



UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/9646+Add.1  
13 June 1974  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

Twenty-ninth session  
Agenda items 75 and 77 of the  
preliminary list\*

REVIEW OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND EXPERT MACHINERY  
DEALING WITH THE FORMULATION, REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF  
PROGRAMMES AND BUDGETS

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report on medium-term planning in the United Nations system

Note by the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has received from the Secretary-General a report by Mr. Maurice Bertrand, a member of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Report on medium-term planning in the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/74/1). The report was transmitted to the Secretary-General in March.
2. The Secretary-General has informed the Advisory Committee that Mr. Bertrand has requested that the report be addressed, for submission to the appropriate organs, not only to the United Nations, but also to the executive heads of the ILO, UNESCO, FAO and WHO. Given the complexity and system-wide implications of the report, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) decided, at its sixty-first session held in April 1974, to defer substantive consideration of the report until its session in October. Bearing in mind that such a time-table would mean a considerable delay between the publication of the report and that of the related comments, at a time when work on the next medium-term plan is under way, and mindful of the interest of Member Governments in the subject of medium-term planning, the Secretary-General has suggested that the Advisory Committee agree, as an exception to established procedures, that the report be issued before the comments of the executive heads and of the Advisory Committee's own observations.

\* A/9600/Rev.1.

3. While the Advisory Committee appreciates the difficulties which prompted ACC to take the decision referred to in the preceding paragraph, it urges the executive heads concerned to expedite the submission of their comments on the report.
4. In the meantime, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3199 (XXVIII), the Advisory Committee transmits the report on medium-term planning in the United Nations system to the General Assembly. The comments of the executive heads and of the Advisory Committee thereon will be issued as addenda to the present document.

REPORT ON  
MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING  
IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

by

Maurice Bertrand  
Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva  
January 1974

Note: This title has been adopted for the sake of brevity; the report directly concerns only five organizations (United Nations, the ILO, UNESCO, FAO and WHO) and UNDP. The other organizations might possibly be affected by the descriptions or suggestions the report contains, but the recommendations are not addressed to them directly. On the other hand, the report also deals with the problems created by the country programming of operational activities in UNDP in relation to medium-term programming.

Observations on a number of expressions used in this report

- (1) For the expression "intergovernmental machinery", see the footnote at the beginning of chapter IX, page 131.
- (2) The expression "policy-making committees" denotes all the intergovernmental expert or tripartite bodies which are called upon to take decisions on the programmes and budgets of the organizations or on the programmes financed from extra-budgetary funds, such as UNDP; it includes the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations.  
The expression "intergovernmental committees" is more common, but it is not appropriate for the Governing Body and Committees of the ILO; generally speaking, therefore, we have avoided using it.
- (3) The expression "governing bodies of the organizations" denotes those committees and boards which are called upon to take decisions concerning the programmes and budget of each organization. In the case of the United Nations, this expression generally includes ACABQ and CPC.
- (4) In this report, the expression "the five organizations" denotes the United Nations, the ILO, UNESCO, FAO and WHO.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### 1. Background and development of the problem

The need to introduce a certain amount of order and clarity into the extraordinary diversity of the activities - too often marginal - of the international organizations, and the desire to condense these activities, through a concentration of effort, into a number of programmes whose effectiveness is beyond question are as old as the United Nations system itself. As the number of economic and social sectors in which member States have called on them for action has grown, the international organizations have become increasingly concerned with overcoming the fundamental contradiction between their universal vocation and the paucity of their financial resources. Thus, concern over programming, planning, the clear definition of objectives, a better selection of priorities and evaluation of the results achieved made its appearance as soon as the organizations in the United Nations system began to function. But programmes of activities have increased, multiplied and diversified faster than solutions have been devised to meet these needs for order and effectiveness. It is not surprising, therefore, that for some years now, in view of the increased financial austerity, a start has been made with putting more coherent measures into effect.

