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Dual distribution

POLICY ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION OF THE
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME UNDER THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTIONS

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A Special Report by the Administrative Committee
on Co-ordination
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The Financial Resources of the Programme.

The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination regards the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme as one of the major undertakings of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Programme was launched in 1950 in the expectation that it would be a rapidly expanding Programme covering the different phases of economic development. The participating agencies estimated that in the first year an expenditure of 36 million dollars could be undertaken, increasing in the second year to over 50 million dollars. In practice it was found that the initial action to be taken in launching the Programme imposed a slower rate of development than had been expected. Nevertheless in the second year of the Programme's activities 23 million dollars had been expended, a figure three and a half times the commitments of the first year. Had resources been available, the expenditure of the third year would have represented twice the commitments of the second year.

Events have fallen far short of expectations. The contributions to the fund have remained in the region of 20 to 25 million dollars over each of the

three financial periods during which the Programme has been in operation. It is clear that unless the fund is supplemented to a figure comparable to the original expectations of its sponsors, the objectives of those who initiated this vital undertaking will not be realized. Moreover, the machinery which has been created to operate the Programme, at the central point, in the participating agencies, and in the field, will not be justified on the basis of continuing expenditure of 20 to 25 million dollars. It can only be justified if the Programme develops to the extent and on the scale originally envisaged.

If the governments of the underdeveloped countries with the assistance of the participating agencies can be expected to plan a scale of activities commensurate with the needs of the countries concerned, provision must be made for reasonably long-term assurances over a number of years. Otherwise, long-term planning which is essential to any rational form of economic development will be impossible.

Country Programming

The changes introduced into the operation of the TA Programme as the result of the resolution adopted by the Council in June 1952 (433 (XIV)) were designed to achieve greater co-ordination of the Programme at the centre and increased co-operation in the field.

As the result of the experience of the TAB, since that resolution has been adopted, it is felt that the objectives of the Council can be more effectively achieved on the basis of country programming rather than by TAB itself undertaking the detailed review and appraisal of programmes and projects and the allocating of the available resources on the basis of such a review. By concentrating upon planning at the country level, excessive documentation is avoided and technical competence applied at the point where the government concerned with the assistance of the technicians can determine programmes most effectively.

Experience over the last three years has shown that with the limited resources available to the Expanded Programme, no real substance can be given to the concept of an integrated programme of economic development arising in the activities of the agencies themselves. The only clear meaning which can be given to this

concept is that agencies should use their resources to help countries to plan and implement their own integrated development plans. The assistance which the agencies are able to render naturally take full account of the countries' own resources, their ability to implement the assistance provided, and the help which the country expects to receive from other multilateral and bilateral sources.

In planning country programmes the representatives of the participating agencies and the Resident Representatives appointed by TAB will naturally take account of the directives in the basic Council Resolution (222 (IX)) that Technical Assistance should be provided only on the request of the government concerned, and that the aim should be to assist in planning and carrying out integrated programmes of economic development. The responsibility for such programmes must naturally rest with the governments concerned.

Allocation of Resources

If the country programmes are to be so planned as to fit into whatever resources are available for the Expanded Programme, some guidance must be given to the agencies and to the countries concerned in planning these programmes. Otherwise the summation of country programmes, or the projects which the participating agencies wish to undertake, will in total greatly exceed the amount contributed to the TA Fund. Two forms of guidance are desirable. Agencies should know in advance the range of expenditure they can undertake for the whole of the countries for which they are providing assistance. Some indication should also be given of the relative magnitude of the programmes to be undertaken in the different countries, based upon the experience of the agencies, and on the countries' potentialities and expressed needs.

The former type of guidance calls for some predetermination of the distribution over the different fields of agency activity of the available resources, after providing for the central administrative costs of TAB, those of the Resident Representatives, and a small reserve to give the Executive Chairman and the TAB a modest degree of flexibility in his administration of the Programme as a whole. In determining such a distribution of resources there should be a de facto recognition of the percentages laid down in 1949 by the Council *

* And subsequently modified, with the approval of the TAC, to provide an increase for ICAO.

as a practical and working method for the present and until further experience has been obtained of the results achieved by the Programme. The latter type of guidance would call for a general indication by TAB to the Resident Representative and to the agencies of the relative magnitude of the activity which might be contemplated in the countries concerned.

It will be recognized that it is not possible to achieve an optimum geographical balance in a period as short as one year, and that geographical balance needs to take into account the programme over a period of time.

The Role of the Resident Representatives in Country Planning

In the preparation of country programmes, special responsibilities would fall upon the Resident Representatives in the performance of the duties they carry out on behalf of the Executive Chairman and the participating agencies. Agency chiefs of mission or other agency representatives there would also play an essential role in advising the government of the projects to be undertaken.

In countries where there is a Resident Representative, he should be of great assistance to the government and the agencies in working out a satisfactory programme. His position would not be that of an arbiter of "final authority", rather his responsibility would be to give his friendly advice, help and good offices. He would work in close collaboration with agency representatives and experts, but he would not interfere in any way in the normal relationship between agencies and local government departments. It would, however, be his business to prepare for the Executive Chairman and the agencies a report on the combined results of the various negotiations with the government, including any comments he might wish to make.

The Responsibilities of the Board

Under a system in which co-ordination rests upon the development of country programmes, the Technical Assistance Board would continue to exercise general supervisory authority. Country programmes would be submitted to the Board by the participating agencies on the conclusion of negotiations at the country level and the over-all programme would be reviewed by the Board in the light of recommendations which the Executive Chairman might wish to make concerning

(a) the suitability of any particular project in connexion with the programme designed to assist economic development, (b) the extent to which the country programmes submitted contribute to the planning and implementation of integrated programmes of economic development in the country concerned, (c) the over-all balance of the Programme, with respect to both geographical distribution of effort and the responsibilities of the agencies.

The Need for Further Study

The proposals contained in this document represent the lines on which the ACC, in the light of the experience of the participating agencies, consider that the objectives of Council Resolution 433 (XIV) can be most satisfactorily achieved. Nevertheless, these proposals are necessarily pragmatic in character.

The Expanded Technical Assistance Programme is still young. New problems arise as the scope of the work grows and as greater experience is obtained. The present suggestions are necessarily put forward in the light of the best possible current appreciation which can be made. Trial and error must of necessity be the basis on which progress can be achieved to evolve the most satisfactory method of handling this far-reaching and important undertaking. The ACC, therefore, would hope that the Executive Chairman and TAB itself will maintain under continuous review all questions relating to the operation of the Programme and will keep ACC informed of their views so that the whole question can be reconsidered by ACC from time to time and appropriate suggestions submitted to the Economic and Social Council and to its Technical Assistance Committee.