period will be to maintain and improve social conditions in times of austerity. Human resources development has emerged as a priority area of activity for United Nations organizations. Among the recommendations made by the Secretary-General are that the organizations of the system, through the existing machinery of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, should work together to formulate a common operational definition of human resources development. The efforts of United Nations bodies, including the regional commissions, to make the concept operational are highlighted. Joint programmes and other kinds of concerted actions could be implemented to improve the co-ordination of United Nations activities in the field of human resources development. Human resources development, which is by its nature an evolving process, should be kept under review by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The priority that Member States wish to accord to human resources development should also be fully reflected in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Council, by resolution 1987/81, requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on human resources development and the activities of the system as a whole in that field, containing conclusions and recommendations, to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council, for consideration and appropriate action. The resolution also invited Governments of Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information on their experience in the development of human resources, to be reflected in the report.

2. The present report is being submitted in response to resolution 1987/81. The Secretary-General has consulted with all organs and organizations of the United Nations system in preparing the report. Regarding national experiences in the development of human resources, Member States have not directly furnished the Secretary-General with information that could be reflected in the report. The Secretary-General asked the United Nations regional economic commissions to provide information on national experience available to them. However, the information forwarded to the Secretary-General is quite limited and incomplete. The present report therefore does not contain specific information on the experience of individual Member States in the development of their human resources.

3. The report contains three sections. The first discusses the concept of human resources development. The second section provides information on the existing and planned activities of the United Nations system in the field of human resources development. Earlier United Nations reports and studies and recent relevant decisions of United Nations intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies on the subject of human resources development are noted. This section then describes the activities of individual organs and organizations of the United Nations system, based on information submitted to the Secretary-General. The final section contains the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General.

## II. THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

4. The concept of human resources development, which has undergone considerable evolution in recent years, is broad and complex. The development of human resources is at the same time an essential precondition for development and the ultimate aim of development. It is thus both a means and an end. Indeed it has come to represent a distinct approach to development that can be contrasted with more traditional approaches that focus on economic variables.

5. Such an approach to development cannot be said to be entirely new. In 1967 the Secretary-General had prepared a major report on the development and utilization of human resources in developing countries (E/4353). In the past several years the concept of human resources development, which originally had been defined somewhat narrowly in terms of labour supply or the provision of skills, has been expanded. It is now widely accepted that human resources development refers to a process of human-centred development that seeks to enhance the full capacities

and capabilities of human beings. This approach focuses on the human dimension and insists that people come first. The Committee for Development Planning, in its 1988 report, concludes that "the ultimate objective of economic development should be human development". 1/

6. Those advocating this expanded concept of human resources development are not unconcerned with economic growth and the output of goods and services. They indeed assert that emphasizing the full development of human resources is both an efficient and effective way of stimulating growth and increases in output. It is widely believed that the human factor will be crucial to economic growth in the future. The Amman Statement of the 1988 United Nations Development Programme/North-South Round Table contends:

By the year 2000, human development will acquire a new importance and magnitude both for developing and industrialized countries as competitiveness, productivity, skilled labour, knowledge-based employment and management capacity become the key factors of economic development. The largest part of world output will be ensured not because of additions to capital, but thanks to improvements in people's capacities. People, armed with specialized education, skills, training and supported by the new technological facilities of informatics and telecommunications will become the engine of economic growth. 2/

7. There is no commonly accepted definition as to what in practice constitutes human resources development, but the elements of human resources development can be identified. The Committee on Development Planning has suggested that human resources development programmes can be considered within three broad categories. These relate to (a) education and training; (b) health services, water supply and sanitation; and (c) food security and nutrition policies. 3/ The members of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination have stated that in their view "human resources development include everything that can give human beings the capability of full life - in their work, skills, education, health, knowing how to handle new technologies and culture" (E/1988/42, p. 7). Another United Nations report refers to "a wide range of issues, including nutrition, literacy, health, shelter and appropriate technology" (E/1987/83, p. 6).

8. Human resources development is a complex process made up of various components, which must be integrated. As the Administrator of UNDP has written (DP/1986/10, p. 4):

Human resources development must be broadly defined because of its intersectoral links, for example, those between schooling, age of marriage and knowledge of family planning; between productivity and caloric intake; between education and the productivity of farmers. In the absence of a programme to create jobs and outlets for human energies, heavy investments in education and skill development only exacerbate the brain drain and place large segments of the population at the margin of development.

The need to address these intersectoral linkages undoubtedly results in increased complexity, but at the same time the wide scope of the concept of human resources

development allows it to be used as an overall framework within which development policies can be formulated. As a United Nations report concludes (E/1988/65, p. 22):

The emphasis on human development recalls and revives the awareness that people are both the objective of development and the essential means to it. It also helps to overcome an excessive compartmentalization among the areas of social policy. Experience has made it clear that advances in all areas of human resources development are mutually reinforcing: education leads to better nutrition and health, and vice versa.

The concept of human resources development thus opens a way to a more integrated view of development policy - not an unknown one, but one that has been increasingly clogged by specialization and institutionalization.

9. Since the Second World War there has been considerable progress, in all parts of the world, in enhancing human resources. Dramatic advances in literacy, life expectancy, nutrition and related fields have been recorded. The economic growth that has characterized this period has undoubtedly facilitated the increase in human resources.

10. The deteriorating economic conditions experienced by many countries in the 1980s have unfortunately brought about a reversal of these positive trends. The adjustment process imposed on many developing countries, particularly those in Latin America and Africa, has resulted in reduced spending on social services and falling standards of living, especially of the most vulnerable groups. The undeniable increase in human suffering in these countries has led to appeals for adjustment with a human face.

11. On the African continent, the problems have been particularly acute. High indebtedness, drought and desertification and protracted conflicts in different parts of the continent have severely affected prospects for development. In recognition of the crisis situation faced by many African countries, the General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (resolution S-13/2, annex). This programme devotes considerable attention to human resources development.

12. The renewed interest in human resources development is partly a reaction to the setbacks that have accompanied the adjustment process in most countries. There is indeed a strong feeling that the pendulum has now swung too far in the direction of ignoring the development of human capabilities. The effort to refocus attention on the neglected human dimension in development has been a powerful impetus to the new thinking now emerging on the role of human resources development.