2. Stages on the way<sup>1/</sup>

The first programme budgets - the first attempts at the joint presentation of the programme and the budget - date from the early 1950s in the case of UNESCO (1951) and FAO (1952), whereas WHO opted for this method of presentation as far back as 1948. In 1951 also, UNESCO was the first organization to present a biennial budget (1953-1954); it was followed by FAO in 1957 (for the financial period 1958-1959). The ILO and United Nations did not adopt programme budgets and the biennial cycle until later: in the late 1960s in the case of the ILO, in two successive stages (financial year 1957 and financial period 1970-1971); and not until 1972 in the case of the United Nations, which made the two changes simultaneously for the financial period 1974-1975. At about the same time, new and more modern programme-budgeting techniques were being adopted by FAO for the financial period 1972-1973 and by WHO for the financial year 1975. As from 1976, all five organizations will have biennial programme budgets.

The adoption of medium-term planning is much more recent and, in the case of four organizations, dates only from the early 1970s (WHO began to present "programmes of work for a specific period" - actually five years - as early as 1952). In the most varied forms, outlines of medium-term plans already exist at the present time in the five organizations. Lastly, the "country programming" system was adopted by UNDP in 1970 (adoption of the "Consensus for the period 1972-1976"). Some organizations are beginning to consider the possibility of moving towards a formula of this type: WHO refers to "country programmes" in its 1975 budget; FAO and UNESCO, for their part, have undertaken a number of country studies which may also serve as the basis for a programming system.

3. End of a first stage

The examination of the programming and planning documents to be undertaken in the following chapter will show that this enumeration of dates has, in itself, only a limited significance, inasmuch as the terms "programme budget" and "medium-term plan"

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<sup>1/</sup> Cf. table I attached. More precise details are given in annex I.

Table I

Main dates of the adoption and execution of various measures  
leading to a programming system

Adoption of a programme budget

WHO	-	from the outset
	- 1972 modification for the financial year	1975
UNESCO	- 1951 for the financial period	1953-1954
FAO	- 1952 for the financial year	1953
	- 1969 modification for the financial period	1972-1973
ILO	- 1966 for the financial year	1967
United Nations	- 1972 for the financial period	1974-1975

Adoption of a biennial budget

UNESCO	- 1951 for the financial period	1953-1954
FAO	- 1957 for the financial period	1958-1959
ILO	- 1968 for the financial period	1970-1971
United Nations	- 1972 for the financial period	1974-1975
WHO	- 1973 for the financial period	1976-1977

Adoption of a medium-term plan

WHO	- 1952 programme of work for a specific period	(5 years)
UNESCO	- 1968 for the period	1971-1976 (6 years)
	- 1970 second plan, for the period	1973-1978 (6 years)
FAO	- 1969 for the period	1972-1977 (6 years)
ILO	- 1970 for the period	1972-1977 (6 years)
	second plan, for the period	1974-1979 (6 years)
United Nations	- 1972 for the period	1974-1977 (4 years)
WHO	- 1972 new formula to begin in	1976

Adoption of country programming

UNDP	- 1970 adoption of the "Consensus", application to 82 countries in 1972 and 1973, in general for a period of 5 years	1972-1976
WHO	- 1973 first country programmes in the programme budget for 1975	1975
FAO/UNESCO	- 1971-1973 first country studies	1971-1973



embrace realities which vary appreciably according to the organization concerned. The acceleration of this trend since 1966 is nevertheless worthy of note.<sup>1/</sup> With the adoption of country programming by UNDP (1970), the beginning of its systematic implementation, the adoption by the World Health Assembly of resolutions WHA 25.23 and WHA 25.24 of 23 May 1972,<sup>2/</sup> and the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 3043 (XXVII) on 19 December 1972,<sup>3/</sup> the three-year period 1970-1972 marks the end of the first stage on a path which would seem to be leading to a renovation of the working methods of all the organizations in the United Nations system.

