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REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

REPORT ON TREATMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
IN THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

(JIU/REP/72/3)

Addendum

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

1. This informative report analyses the activities of the United Nations family of organizations in the field of water. It makes observations on the efficiency and impact of these activities in Member States. The report proposes measures to improve co-ordination among the United Nations organizations. In appendix IV to the report, Inspector Jha describes and appraises UNESCO's contribution in this field.

2. The preliminary observations of the Director-General are presented under two headings:

I - Observations on the recommendations (chapter IV of the report) of concern to UNESCO

II - Observations on points of detail

I. Preliminary observations on the recommendations of the Inspector of concern to UNESCO (chapter IV of the report)

3. Paragraph 118: Recommendations for consideration by ECOSOC and the legislative bodies of organizations concerned. Item 3.

(a) The proposal to create a "World Water Centre" is of major importance and requires detailed study. On first consideration it seems uncertain that the

large additional cost would be justified by more effective co-ordination. However, if the governmental bodies concerned, particularly ECOSOC, so decide, the Director-General will submit to the Executive Board proposals for UNESCO's contribution towards the establishment and functioning of the water centre.

(b) The observations of the Inspector which set the stage for his proposals on machinery for global and regional co-ordination are important. In particular, the Director-General agrees with the Inspector's statement in paragraph 60 arguing against a "single organization dealing with the totality of water problems". However, the Director-General agrees that there is need to improve co-ordination.

(c) The Inspector's observations in paragraph 66 on what any new machinery should not be are endorsed. However, the arguments of the Inspector in favour of new machinery (paras. 67 to 70) are less convincing. There is insufficient information to permit a cost effectiveness analysis for the new machinery (see paras. 96 to 98). Therefore, before any decision is taken, detailed studies will be required at an interagency level.

(d) The assessment by the Inspector of the limitations of the existing arrangements for co-ordination (paras. 42 and 44) may not take sufficiently into account the potentials of this machinery, as an alternative to more formal structures and also the progress achieved by the ACC Sub-Committee on Water Resources Development at its recent sessions. At its sixteenth session in 1969 the Sub-Committee reviewed the responsibilities of the various organizations and defined problems of interagency co-ordination and collaboration. At its nineteenth session (February 1972) the Sub-Committee agreed that the spheres of competence defined in 1969 should continue to serve as a basis for the division of responsibilities among the United Nations organizations. At the same session the Sub-Committee prepared a preliminary statement on co-ordination in water resources.

An important step forward was made at the eighteenth session, in 1971, when the Sub-Committee considered measures for in-depth co-ordination of activities of United Nations organizations in some specific fields of water resources such as hydrology, hydrogeology, water pollution, water resources planning and water legislation. The Sub-Committee agreed that working groups of the Sub-Committee should meet from time to time as necessary to take up detailed co-ordination on the above topics of particular interest. As a consequence, an ad hoc working group for hydrology was convened in January 1972. The results of this ad hoc meeting are a good example of positive co-ordination in this area within the framework of the ACC machinery. It is considered that similar meetings could be convened in the future for the other fields suggested by the Sub-Committee.

The examples of unco-ordinated agency action such as the case cited in paragraph 20 are unlikely to be repeated since the recently adopted country programming procedures make mandatory the co-ordinated consultations and action suggested by the Inspector in paragraph 21.

Recommendations requiring executive/legislative action by individual bodies (para. 120)

(a) Recommendation 12 corresponds fully to the view UNESCO has advanced in discussions with UNDP and in interagency meetings.

(b) Recommendations 19 to 24 addressed to UNESCO:

- (i) Recommendation 19: In paragraph 41 of annex IV, the Inspector has interpreted the statements of some "senior officials of UNESCO" as being too academic. In fact, these statements stressed the necessity of conceiving the study of water resources in its entirety, without subordination of hydrological investigations to a one-sided water use (agriculture, energy, community water supply, etc...). But the present and future programmes of UNESCO have always emphasized the importance of hydrology from the point of view of its practical application to water resources development, and taking into account the interrelations between the natural water cycle and human activities.
- (ii) Recommendations 20 and 21: In paragraph 45 of annex IV the Inspector proposes the setting up of national training institutes and the organization of training courses on a regular basis. This has been the policy guiding the programmes of UNESCO in hydrology training. Thus, with a view to shift the bulk of hydrological training activities towards developing regions, a post-graduate course of one year duration was established in India in 1972. The establishment of a similar course for the Arab States is under consideration. At graduate level a highly specialized course was held in Chile in 1971 on the hydrology of snow and ice to assist the South American countries to utilize their water resources. A similar course is being prepared for Asian countries to be held in late 1973. Courses on the use of computers for data treatment are under preparation to be held in Japan for Asian countries and in Argentina for Latin American countries in 1973 or 1974 respectively.