13. It should not however be assumed that the current intense interest in human resources development is solely the result of the economic crisis being faced by many developing countries. In many Asian countries with vibrant economies, by contrast, there has been a fundamental re-examination of the outcome of the developmental process. As an Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) document (ST/ESCAP/601, p. 42 (1)) notes that:

There has been a growing recognition in recent years of the need to re-examine and re-direct development efforts in favour of the "human dimension". This is partly in response to the growing awareness that development in too many cases has been "successful" only in narrowly defined economic and statistical terms, while even that "success" has in many cases largely bypassed the majority of the people.

In certain developed countries economic growth and prosperity have also resulted in greater, rather than less, inequality in the distribution of income and the continuation of severe social problems.

14. Other factors accounting for the renewed interest in human resources development, many affecting developed as well as developing countries, include the spectre of labour redundancy resulting from new labour-saving technologies, changing global production patterns and their impact on labour markets, and problems encountered in efforts to upgrade and adapt human resources in an era of rapid change and world-wide economic instability.

### III. ACTIVITIES OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

15. The development of human resources has always been a major concern of the United Nations system. In recent years, organs and organizations of the system have played a leading role in broadening the concept of human resources development and in formulating plans to make the concept operational.

16. It is clear from Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/81, which requested the present report, as well as other decisions of intergovernmental bodies, that Member States believe that the operational programmes of the United Nations and other organizations of the system should reflect the priority accorded by Member States to human resources development.

17. The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in reviewing the experience of UNDP in human resources development since 1970, reiterated "its recognition that human resources development is an integral part of all development activities, not only as an instrument of self-sustained growth but also as an objective of development itself" (Governing Council decision 88/29). Similarly, the Jakarta Plan of Action, adopted by ESCAP, 4/ and the Khartoum Declaration, endorsed by ECA, 5/ seek to place human concerns at the very centre of development efforts.

18. In conformity with the decisions of intergovernmental bodies, the development of human resources has begun to emerge as a dominant theme in the operational programmes of many United Nations organizations. The annual overview report of the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination for 1987 endorses human resources development as a policy orientation for the United Nations system (E/1988/42, pp. 6-9). The development of human resources, and in particular the co-ordination of activities of the United Nations system in this domain, was the subject of the twenty-second series of joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and

Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination held in 1987. In the report of the Co-Chairmen of the joint meetings it was stated (E/1987/83, p. 11):

The Joint Meetings recognized that human development was vital to the development process and was the ultimate objective for all development efforts. Unless the human dimension in the development process was effectively promoted, life and dignity for millions of people in the world, especially in the developing countries, would remain in jeopardy.

19. In the United Nations, human resources development will be an area of emphasis in the medium-term plan beginning in 1992 (A/43/329). It will also be an area of high priority for many other United Nations organizations. A description of the activities of individual United Nations organizations and agencies in the field of human resources development follows. The activities have been grouped under two broad headings: A. Strategies for and monitoring of activities for the development and utilization of human resources; and B. Employment promotion, education and training activities.

A. Strategies for and monitoring of activities for the development and utilization of human resources

20. A main priority of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will be to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to develop and utilize information and monitoring systems. This will include assistance to member States in developing labour market information in order to monitor, and if possible anticipate, the impact of monetary, fiscal and trade policies on employment and poverty. Assistance in the establishment of adequate statistical bases and monitoring mechanisms at the national level, in which employers' and workers' organizations should be fully involved, will be a priority in the coming years.

21. At the international level, ILO will continue to monitor the employment implications of world structural change, and particularly the world-wide employment effects of domestic actions taken by industrialized countries to improve the functioning of their own economies. These activities will be designed as part of a United Nations system-wide effort to develop social indicators to monitor the impact of economic policies on social conditions.

22. In developing countries ILO will integrate more fully its work on population change into the analysis of labour markets and will continue to promote the integration of population concerns into employment and development policies. Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups in the labour market, especially women and older workers.

23. An important aim of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is to assist member countries to develop human resources capable of planning and executing development programmes. Analysis of available skills and training institutions is being continuously carried out by FAO at the regional as well as national levels. Monitoring human resources development activities is carried out through technical backstopping and evaluation missions. In addition,

the Interdepartmental Working Group on Training in FAO has the responsibility of overseeing all activities carried out by the Organization in this field and of providing guidelines on orientations and priorities for programme development.

24. The human resources development programmes of FAO concentrate on three major areas: (a) strengthening national training and rural institutions and the establishment of national policies for human resources development in the rural sector; (b) preparation and use of suitable training programmes and materials that meet the needs of agricultural and rural populations; and (c) training in each member country of a core of teachers and trainers. FAO pays special attention to small farmers, including women farmers and rural youth.

25. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), development must be a process centred on man, furthering the fulfilment of individuals and societies. Human resources development is seen as a long-term effort aimed at directing the creative potential of every man and woman towards the independent and endogenous development of communities. It is essential to take into consideration the cultural dimensions of human resources development strategies in this process, by adapting them to different socio-cultural contexts. In fact, on the basis of the essential components of cultural identity, societies are able to stimulate their development, participate in international exchanges on an equal footing and gain from outside contributions. If human resources development efforts neglect these fundamental aspects, they run the risk of not being fully effective, or even weakening the creative and innovative capacity of the populations concerned.

26. A list of 71 human resources indicators has been prepared by UNESCO. Most of them relate to the state of human conditions. UNESCO publishes statistical yearbooks and other documents containing national, regional and international information related to those indicators.

27. The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned with the appropriate development of health personnel required to achieve the goal of health for all through primary health care. Many countries now realize the need for accurate and relevant information on health personnel and related health systems research to enable decision-makers to make rational and realistic choices among alternative policies in human resources development. An increasing number are setting up such information systems. However, there is frequently no system to assess the relevance of information collected or to ensure that research is undertaken in response to a direct need.

28. The aim of the WHO Development of Human Resources for Health (HMD) Programme is to co-operate with countries to ensure that, by 1995, the majority will have developed the necessary human resources for comprehensive national health systems based on primary health care, and the others will be at a stage of development that will permit them to achieve it by the end of the century. The main thrust of the Programme is to promote and co-operate with member States in: (a) strengthening inter-sectoral co-ordination to facilitate implementation of integrated health systems and health personnel development policies and health personnel plans in line with national health for all strategies; (b) strengthening of systems and

practices for the optimal deployment, utilization and continuing education of all health workers, especially those working at the district level; (c) promoting and strengthening national health personnel information systems and research leading to effective utilization of information by decision-makers; (d) strengthening the capacity, and reinforcing the resources, of educational institutions and programmes; (e) developing, with community involvement, innovative approaches in educational programmes, including training for leadership, to increase their relevance to health needs; and (f) the development and production of locally appropriate teaching and learning materials. One of the essential components of primary health care - community involvement - places great stress on health promotion where individuals will be increasingly required to take decisions on their life style and health, as well as on the trend towards "self care".