#### 4. Need for a comparative study

The various competent intergovernmental committees of the above-mentioned organizations have had an opportunity, particularly in recent years, of seriously examining or re-examining the problems created by the application of these methods, and some of them have succeeded in acquiring real experience of the budget-programming system, or more recently of the system of medium-term planning and country programming. But these various committees, councils or conferences have, in general and understandably, been able to concern themselves only with the experience acquired within the organization for which they were responsible: they have not been given an opportunity of making very precise comparisons between the various experiments now being undertaken. The general adoption of programming can make sense, however, only if it promotes the harmonization of methods and paves the way for the integration of programmes. The time has come, therefore, to propose a comparative study, and this is one of the objectives of the present report.

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<sup>1/</sup> This trend has been considerably encouraged by the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies (document A/6343), and the publication in 1969 of the Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System (Geneva 1969, DP/5) and of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on "Programming and budgets in the United Nations family of organizations" (A/7822, 3 December 1969).

<sup>2/</sup> Supplemented in 1973 by resolutions WHA 26.37 and 26.38.

<sup>3/</sup> Resolution 3043 was confirmed and developed by resolution 3199 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973.

5. Need for an agreement on the course to be followed in the future

Consideration of all the data relating to this problem throughout the United Nations system would seem to be especially necessary since there is a danger that the difficulties encountered may give rise to differences of opinion among the various organizations concerning the course to be followed in the future. In general, there is undoubtedly a very great similarity in the observations and requirements of the various committees regarding better presentation of documents, greater precision in the definition of objectives, and the improvement of methods. A confrontation of views on future working methods is nevertheless essential if there is to be any hope of adopting a common methodology.

6. Place of methodological research in the context of more general questions

The relatively general agreement that would seem to have been reached on the need to programme and plan the activities of the main organizations in the United Nations system, with a view to reaching common objectives, cannot, however, be said to reflect any profound agreement as to what part these organizations have to play in economic and social matters. Moreover, this generalized adoption of programming methods coincides with a calling in question again of the very nature of the economic and social activities of the United Nations system. Through exercises in the "unified approach" to development, "collective economic security", the "economic rights and duties of States", the problems caused by foreign private investment in the developing countries, the sovereignty of these countries over their natural resources, the role of multinational companies, the measures to be taken in order to assist the least-developed countries, environmental problems and so on, we are in fact witnessing a virtually complete renewal of the data of the problem of the type of relations which should exist between the rich countries and the various categories of less-rich or really poor countries, and of the role devolving in this respect on the international organizations. These preoccupations and questionings fall in turn within an even more general context: that of the calling in question again of the structures of the economic, monetary and trade relations, not only between rich countries and poor countries, but between the rich countries themselves. For instance, the trade negotiations between the United States and Europe are being extended even now not only to monetary problems, but also to considerations concerning the economic and political structures themselves. At the same time, all over the

world, processes of economic integration among neighbouring countries in the same continent are being initiated by different methods and with varying degrees of success. Lastly, recent events in connexion with the change in the price of petroleum and the "energy crisis" only confirm this challenging of over-all structures more sharply.

7. General nature of long-term forecasting needs

All these problems require difficult diplomatic negotiations to define common perspectives in these economic and social sectors. Only through long-term forecasting techniques, however, can the essential working hypotheses be elaborated. National programming and planning policies, which are increasingly conditioned by the data of the international situation, require for their formulation, not only more precise and more comprehensive information on that situation, but a common frame of reference at the world and regional levels. The United Nations had admittedly offered the beginning of an answer in the form of the International Strategy for the Second Development Decade. But what many countries are asking for, at least implicitly, are perhaps far more detailed answers, providing an intellectual system of analysis, and methods and approaches much closer to the types of problem which every Government has to solve at the national level. In these circumstances, the need felt by member States to develop the medium- and long-term forecasting and programming systems of the international organizations themselves unquestionably reflects a search for clarification the significance of which, in this context, is obvious. And if the international organizations were able to make a positive response to this need by providing the commonwealth of States with an operational instrument of recognized quality for long-term global forecasting and the detailed analysis of major world problems, their ability to do so would in itself be a new and important political fact.