At the technicians level, regional courses have been held in Mali (1965), Iraq (1966), Tunis (1967), Kenya (1969). Another course is under preparation to be held in Ghana for technicians from the English speaking countries in West Africa in 1973 and for Central American countries in 1974.

- (iii) Recommendation 23: In paragraph 47 of annex IV, the Inspector recommends that within the UNESCO secretariat over-all responsibility in the water field should be concentrated in the Office of Hydrology. This recommendation corresponds to the factual situation, because, as the Inspector himself notes, "the Office of Hydrology is functioning more and more as a focus of UNESCO activities in the field of water resources". Some misapprehension

seemes to have arisen in connexion with responsibilities of other divisions in the field of water. In view of the wide implications of water problems to various activities it is quite normal that programmes of several divisions in UNESCO touch upon such problems; this holds particularly for the fields covered by the Department of Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources Research (to which the Office of Hydrology belongs). In all such cases necessary co-ordination is assured and the Office of Hydrology retains primary responsibility for specific aspects of water resources.

- (iv) Recommendation 24: References made in the main body of the report and its annex IV to the relations between UNSECO and WMO bear mainly an historical significance. In effect the Director-General is glad to note that the recommendation made by the Inspector in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the report are already in the course of implementation, as a result of his initiative in early January 1972. The Director-General has already reported on this matter to the Executive Board at its eighty-ninth session. The Board approved the joint convening by UNESCO and WMO of the End-of-Decade Conference to be held in 1974, as a further step towards achieving a harmonization of the hydrological programmes conducted by UNESCO and WMO. The principles of the working agreement between UNESCO and WMO, that were proposed by the Director-General in January 1972, have been approved by the Executive Committee of WMO at its session in May 1972; the agreement is to be concluded shortly. The Director-General was most gratified to note the statement made by the Secretary-General of WMO at the forty-third session of ECOSOC in July 1972, in which Mr. Davies referred to the beneficial development of the collaboration between UNESCO and WMO, and to the initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO in this regard.

II. Observations on points of detail in the body of the report and in annex IV

Most references to UNESCO in the main body of the report and in annex IV are well taken and do not call for further comment. The Director-General was pleased to note the positive evaluation by the Inspector of UNESCO's programme in hydrology (annex IV, paras. 38 and 39). The few points requiring correction or comment are described below.

5. Some of the figures given in the report, which refer to UNESCO's regular and extra-budgetary programmes are not accurate. Thus, in paragraph 17 of the main report, UNDP costs for projects entrusted to UNESCO during the period 1959/1970 are given as amounting to \$1.8 millicn, while in fact a calculation of UNDP contributions for the projects mentioned in paragraph 33 of annex IV gives a figure of over \$7.7 million.

Also, the foot-note on page 5 of the report indicates that the United Nations organizations have allocated only comparatively small funds to water resources

activities under their regular programmes, with the exception of WHO. This exception applies also to UNESCO, whose total regular programme expenditures since the starting of the International Hydrological Decade in 1965 amounted to over \$4 million.

6. In paragraph 43 of annex IV, the Inspector refers to the need to concentrate efforts within the programme of the International Hydrological Decade, and to recommendations made in this respect by the Mid-Decade Conference (1969). The Co-ordinating Council of the IHD and the secretariat have already taken action to implement this recommendation. At its sixth session in 1970, the Co-ordinating Council undertook a reorganization of its various working groups and panels with a view to concentrating activities on the basis of priorities recommended by the Mid-Decade Conference. The provisions made in 17 C/5 for the last two years of the IHD programme are also based on selective actions towards the most effective finalization of the programme.