29. The integrated development of plans for national health systems with those for health personnel will continue to be promoted in order to ensure the establishment of sound policies that take into account the social and economic issues related to the development of human resources for health. Promotion of community involvement at all stages in the development, implementation and evaluation of manpower policies and plans is an important feature of the programme.

30. The World Bank assesses human resources development through a broad, ongoing programme of studies on the coverage, quality and costs of education, training, health and other social services. Monitoring the participation of disadvantaged groups in education, training and the labour market has become a standard feature of the Bank's country economic and sector work with special attention to monitoring the provision of basic education.

31. The Bank is participating in a world-wide education initiative with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNESCO, and UNDP, leading to a major international conference with the theme "Education for All", to be held in 1990.

32. The Bank hopes to collaborate increasingly with UNESCO to improve the coverage and quality of comparative educational statistics in order to strengthen the collection and analysis of statistics for sectoral planning and management. This concern is reflected in specific investment components in many Bank-financed projects.

33. In the area of human resources development and training, the Bank attaches high priority to the development of labour market information systems to monitor labour market performance and appropriate feedback to ongoing training activities.

34. The Bank's living standards measurement surveys are an important tool for identifying needs in education, health and nutrition. Bank lending for industry, energy and agriculture is based increasingly on the upstream assessment of potential impact on local populations and on the environment. As regards the financing of human resources development, the Bank is encouraging the testing of new approaches to involve local communities, employers and non-governmental organizations, at the same time seeking to increase their participation in planning and decision-making.



35. During the 1980s, UNDP emphasized the need for an integrated approach to all aspects of human development, at both national and international levels. It supported operationally the activities of developing countries in this area. In this context, since 1983, the UNDP Development Study Programme has sponsored a series of round tables on human development. Similarly, UNDP has convened regional workshops on human resources development.

36. UNDP is determined to pursue vigorously its activities in support of developing countries' efforts in the area of human development. In the operational arena, technical assistance will be provided to developing countries, at their request, for the preparation and the implementation of integrated national plans on human development. Higher priority will be attributed, in the country programming process, to correcting the deficiencies in the management of the public and private sectors. A leading role will be played, in co-operation with other parts of the United Nations development system, in assisting Governments, at their request, to establish a balanced system of incentives to improve the capacity of their civil services, local level of administrations, the private sector and grass-roots institutions.

37. The global strategy of UNICEF is to promote the use of low-cost but effective actions to promote child survival and development. The goal is to reduce the under-five mortality rate by half by the year 2000. Remarkable progress has been achieved over the last 10 years. The UNICEF strategy is, therefore, to use the progress achieved to strengthen services to meet the basic needs of the urban and rural poor and to lay the foundation for restoring growth of household income and human resources development for sustained economic growth, especially in Africa and Latin America. UNICEF human resources development programmes pay special attention to the urban and rural poor, women farmers and small-scale producers.

38. UNICEF provides developing countries with resources and advisory technical services for strengthening their capacities to monitor and analyse the situation of children, women and other vulnerable population groups for improved planning and programming at national and sub-national levels. Social data, including information on the human resources development situation in developing countries, has been disseminated through a variety of UNICEF publications.

39. The work of UNICEF on "Adjustment with a Human Face" is receiving increasing attention. The monitoring and analysis of the human resources situation has been one of the central themes of the work in this area, which focuses on the human dimensions of structural adjustment policies and the longer-term effects of economic recession on vulnerable groups. In many developing countries UNICEF has sought to protect the poor and to develop human resources to lay the foundation for sustained development.

40. With WHO, FAO and the secretariat of the Sub-Committee on Nutrition of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, UNICEF is participating in the development of the Inter-agency Food and Nutrition Surveillance Programme. Operational guidelines were issued to all field offices on incorporating surveillance more systematically into the preparation of country programmes and projects. The priority group to be monitored is children, with an emphasis on frequent and timely reporting of a few key indicators.

41. The World Food Programme (WFP) is shifting from an emphasis on a "welfare" approach in its human resources development projects towards one that stresses self-reliance, sustainability and improved nutritional status for the poorest sections of the population. An effective way to combat the poverty cycle that is gripping many developing countries is to invest in "human capital". A primary development objective has always been to invest in the future of a country by improving the health and education of its people, particularly children. WFP promotes human resources development by feeding vulnerable groups, mothers, infants and pre-school children, and by supporting education at primary and secondary schools.

42. WFP believes that food aid in support of human resources development must be seen in a much broader context than its more traditional objectives limited to the amelioration of nutritional standards. Overcoming hunger and malnutrition will only be possible when people have acquired the health, know-how and resources to produce their own food and/or to acquire income that secures access to food. Human skills and capacities need to be extended and improved if people are to break out of poverty through income-earning activities. This translates into development projects that support training and extension, especially in rural areas. In addition, WFP is giving assistance to people's institutions such as co-operatives and rural seed banks. There are also greater efforts to combine the traditional feeding programmes with literacy, vocational and other activities that are designed to upgrade local skills, particularly those of productive women.

43. There have been both positive and negative trends in the development of the human condition in recent years among Palestine refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The positive trends may be attributed in part to the determination by the refugees to improve their situation and in part to the Agency's new strategy of concentrating scarce resources on the priority needs of the refugee population. Recently, with the co-operation of the refugees and of donor and host Governments, UNRWA diverted resources from food aid to the higher priority education and health programmes that had been threatened because of a shortage of funds. The education programme, which is described below (see para. 107), covers the basic educational needs of all refugee children, while the health programme provides a primary health care service that focuses on the vulnerable groups of the refugee population. Food aid and other assistance is extended to the most needy refugees. Living conditions for those who live in camps are being improved wherever possible and programmes are being expanded for women, young people, the disabled and other groups with special needs.

44. On the negative side, the uncertain future for the refugees, in the absence of a political settlement, continues to affect adversely their human condition. Refugees in some areas are only just beginning to rebuild their homes and their lives after enduring years of fighting and destruction. The situation of those living under occupation has sharply deteriorated following confrontations with the military authorities that have led to loss of life, injuries, curfews, school closings and loss of employment.

45. The United Nations Office at Vienna, including the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, contributes to human resources development

through its activities focused on. (a) action-oriented policies and recommendations; (b) interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research; (c) monitoring of global instruments and programmes of action; (d) support of national efforts to implement global instruments; (e) clearing-house functions at the international level, including dissemination of information on policy issues, through bulletins and newsletters; (f) inter-agency activities; and (g) advisory services and technical co-operation.