8. The main questions

The definition of a new step in this direction therefore needs more than a mere comparison between what has already been done in the main organizations. It requires that precise technical answers should be given to a number of questions which are in everybody's mind, and among which we may mention the following:

- What definition can be given to the word "objective" in an international organization, and how can this definition be reflected in programming and, in particular, in the formulation of programme documents?
- To what extent, in what sectors and by what methods is it really possible to make reliable forecasts of activities four, five or six years in advance, and what degree of flexibility should planning allow for?
- What kind of relations can exist between "country programming", on the one hand, and medium-term planning in the agencies, on the other?
- How can programming function within previously-defined appropriation limits (enveloppes financières), and, more generally, what machinery can member States use for defining priorities?
- At what moment and in what form can the adoption of a programming system be considered which makes it possible to effect choices from among alternative solutions for various objectives (in the manner aimed at by the most elaborate systems of the PPBS type)?
- What role and what degree of initiative must and will the adoption of a system of this type leave the secretariats of the various organizations, insofar as the definition of precise objectives and the establishment of time-limits will entail more rigorous control and increased possibilities of appraisal by the intergovernmental committees? In addition, what should be the functions and size of the various "programming departments"?
- What role should be entrusted to the regional committees in the programming procedures?
- What are the possible patterns for the re-organization of intergovernmental procedures which would enable member States to take simultaneous decisions on the programmes as a whole and on financial resources?

- How can planning and programming methods help to improve the quality of management in the organizations and facilitate evaluation of the results obtained?<sup>1/</sup>
- In view of the marginal nature of United Nations activities, and of those of the United Nations system in general, in relation to the totality of international co-operation programmes, and a fortiori in relation to all the economic and social activities of member States, what type of relations can be established between the programming exercises of the international organizations and national planning activities? In other words, is there a place for medium-term planning of the activities of the international organizations within the framework of the International Strategy for the Second Development Decade?

9. Preliminary examination of fundamental problems regarding the role of the international organizations

The number and importance of these questions show that, in following this course, the international organizations have begun to consider fundamental problems, and that their exercises in programming and planning may be included among the means by which

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<sup>1/</sup> Some specialists on programming problems in the United Nations system seem to regard the improvement of the quality of management, programme implementation control and, lastly, evaluation of the results obtained as the final aim of the whole programming enterprise.

I myself believe that this aspect of the problem really is very important and even crucial, for it is useless to define objectives if there is no guarantee that they can be attained.

I believe, however, that the problems of the formulation of objectives should be studied and resolved before those of programme implementation and evaluation. As the present report tries to show, these problems of formulation are in themselves very difficult to resolve. When they have been solved, however, even partly, the problems of execution and evaluation can be studied to some purpose. The reason why the efforts already made in the matter of evaluation have so far failed to produce any valid result is, I think, that the problems have not been raised in the right order. This report, which is devoted to the formulation of objectives, is therefore aimed directly at the improvement of management and evaluation methods.

these organizations are in the process of challenging the very conception of their activities in the economic and social sectors. The main question in this respect is perhaps that of the distance separating the function of stimulating a series of relatively marginal operational activities from the function of endeavouring to define a global policy of economic and social co-operation, not only between developed countries and developing countries, but between all countries of the world.

10. The two aspects of the problem

In these circumstances, the problem which is posed in this chapter may be summarized in the following manner: generally speaking, it would seem essential to define the next stage in progress towards a more efficient system for the programming and planning of economic and social activities. This definition should not, however, be confined to an examination of the possible types of improvement in the presentation of a few documents. It requires methodological research in depth to identify problems which the international organizations must try to solve, and to define the objectives they must set themselves. What must be done therefore is:

- not only to indicate clearly how better programming and planning methods would be conducive to better-chosen priorities and to objectives more precise and easier to evaluate:
- but also to say how, on the occasion of this appraisal, the purpose and general conception of the activity of the international organizations in the economic and social sphere can be defined more clearly.