46. The programmes of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs make an important contribution to the monitoring and analysis of the state of human resources development through many ongoing activities including: (a) collection, compilation and dissemination of demographic statistics, including social, housing and human settlement statistics, population census data and statistics and indicators on special population groups; (b) the Report on the World Social Situation; and (c) monitoring, review, appraisal and analysis of the world demographic situation.

47. The United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development is preparing an end-of-decade review on science and technology for development. This major review exercise, to be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development at its tenth session, in 1989, will include a review of human resources development in the area of science and technology for development. Human resources development will also be an important component of the activities of the United Nations Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development planned for 1988-1989.

48. A major concern of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development is to assist developing countries in collecting and analysing data on the availability of human resources, including the availability of skills in economic management as well as in particular technological sectors. On the statistical and demographic side, the Department is actively engaged in assisting developing countries to launch the 1990 round of population censuses. Its programmes have seen a marked increase over the past two years in part because of increased attention being paid to housing censuses, strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems, and also because of demographic analysis and population projections, including the integration of population policies into national development planning processes.

49. ECA indicated that a significant strengthening of the capabilities of African countries to develop and make adequate use of their human resources is necessary. These efforts should be aimed at reinforcing, expanding and making more relevant the human resource base, avoiding wastage through underutilization of manpower, or loss through the brain drain, and raising productivity levels, particularly in agriculture, through various support policies and programmes and public sector interventions.

50. The development of human resources has always been an area of emphasis for the African continent. Under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development

took place at Khartoum in March 1988 as part of the follow-up to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (resolution S-13/2, annex) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. 6/ The Conference adopted The Khartoum Declaration: Towards a Human-focused Approach to Socio-economic Recovery and Development in Africa, 5/ and a number of recommendations that call for action at the national, regional and international levels.

51. International organizations were requested to undertake high priority actions aimed at supporting and enhancing the human dimension in the recovery and development programme of Africa. The Conference endorsed the proposal of UNDP for the establishment of an inter-agency task force for the assessment of Africa's human resources needs and the development of an appropriate United Nations system-wide programme of action in the field of human resources development. Regional monitoring and information exchange would be conducted by ECA. The Task Force, in consultation with national Governments, would draw up a detailed human resources development plan for submission to and approval by a special ECA meeting of ministers.

52. The work programme of ESCAP has traditionally focused on human resources development. The Commission's activities in the field of economic and social development have consistently accorded priority to those conditions which would improve productivity as well as the standard of living of the great majority of the people in the Asia-Pacific region who are included among the rural and urban poor and such other disadvantaged groups as isolated communities, indigenous minorities, women, youth and other underprivileged and vulnerable groups.

53. The Commission has in recent years been according increasing attention to projects aimed at alleviating poverty, generating increased productivity among specific disadvantaged target groups and enhancing the participation in development of all sections of society. In this connection, the secretariat has given increasing consideration, inter alia, to activities to strengthen national policy and planning, increase public awareness through information dissemination, improve understanding of the issues through research studies and surveys, and provide training to key enabler groups such as local level officials and community leaders in generating human resources development. A number of inter-sectoral projects are currently under way with human resources development as their specific focus.

54. The ESCAP secretariat in 1987 formulated a draft plan of action on human resources development for the region. The Commission adopted that plan at its forty-fourth session in April 1988 as the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, 4/ and it directed the secretariat to take steps to ensure the Plan's early and effective implementation. In follow-up to that Commission directive, the secretariat undertook a major preparatory project to formulate a package of inter-sectoral projects on human resources development for implementation by ESCAP in close co-operation with other concerned United Nations bodies and agencies in the region. The package of inter-sectoral projects was to be further considered by the Commission at its forty-fifth session in 1989.

55. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) population project strategy involves a multi-level country-oriented approach to population problems as well as to the

development of human resources and related socio-economic consequences. The current ECE work programme in the fields of population and human resources consists of several projects to be carried out with financial support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The work programme also includes a project on the time-use of women in ECE countries, which ECE is undertaking in collaboration with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

56. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) places special emphasis on the work being done and planned by the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agricultural Division on food security and nutrition and on the Joint Unit with Habitat on human settlements, emphasizing the improvement of living conditions in sub-standard housing, and with a strong human resources training element to deal with municipal administration. The work of the Social Development Division relating improvements in educational levels with questions of equity and the work of several divisions (Industry and Technology, Transport and Communications, Economic Development, International Trade and Development, etc.), in providing training services for upgrading specialized human resources of Member States is also to receive special attention.

57. Mention should be made of the work of the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) dealing with the relations between development and various demographic trends; advisory services in family planning; and training programmes to prepare national experts in these and related fields.

58. Another important contribution by the ECLAC system to the improvement of human resources is that carried out by the Latin American Institute of Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), which is very active in providing technical assistance and especially training programmes, directed toward improving human resources, in planning and related fields.

59. ESCWA has grouped the social fields under one division, the Social Development, Population and Human Settlements Division, which includes the population, labour, social development, women and human settlements activities. This facilitates the integration of the different aspects of human resources development and an inter-disciplinary approach to the question. Every two years ESCWA publishes the Demographic and Related Socio-Economic Data Sheets, which contain indicators relating to population, manpower and education for each country of the region. It is in the process of preparing a special set of social indicators covering various social issues, including participation of women, disability and aging. In addition, ESCWA will hold in November 1989 a conference on the capabilities and needs of disabled persons in the ESCWA region, whose purpose is to better integrate the large and increasing number of disabled as human resources in the development process. The 1990/1991 ESCWA work programme includes the holding of a seminar on human resources development, which will deal with the concept, content and policy issues of the subject.

B. Employment promotion, education and training activities

60. ILO indicated that new employment strategies will be necessary in the 1990s and three approaches may be used to develop them. Firstly, an analysis will be made of significant failures in domestic policies during the 1970s that contributed to economic difficulties in the 1980s. Attention will be given to the neglect of employment considerations in public investment programmes, lax controls over recurrent public expenditures, and neglect of market and efficiency considerations in the allocation of economic activity between the public and private sectors and in the design of development programmes. A second approach will be to evaluate the extent to which the policy adjustments in the 1980s could increase the demand for labour in the 1990s. Given lower growth prospects and the extent of unemployment and poverty, the design of more employment-intensive development policies, consistent with efficiency and competitiveness will be a major challenge. Thirdly, it will be necessary to examine the role of direct policy interventions and programmes to reduce poverty in the 1990s.