11. Plan of the report

The rest of this report will show that the first exercise cannot be undertaken without dealing with the second, and that in fact the desire of member States that the long-term objectives should be clearly defined implies a desire for the "reorientation" of United Nations economic and social activities in a very new direction. In these circumstances, it would appear to be necessary - in order to provide material within the secretariats and delegations for the collective research which alone offers any hope of solving this problem - to try to consider successively:

1. The present situation: programme budgets (chapter II), medium-term plan documents (chapter III), reactions of the governing bodies of the various organizations (chapter IV), and country programming (chapter V).
2. Existing priorities and present objectives: what the international organizations are doing (chapter VI).
3. The necessary review of the decision-making procedures as regards the identification of problems, priorities and objectives (chapter VII);
4. The reorientation of technical co-operation activities and of study and research activities (chapter VIII).
5. The problem of the "intergovernmental machinery" and the establishment of the second stage in the construction of a programming system (chapters IX and X).

CHAPTER II

PROGRAMME BUDGETS

12. Specificity of programme budgets

Among the three categories of programming documents in the organizations (programme budgets, medium-term plans, miscellaneous programme documents) which each answer to specific needs, only those which include the word "budget" in the title have so far given rise to juridical decisions involving financial approval (authorizations of income and expenditure). That situation may have to be changed once the exact role of "medium-term plans" has been defined. As things are now, however, "programme budgets", despite any innovations they may contain, present the most traditional features, are of the most immediate practical use and are the easiest to understand. It is not surprising, therefore, that these documents, in spite of the differing stages of development they exhibit, display no basic differences and seem to be moving gradually towards a format which it should be possible to harmonize fairly quickly without any great difficulty.

13. Similarities between the programme budgets of the five organizations

These programme budgets are all lengthy - 400 pages on the average, varying between 210 pages in the case of the ILO and 712 pages in the case of WHO.

- They involve (with the exception of WHO, which approves the budget simply by resolution) two successive publications: the budget proposals and then the approved budget.
- They all (at least so far as the budget proposals are concerned) include an "Introduction" by the Director-General or Secretary-General, with comments on new programme directions or new programming features.



- The general framework is usually of the same type: it is made up fundamentally of "major programmes", subdivided into "programmes" and "sub-programmes" (terminology varies in this regard). These "major programmes" correspond in general to the organizations' principal sectors of activity. The part dealing with the substantive departments and divisions is supplemented by conventional-type sections which include: General policy and management - General administration and programme support - and Miscellaneous.
- Generally speaking, at the "sub-programme" or "programme component" level, there are descriptions or enumerations of the main objectives, indicating with varying degrees of clarity and detail the work plan on which requests for the relevant appropriations are based. Various tables - staff, budgetary and extra-budgetary appropriations, breakdown of appropriations by type of expenditure - usually round out such descriptions.
- Lastly, in every case there are voluminous annexes giving additional summaries or breakdowns for staff and appropriations, tables indicating differences as compared with previous years and sometimes a calendar of conferences and a list of intended publications.

#### 14. Differences

The greatest differences lie in the degree of detail with which the objectives are defined, or, more generally, in the methods of describing programmes.

The following distinctions can here be made between:

- UNESCO, FAO and the ILO, which have found, each in its own way, a fairly precise method of description which, although it could certainly be improved, gives quite a clear idea of the work undertaken; the
- United Nations, which is submitting its first "programme budget", and which is far from having reached a comparable degree of precision and clarity; and lastly,
- WHO, whose programme budgets, up to and including that for 1974, varied considerably in the degree of detail according to the type of activities described, but which has just adopted a new presentation for its 1975 budget.

UNESCO, FAO, ILO

15. Type of presentation

The differences in the descriptive methods used by these three organizations are not very great, but the following may be noted:

- Type of presentation: Presentation by major programmes of activity of the substantive departments is in line with the organization's administrative structure in the case of UNESCO (1. Education; 2. Natural Sciences; 3. Social Sciences, Humanities and Culture; 4. Communication; 5. International Standards) and the ILO (Industrial Activities;<sup>1/</sup> Central Research and Planning; Conditions of Work and Life; Employment Planning and Promotion; Human Resources Development; Social Institutions Development; International Labour Standards). FAO, on the other hand, chooses six "areas of concentration"<sup>2/</sup> in its programme (1. Mobilization of Human Resources; 2. Production and Productivity; 3. Nutrition and Protein; 4. Conservation of Resources and Control of Diseases and Pests; 5. Agricultural Policy and Planning; 6. Basic Economic and Statistical Services), and the administrative structure has not been reorganized in terms of that pattern. The structure of FAO's substantive departments (Economic and Social Policy, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Development, plus the Regional Offices) covers only part of the programme structure.<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> "Industrial activities" do not correspond to an administrative unit.