61. A central concern of ILO is the promotion of organizations through which unprotected and hitherto unorganized workers can improve their incomes and living conditions. Such workers must be informed of their social rights and assisted in organizing themselves to set up employment and income-generating schemes and achieve social and economic benefits with modest external support and reliance on their own resources and organization.

62. The objective of the training programme of ILO will be to prepare people, including disadvantaged groups, for productive employment by enabling them to upgrade their knowledge and skills and adapt themselves to a rapidly changing working environment. Vocational training must be responsive to the changing needs of the labour market. This means that training institutions must be able to assess the impact of economic, social and technical changes on skill requirements. They must be flexible enough to modify their courses. Work will concentrate on improving training needs assessment methods so as to make training respond to changing requirements. Activities will increasingly focus on industries and sectors affected by structural adjustment. ILO will also actively seek to improve opportunities for vocational training for disadvantaged groups - unemployed and underemployed young people, women, refugees and individuals with little formal education - to develop training techniques relevant to rural areas and to improve the delivery of skills to the informal sector.

63. A total approach to resource management, enterprise productivity and performance will be promoted. Training packages will be developed and field assistance provided in priority areas such as maintenance management, waste reduction, quality management and energy conservation. Training in accountancy procedures will be emphasized and new types of accounting projects will be linked with management information systems designed for optimum control and use of resources. Entrepreneurship training will also be promoted. ILO efforts to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises will be continued through practical advice to member States on policies to create a favourable business climate for local small enterprises.

64. FAO assists member countries in the revision of curricula of agricultural faculties and intermediate agricultural institutions to meet the needs of employers whether in the public or in the private sectors. Studies are being carried out to identify training needs in order to revise the curricula accordingly.

65. FAO training activities present a tremendous diversification with regard to the type of the activity, its relation to other activities in an agricultural or rural development project, place and mode of implementation, human and resources factors involved, and so on. Almost all FAO-executed projects aim, in one way or another, at developing the knowledge and skills of national counterparts and beneficiaries.

66. FAO will put emphasis on helping member countries to define the future role of agricultural universities and faculties in agricultural and rural development. FAO is at present conducting a study in a large number of those institutions in the world, which should lead to the indication of major orientations that should be taken by training institutions in the twenty-first century. Another aspect to be emphasized in the future is the creation of low-cost teaching and training methodologies with main emphasis on agricultural extension methodologies.

67. A major aim of UNESCO is to help pave the way for the widest participation by individuals and groups in the life of the societies to which they belong and in that of the world community by making primary education available to all and ensuring that communication is at their service. This provides the basis for education and active participation of individuals in their own advancement.

68. The objective of increased participation implies the democratization of education. Some marginal groups or populations still remain on the fringe of civic or community life, lacking the benefit of a minimum of information or basic education. This is the reason for the priority accorded by UNESCO to its programmes on Education for All and Communication in the Service of Man.

69. The acceleration of technological progress has resulted in changes in employment structures that must be taken into account by technical and vocational education if it is to train manpower capable of adapting to change and ensuring a more flexible transition between school and the world of work.

70. WHO has promoted collaboration between training institutions in order to strengthen their reorientation to community needs. This has been undertaken mainly through networks of innovative institutions seeking to promote community-oriented, problem-based and multi-professional education, for example, the WHO-promoted Network of Community-oriented Educational Institutions for Health Sciences.

71. Training methodologies for improved planning and management of health personnel are being developed and disseminated. National management practices are being studied and assessed, and recommendations formulated to improve living and working conditions, career development and motivation of health personnel. WHO will continue to promote strengthening of schools of public health, which will be mobilized to undertake the training of public health specialists - a category of professionals who can generate schemes for health development in communities or populations, plan, implement and monitor them, and bring together specialized

knowledge from all relevant disciplines. The WHO fellowship programme plays a crucial complementary role in the rational development of health manpower activities.

72. Regulatory bodies are being supported in revising and promoting regulations for training and practice appropriate to health for all through primary health care, especially among nursing and midwifery personnel. In collaboration with the International Council of Nurses and a newly established network of WHO collaborating centres for nursing development, the expanded role of nurses and the increased use of nurse-practitioners is being promoted.

73. The economic and sector work of the World Bank focuses increasingly on labour market issues. In the middle-income countries, in particular, special attention has been given to the redeployment and retraining of the work force necessitated by structural changes in the economy. Educated unemployment, particularly in lower-income countries with small modern sectors, is also of special concern; hence the Bank is giving particular attention to the employment potential of the informal sector.

74. There has been an increase in lending to meet the training needs associated with industrial, agricultural and infrastructure investments. In the face of structural and technological change, a major concern of the Bank is to develop cost-effective and sustainable in-country training capacity that is able to respond flexibly to training and retraining needs through the conduct of needs assessments and the design, conduct and evaluation of training programmes. The Bank is preparing a major policy paper on technical and vocational education and training destined for policy-makers in its borrowing countries, which will also provide the basis for wide consultation with international and multilateral agencies. Particularly in Africa, the training of higher-level cadres for economic management and planning is a special priority for the Bank. The Bank provides substantial financing for training and upgrading of administrative and teaching personnel of school systems with special emphasis on training of regional, district and school-level supervisory staff and the in-service training of teachers.

75. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has developed an extensive training programme in project preparation and evaluation in which professionals from development banks, consulting firms, private and public industrial firms, and ministries participate. Requests are also increasingly received from commercial banks, industrial enterprises and development aid organizations of highly industrialized countries to have their staff trained by UNIDO in its methodology of project preparation and evaluation. It is expected that UNIDO's training programme in industrial investment project preparation and evaluation will see a further expansion during the period of 1990-1995.

76. Owing to the need to introduce new technologies in developing countries, modernize their existing industries and diversify the product range, UNIDO will place emphasis on the manpower implications of these structural changes and adopt measures to facilitate training and retraining to meet the demand for specialized know-how in both managerial and technical fields.



77. UNIDO will continue to execute specialized training, particularly for Africa, related to policies and measures to be adopted for industrial development by industrial financing and industrial banking institutions to promote sound investments. It will also continue its efforts in areas such as training in entrepreneurship development for the promotion of small industry, including industrial co-operatives, with emphasis on utilization of local resources and the integration of women in industrial activity.

78. In its training operations, UNIDO emphasizes practical training (in-plant or on-the-job), upgrading or updating of professional skills and the transfer of technological and industrial management know-how and experience. Besides fellowships and study tours UNIDO offers two other types of training programmes: industrial training field operations and group training programmes.

79. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is continuing its efforts to encourage countries constantly to improve human conditions, particularly within the framework of its technical assistance activities on behalf of developing countries. In this context, UPU has encouraged and itself undertaken studies, for instance, into the best ways of reducing the laboriousness of postal work as well as of designing equipment tailored to specific work positions. The postal sector is, by its very nature, greatly dependent on labour for its development. This is proved even in countries where considerable progress has been made in the modernization of services. That is why UPU has established minimum theoretical postal staff requirement standards, noting that they should be adjusted in line with the socio-economic conditions and postal consumption of each country.

80. The main policies of UPU in postal training may be summarized as follows: (a) general introduction of training of operational and supervisory staff into all countries; (b) training middle-grade managerial staff on the spot when justified by needs in certain countries; (c) establishment and expansion of regional postal schools to train middle-grade and senior managerial staff; and (d) training a sufficient number of qualified instructors. Future priority will be given to training activities aimed at organization, management and marketing.

81. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) involvement in human resources development is largely in the refinement or enhancement of already existing skills in both the technological and managerial fields. Whilst ICAO is primarily concerned with the creation of specialists, it does, through its Technical Assistance Bureau, contribute significantly to human resources development.

82. The ICAO personnel licensing and training practices activity is responsible for ICAO training manuals and related technical manuals and circulars and for the production and acquisition of audio-visual training aids. The work covers advice and guidance to countries on personnel licensing and training matters, development of training standards and the production of training syllabuses, audio-visual aids and courses for flight crew members, air traffic service personnel, aircraft maintenance technicians and other personnel whose duties are related to aircraft flight and ground operations.

83. ICAO has recently embarked on a new programme in human resources development entitled TRAINAIR. The TRAINAIR programme will undertake the decentralized preparation of a global pool of high-quality standardized civil aviation training material that will be available to civil aviation training centres throughout the developing world.

84. Telecommunication is a dynamic, high-technology sector. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will therefore continue to contribute to the development of more flexible and economic training systems and assist telecommunication organizations to identify the skills required to face future rapid changes in technology.

85. ITU has developed guidelines, standards and classification systems for job analysis. These will provide better criteria for the recruitment and training of staff. By promoting the development of telecommunications, in particular in rural areas, ITU indirectly fosters the creation of new employment opportunities in this growing sector. Flexible and adaptable modular training programmes are being developed to meet the requirements of the rapidly changing technology in the telecommunication sector. The strategy used to achieve this includes the establishment of networks (the ITU/CODEVTEL international "Sharing System") for co-operation between telecommunication organizations on the basis of common standards.

86. ITU has developed models and standards for training development (the ITU Training Development Guidelines have been adapted for use in the UNDP/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) TRAINMAR project and, recently, in the UNDP/ICAO TRAINAIR project) and standards and support software for information exchange about available resources (training packages, opportunities, facilities, etc.). ITU also trains nationals in instructional techniques, in the application and use of guidelines and standards for training development (including computer-based training), in management of training, in information system development and microcomputer applications within the field of training.

87. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has laid special emphasis on the effective implementation and continuous improvement of global standards in maritime safety, training, legislation and the prevention of marine pollution and related areas. IMO has carried out this policy through the execution of technical co-operation activities such as maritime training projects, technical advisory services, sectoral support missions, fellowships, seminars and training events. The IMO governing bodies have placed the greatest possible emphasis on maritime training for seafarers and shore-based personnel through the establishment or modernization of maritime training academies and maritime safety administrations, and other direct support in areas such as harmonization of maritime legislation, marine pollution prevention, hydrography and so on.

88. The following are development areas that will require continued attention in the years ahead: (a) enhancement of training standards to keep up with technological advances in various areas of shipping services, including technical port operations, navigation, containerization systems and marine pollution prevention; (b) harmonization of maritime legislation in line with current international obligations and recommendations; (c) heightening the awareness of the

need to protect and preserve the marine environment from pollution from ships; and (d) pragmatic plans to facilitate the implementation of the global maritime distress and safety system and rescue services, and the safe handling of dangerous goods.

89. The World Maritime University (WMU) will continue to provide post-graduate maritime training to enable developing countries to train their own experts, thus reducing their dependence on expatriate personnel.

90. The development of human resources will continue to be one of the priority areas under the development co-operation programme of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in its two main fields of competence, namely, industrial property and copyright and neighbouring rights. Training activities will continue to be organized by WIPO for the progressive creation of a core of specialists in the developing countries in these two fields, as well as to spread the awareness of the importance and implications of intellectual property in the development process. These activities, which are directed both to officials responsible for the administration of the intellectual property system of their countries and to end users of the system, have been expanded considerably in recent years, through a combination of group training activities (courses, seminars, workshops and similar training meetings organized in both industrialized and developing countries) and individual training programmes and study tours.

91. UNICEF continued to pursue an integrated approach to child survival and development, reinforcing child-specific interventions with actions to strengthen the socio-economic resource base of women. UNICEF is putting increased emphasis on non-formal education as a means of reinforcing the position of women in both the household and community and is assisting several countries in strengthening the economic activities of women.

92. However, greater attention and support are needed for actions geared towards eliminating discrimination against women and young girls. There must also be increased emphasis on household food security, incorporating the health and credit needs of women as well as their role as food producers, actions that address the multi-dimensional role of women, including health and educational needs not directly linked to their reproductive roles, and fuller integration of women's concerns into mainstream development programmes, rather than separate or parallel initiatives.

93. All components of the social development work programme of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs emphasize the training of personnel, especially social administrators, social planners, social workers, criminal justice and prison personnel, community workers, para-professionals and volunteers, and those working in various specialist fields in the areas for youth, aging, disabled persons, migrants, family and co-operative organization and management.

94. The vast majority of technical co-operation activities organized focus specifically on human resources development. Training, especially for employment, is the main focus of projects financed by the trust funds administered by the Social Development Division of the Centre (youth, aging, disabled persons and

social defence). Training seminars or workshops especially for the training of trainers are also emphasized.

95. The United Nations Programme of Advisory Services for the Advancement of Women undertakes training seminars on priority issues for the advancement of women and provides fellowships to train qualified personnel of each region and advisory services in order to strengthen the national machinery for the advancement of women. Development education kits on women are also produced.

96. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development has reported a steady increase over the past two years in the level of its training activities in all of the sectors under its competence. This covers direct support for training institutions at the macro and sectoral level, including the production of training materials and training as a project component, encompassing individual fellowships, seminars and workshops.