<sup>2/</sup> Referred to as "areas of emphasis" in the programme budget for 1974-1975.

<sup>3/</sup> This distinction raises a problem which is still open for discussion. UNESCO, for example, has been faced with a similar question: whether or not the emergence of "intersectoral" programmes (drug abuse, human rights, youth, population, man and the environment, etc.) should be accompanied by the establishment of new "horizontal" administrative structures. A report by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/72/6), on "intersectoral programmes" at UNESCO, was prepared in August 1972 at the request of the Director-General. It concluded categorically that it was "pointless to contemplate the establishment of new horizontal co-ordinating structures proper to the intersectoral programmes." But the Executive Board of the organization has not yet come to a final decision on this point.

16. Composition of "major programmes"

The terminology varies according to the organization (its harmonization should be no problem), but it is easy to see that the "chapters" in the UNESCO budget (corresponding to "sectors" in the organization) are closely akin to the FAO major "programme objectives" and the ILO "major programmes". These major programmes are divided:

- in FAO, into "programmes", broken down in turn into "sub-programmes": in the 1974-1975 budget, chapter 2, concerning "Technical and Economic Programmes", consists of six major "programme objectives" (the "areas of concentration"), 17 "programmes" and 74 "sub-programmes";
- in the ILO, into "programmes", also broken down into "sub-programmes": in the 1974-1975 budget, there are 16 "major programmes of activity" divided into 100 "programmes" and 440 "sub-programmes";
- in UNESCO, into "sub-chapters" and "sections": in the 1973-1974 budget there are five chapters in part II, concerning "Programme Operations and Services", 20 "sub-chapters" and 49 "sections"; each "section" is also divided into projects which in turn are in numbered paragraphs, the corresponding appropriations being generally indicated. There are 8,020 paragraphs of this type in the whole of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1973-1974. This number is reduced to 1,581 in the Approved Programme and Budget, whose presentation is slightly different from that of the Draft.

The size of each of these subdivisions varies greatly, as can be seen, in each organization, and the amount of the appropriations for each does not give a very precise idea of their relative importance.<sup>1/</sup>

### 17. Descriptions

The descriptions which accompany the requested appropriation lines corresponding to each programme, sub-programme or section seem to be drawn up in the three organizations according to a relatively stabilized pattern. It is, of course, on the quality of these descriptions that the degree of sharpness with which the objectives are defined depends. In FAO, such descriptions exist only at the "sub-programme" level; they are supplied in the ILO at the "major programme" and "programme" levels; UNESCO provides an introduction for each "chapter", a rather short explanatory text for each "sub-chapter" and a detailed "work plan" for each section. The most significant texts are therefore at the "sub-programme" (FAO), "programme" (ILO) and "section" (UNESCO) levels.

<sup>1/</sup> For example, for roughly equivalent amounts (the budget proposals for the above two-year periods are \$112 million for UNESCO, \$83 million for the ILO and \$102 million for FAO) and substantive programmes that are also of a similar order of magnitude (\$68 million for part II in UNESCO, \$50 million for the ILO's programmes of activity, \$57.5 million for FAO's technical and economic programmes), the approximate amount of the appropriations for each division is as follows:

Organization	Average amount (\$ million)	Ranging between (\$ million)
Chapter, major programme or programme objective		
UNESCO	13.5	1.2 and 25.5
ILO	3.1	0.6 and 10.7
FAO	12.7	5.2 and 15
Sub-chapter or programme		
UNESCO	3.4	0.8 and 9.5
ILO	0.5	0.1 and 4.7
FAO	2.5	0.16 and 9.8
Sub-programme or section		
UNESCO	1.4	0.1 and 2.5
ILO	0.11	0.003 and 2.1
FAO	0.78	0.03 and 3.3

18. Standard layouts of descriptions in FAO

The standard layouts for the descriptions at this level are as follows:

- In FAO, each "sub-programme" description consists of the following sections:

1. Medium-term objectives and objectives for the biennium
2. Relationship to the "sub-programme" for the previous financial period
3. Medium-term outlook
4. Progress in the previous financial period
5. Priorities for the current financial period
6. Field programme (where appropriate)
7. Summary of the work plan for the current financial period.