97. Training has been an important consideration in the area of development planning in order to assist developing countries to build up national technical capabilities for planning, including the formulation and implementation of economic policies. As a result of the attention paid to the transfer of technology and to strengthening national capabilities in the area of minerals, Governments themselves are now executing parts of new projects that deal with training of personnel in geology, mining engineering and related disciplines. Training in investment promotion is an increasingly important target in the mineral sector as a whole, as is training in the use of computer technology for economic analysis in support of negotiations between Governments and investors.

98. In energy planning the focus is on energy information systems. ENERPLAN, the energy planning software package developed by the Department, continues to play an important role in training energy planners. Resources planning and management was also an important factor in the water sector.

99. Civil service training institutions, as well as specialized schools for public administration and finance, must be helped to assess training needs, develop training curricula and train trainers. Training modules should be prepared for specific priority training programmes to be used by institutions in developing countries. Interregional training programmes are needed for middle- to senior-level officials on such subjects as government auditing and accounting, personnel management, management training of scientific and technical personnel, and for improving the performance of public enterprises.

100. The proliferation of computers in statistical work has revealed the need for more training in the use of computer hardware, software and related technical skills to accelerate the processing of data available from population and housing census programmes and economic and social surveys. The increased emphasis on integrating population issues within overall development concerns has prompted requests for more training at higher and specialized levels.

101. A basic objective of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) global assistance programme is the attainment of self-reliance by countries in the

formulation, implementation and evaluation of population projects and programmes. In recognition of the crucial role that trained human resources play in the attainment of self-reliance, the Fund has supported a large number of activities related to the development of such resources in all its programme sectors at the national, regional and global levels.

102. The types of human resource development activities that UNFPA has supported include: training of medical and paramedical personnel in contraceptive methodology, reproductive physiology, family planning administration, family planning evaluation, service statistics, research methodology, family health education, nurse midwifery, and maternal and child health; and training of other personnel in, for example, demography, population studies, statistics, policy evaluation and research, social science, population education and communication, information and motivation, programme administration and management. The types of component supported in such programmes include technical and non-technical personnel, operational costs of training activities and supplies and equipment to strengthen training institutions.

103. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) activities address indirectly the issue of development of human resources. To promote sustainable development, UNEP attempts to enhance the capabilities of countries, particularly developing countries, to deal with environmental concerns by providing them with trained decision-makers, advisors and educators who will be able to assist their respective Governments in incorporating an environmental dimension into their development policies, plans and activities. The environmental education effort is being implemented through the joint UNESCO/UNEP International Environmental Education Programme, which has since its inception in 1975 been active in over 140 countries.

104. The International Strategy for Action in the field of Environmental Education and Training for the 1990s was developed and adopted by the UNESCO/UNEP Congress on Environmental Education and Training held in Moscow in August 1987. The Strategy serves as a blueprint to guide action in this area by Governments, local groups and international organizations. Governments are being urged to prepare national environmental education and training strategies based on that document, but reflecting national needs, priorities and solutions.

105. The main objective of the United Nations University (UNU) is to help strengthen the capacities of institutions in developing countries, and to provide opportunities for scholars and scientists from developing countries, particularly young researchers, to participate in the UNU programme of work. The institutions are selected for their potential to have a multiplier effect on other institutions and to carry out regional research, training and advisory functions.

106. In accordance with the UNU mandate, the training and fellowship programme pays particular attention to the promotion of exchanges of scholars and scientists among developing countries. Nearly one half of former UNU fellows have received training at institutions in developing countries. At the same time, UNU also fosters co-operation among institutions in a South-North context. Training activities are being undertaken in the areas of food, nutrition and biotechnology; energy; human and social development; and peace and conflict resolution, as well as in other areas of the social sciences.

107. Over the years, the education programme of UNRWA has expanded and is now the dominant operation of the Agency, accounting for some 60 per cent of its regular budget. The education programme covers elementary and preparatory (lower secondary) education, as well as in-service and pre-service teacher education and vocational and technical training, which will be expanded in the future. The Agency also operates a university scholarships programme.

108. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) accords high priority to strengthening national and local training capabilities and assists Governments in establishing and supporting institutions and units dealing with training at various levels in the fields of planning, project implementation, building technology, building materials and testing and research. To promote new and systematic approaches to human settlements training, UNCHS (Habitat) provides a wide range of services in several areas, including: (a) training guidelines and policies; (b) training needs assessment; (c) training materials and support services; (d) policy seminars; (e) regional courses and workshops; and (f) community participation training.

109. Development of human resources under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) programme has been implemented mostly within the rationale of increased social equity. Educational and training activities focus on increasing access of particular national, regional, ethnic or social groups of refugees to educational opportunities. The central purpose of UNHCR contributions in education is to improve the chances of refugees to succeed in the process of integration in the country of asylum.

110. UNHCR has geared its efforts towards the formal sector of education, giving special emphasis to primary education. Although guidelines for secondary education stress the need to orient educational assistance to the formal vocational level, existing vocational and training structures in developing countries are scarce and special challenges are presented to refugee educational programmes.

111. The guiding criteria in the training strategy of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women are: (a) operation through networks of international, regional, national and local institutions; (b) training of trainers so as to obtain a multiplier effect; (c) training in situ, primarily in developing countries in order to stimulate grass-root participation; and (d) influencing training activities within and outside the United Nations system through its role as a catalyst for developmental change.

112. The Institute's training activities are directed at three main target audiences. The first comprises development practitioners at all levels, including planners, policy-makers, technical personnel, administrators and extension workers. Women's organizations and non-governmental organizations involved with women and development fall within the second target group. The third group includes United Nations field staff. All of the Institute's training materials are elaborated with two main objectives in mind: to sensitize both men and women to the importance of integrating women's components into development programming, as well as to train women in the procedural approaches, at both national and project levels, for such integration.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

113. One of the challenges of the coming period will be to maintain and improve social conditions in times of austerity and a scarcity of resources. Human resources development focuses attention on the ultimate aim of development: the improvement of the human condition. It acts as a valuable counterweight to the tendency to regard basic social services as luxuries that can easily be dispensed with when economic difficulties arise.

114. It can be seen from the description of the activities of United Nations Organizations that human resources development is a priority area of activity for United Nations organizations. The work of the United Nations organizations in promoting literacy, providing education and training for productive participation in economic life and in ensuring adequate nutrition, health and shelter is indeed among the most important activities of the United Nations system. The activities are wide-ranging and multi-faceted, reflecting the broad nature of the concept of human resources development.

115. The description of activities undertaken by United Nations organizations in the field of human resource development is based on information provided by the organizations themselves. Because of the limitations on the length of documents, only the highlights of the activities of the organizations can be related. A number of organizations did not supply information on their activities as requested. 7/

116. It can be observed that United Nations organizations are not proceeding on the basis of a common definition of human resources development. Some organizations equate human resources development with traditional manpower planning while others have a more comprehensive view. The concept of human resources development is still in the process of being defined and its nature and dimensions are not yet fully appreciated. The lack of a common definition of human resources development among United Nations organizations at this stage is therefore understandable.

117. The concept of human resources development, and its operational implications for the United Nations system, has been the subject of in-depth discussion at both the intergovernmental and inter-agency level. At the twenty-second series of joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination held in 1987 and referred to above, some progress was made in defining, for the United Nations system, a workable and integrative approach to human resources development.

118. The responsibility for improving the human condition rests ultimately with the national authorities and people of each country. The organizations of the United Nations system can assist Governments in this process in a number of ways - by acting as catalysts and stimulators of action and change and by providing stop-gap assistance in periods of difficulty or emergencies. However the resources at the disposal of the United Nations system are limited when compared with national resources or the funds dispensed by other donors.

119. Because United Nations resources are limited, it is all the more important that they be utilized in an efficient and effective manner. The comparative

advantages of United Nations organizations must be carefully considered and the inputs of United Nations organizations must be synchronized with each other and with those of other important actors outside the United Nations system. The joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in 1987 recommended that United Nations activities in human resources development should aim both at the grass-roots and higher levels. Undoubtedly one of the strengths of the United Nations system is its diversity, which permits the system to respond to a wide variety of national needs. At the same time it must be recognized that non-governmental organizations are often in a better position to carry out projects at the local or grass-roots level. As the Administrator of UNDP has written (DP/1988/62, p. 11):

UNDP interventions tend to be concentrated at the centre, where admittedly UNDP has greatest influence, rather than at the provincial and district levels where much more planning and training needs to be done. Recognizing this, UNDP is making special efforts to work more closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Otherwise, programmes to mobilize the potential of women and other neglected elements of society at the local level will not benefit much from UNDP support.

There would seem to be considerable scope for all United Nations organizations to increase their co-operation with non-governmental organizations in the field of human resources development.

120. In the discussions at the meetings held in 1987 there was also general agreement on the need to improve co-ordination of the activities of United Nations organizations in the development of human resources as well as to enhance the quality and hence the impact of these activities.

121. The description of the activities of the United Nations organizations reveals a considerable number of activities undertaken jointly by two or more organizations. Nevertheless, it can also be seen that there is scope for more concerted action by the organizations. There are a number of concrete steps that the organizations of the system, within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, can take to carry out human resources development programmes in a more coherent manner. At the conceptual level, the organizations should work together to formulate a common operational definition of human resources development. As suggested by the joint meetings in 1987, the organizations could also consider "preparing joint technical advisory notes for their field staff on how best to assist Governments, at their request, to take into account the human resources development dimension in their development policies and programmes and to minimize the impact of the current economic crisis and the adjustment process on living standards, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups" (E/1987/83, p. 12).

122. Another recommendation of the 1987 joint meetings was that the organizations work together to formulate an agenda of action, including country-specific support policies and programmes related to human resources development. The development of human resources is by definition a long-term and multidisciplinary process. Human



resources development activities will require a shift from a project orientation towards longer-term programmes for specific sectors emphasizing institution-building. It is essential that the sectoral programmes of each organization be closely related to each other.

123. Joint programming and other kinds of concerted actions can be implemented without the establishment of any new formal mechanisms for co-ordination. Real co-ordination occurs when the organizations proceed on the basis of similar perceptions and a common understanding of problems. Ad hoc solutions and the informal handling of shared concerns - which has been referred to as "invisible co-ordination" - is often the most effective.

124. Human resources development is by its very nature an ongoing and evolving process. The evaluation of activities and the monitoring of overall progress must likewise be continuous. The main intergovernmental organs of the system, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, have extremely important roles to play in formulating policies to promote the development of human resources and in monitoring the progress achieved by Governments and international organizations. The question of human resources development should be kept under careful review by these bodies. The priority that Member States wish to accord to human resources development should also be fully reflected in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade.

125. There are, as discussed above, measures that the United Nations organizations can initiate in order for the United Nations system to be better equipped to assist Governments in carrying out programmes to better the human condition. It should be noted also that the research of the organizations of the system can be useful for compiling basic information on human conditions. Research findings and conclusions can also serve as a basis for further refining the concept of human resources development. At the 1987 joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, it was agreed that the United Nations, with the co-operation of the organizations, should consider the possibility of publishing an annual report on human conditions. UNDP, in collaboration with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, plans to publish an annual report on the "State of the Human Conditions". A great deal of relevant data and information is already contained in the existing report on the world social situation, which is issued quadrennially by the United Nations.

126. Because the momentum in favour of human resources development, broadly conceived, is now quite strong, there is a certain pressure not only for separate reports on human resources development but also for new monitoring bodies. However well intentioned, such proposals must be very carefully scrutinized. Human resources development represents an approach to development that must be fully reflected in the ongoing activities of the organizations. Treating human resources development as a separate and distinct type of activity, which can be differentiated from the other activities of the organizations in the economic and social sectors, would not appear to be an optimal means of bringing a human-centred orientation to United Nations activities.

Notes

1/ Human Resources Development: A Neglected Dimension of Development Strategy, Views and Recommendations of the Committee for Development Planning (New York, United Nations, 1988) (E.88.II.A.11), p. 17.

2/ The Amman Statement - Human Development: Goals and Strategies for the Year 2000, North-South Round-table and UNDP Development Study Programme, 1988, mimeo, p. 3.

3/ Human Resources Development ..., op. cit., p. 31.

4/ Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, ESCAP resolution 274 (XLIV).

5/ Khartoum Declaration: Towards a Human-focused Approach to Socio-economic Recovery and Development in Africa, adopted at the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, held at Khartoum from 5 to 8 March 1988 (A/43/430, annex I).

6/ Adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-first ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 July 1985 (see A/40/666, annex I, declaration AHG:Decl.1 (XXI)).

7/ These bodies and organizations are the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination Sub-Committee on Nutrition, IAEA, IFAD, UNCTAD, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and UNITAR.

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