There are tables showing the distribution of the "sub-programme" appropriations by regions of the world and by type of expenditure.

19. Composition of descriptions in the ILO

- In the ILO, each "programme" description, depending on the type, incorporate some of the following sections:

- Departmental management (1)
- Programme development and control (2)
- Staff training (3)
- Research, technical reports and special studies (4)
- Collection and dissemination of information (5)
- Meetings (six types) (6)
- Standard-setting activities (7)
- Miscellaneous support and administrative activities (8)
- Regular budget field projects (9).

For the "programmes" under the "major programmes of activity" (programmes of the substantive departments), the headings most often used are those relating to research and studies (4 above), information (5), meetings (6) and standard-setting activities (7); the descriptions also use other headings, however, corresponding to "sub-programmes" whose nature it is desired to explain. A standardized method is used, but each description has its own features and follows a pattern of its own.

## 20. Composition of descriptions in UNESCO

- In UNESCO, the descriptions accompanying each section consist of a "Proposed resolution" (the Director-General is authorized to co-ordinate ..., promote ... contribute ... etc.) and a "work plan". The composition of the UNESCO "work plans" is more or less comparable to that of the descriptions attached to the ILO "programmes", and they contain headings which are repeated regularly, e.g.

- Training activities
- Research activities
- Dissemination of information
- Advice or assistance to Member States
- Promotion of ....

Each "work plan", however, has its own image, according to the nature of the activities it includes. A Manning table is provided for each section, and for most of the paragraphs in each "work plan" the corresponding appropriations are indicated.

## 21. Nature of the particulars given in the descriptions

In the three organizations, the descriptions usually:

- (a) define general objectives;
- (b) give an outline of the "work plans";
- (c) relate general objectives and "work plans".

The formulation of general objectives at the world level is inevitably imprecise in nature; but these distant prospects are generally indicated, however briefly.<sup>1/</sup>

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### 1/ Examples:

- UNESCO - "to improve the training of instructors and teachers for rural areas by continuing to organize international in-service training courses, seminars and colloquia" (section 1.26, para. (c), of the "proposed resolution").
- ILO - "improvement of the knowledge base concerning rural employment problems in different countries as a prerequisite for sound policy formulation, operational programme planning and evaluation" (major programme 70, paragraph 319 (b)).
- FAO - "to reduce the losses to stored crop products caused by micro-organisms and pests ..." (sub-programme 2.4.2.5, para. 1 (a)).

The amount of space devoted to the description of "work plans" varies according to the amount devoted to the description of the links between general objectives and "work plans". This aspect of the problem is extremely important and its consequences should be carefully noted:

- FAO gives most space to these justifications (cf. para. 18 above): the first five parts of the descriptions (medium-term objectives, relationship to the "sub-programme" for the previous financial period, medium-term outlook, etc.) are devoted thereto. This represents approximately 90 per cent of the number of lines allowed for the description: there are only a few lines left for the "work plan". The ILO, on the other hand, and, in particular, UNESCO tend to describe the operations which are to be carried out with the appropriations requested and devote only a little space to these general considerations concerning the links between general objectives and "work plans".
- A very large number of the explanations supplied by FAO in this respect relate to the medium-term objectives; such a tendency leads to confusion between the medium-term plan and the budget. In the last analysis - and this is in fact what is happening in FAO - such a practice amounts to regarding the medium-term plans as unnecessary.
- On the whole, these justifications would gain by being much more concise; this type of development does not yield any precise information and does not even provide a basis for the choices made as regards the activities in the work plan. The raison d'être of a programme budget, however, is to explain to member States what will be done with the appropriations they are called upon to approve and to define for the benefit of the secretariats what they will have to do when these appropriations have been approved; only precise work plans can satisfy these two requirements.

## 22. Differences in the degree of precision of work plans

In annex II, the "work plans" are closely compared as regards their degree of precision. We shall summarize here the results of this comparison. There are two kinds of difference:

- between types of activity (for all three organizations): study and research activities - which are by far the most numerous - are usually better described than other types (training, information and promotion of ideas);

- between the three organizations: the objectives of the FAO work plans are described, or rather, listed, in a usually far more cursory way than in the case of the other two organizations because of the brevity of the paragraphs devoted to them; the greatest degree of precision in describing the various categories of activities, including field activities, seems to be achieved by UNESCO; the ILO describes research and study activities and activities in connexion with information and the promotion of ideas in almost as much detail as UNESCO, but gives no account of field activities and only a sketchy account of training activities.<sup>1/</sup>

On the whole, there is no technical reason why the secretariats should be unable to supply detailed and quantified information according to the criteria suggested in annex II. I believe that if they wanted to, the governing bodies could obtain a considerable improvement in the descriptions as regards degree of detail.

THE UNITED NATIONS

23. The first United Nations programme budget

The first United Nations "programme budget" (which is the first biennial budget) had, for calendar reasons, to be prepared in a very short time - four months in fact - concurrently with the first medium-term plan. This undoubtedly explains why the document has not been prepared with the same degree of mature consideration and attention to detail as the budgets of the three big organizations we have just been considering. The descriptions are so worded that in most cases it is extremely

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<sup>1/</sup> We have dealt here only with the definition of the objectives, an essential problem in the context of the medium-term programming which is the subject of this report. A special study should evidently be made of the best possible ways of presenting the means of action (staff, appropriations) requested to achieve this objective. This amounts to looking for the best possible method of presenting appropriation lines (budgetary and extra-budgetary), the various systems of breaking down these appropriations, manning tables, various synoptic tables, desirable general annexes, etc. In the three organizations, there are some excellent ideas that should be taken up in this respect and which could be applied generally (for instance, the tables accompanying the FAO sub-programmes, the tables listing the "sub-programmes" making up an ILO "programme" and so forth). The clarity of the typographic presentation should also be studied by specialists (in this respect, the FAO programme budget seems to me to be presented in the clearest way and to be the easiest to consult).



difficult to form a clear idea of what the activities of the sectors under consideration actually consist of. These descriptions are usually drawn up according to the following plan: an account of the general objectives, indication of the legislative basis (General Assembly resolutions) and a reference to recent accomplishments. This last paragraph, on recent accomplishments, is sometimes quite specific, but this can hardly ever be said of the paragraph concerning objectives. The result is that this programme budget is, on the whole, far more specific about what has been done in previous years than about the activities to be undertaken with the appropriations requested for the current financial period.

24. Absence of genuine "work plans"

Apart from a few rare exceptions, where some attempt at precision has been made (the Statistical Office, for instance), the information given about actual work plans does not include particulars of study and research, training activities or activities connected with the promotion of ideas or standards. As for operational activities, some tables on the sources of funds indicate their order of magnitude in dollars, but, with the exception of a few figures on the number of projects (UNIDO, for example), no real description of them is given. Lastly, the typographic presentation helps to make things even less clear (tables mixed up with the text, titled of tables more conspicuous than those of the descriptions, numbering of tables quite unconnected with that of the paragraphs, etc.). Substantial progress is obviously needed, therefore, to make the United Nations budget comparable, as regards quality of information, with that of any of the three organizations considered above.



25. New presentation of the WHO budget for 1975

The proposed programme and budget estimates for 1975 have just been published (early December 1973) in a new presentation. A distinction must be made, therefore, between the current presentation (1974 budget) and the future presentation (1975 budget).

26. The proposed programme and budget estimates for 1974

What is particularly noteworthy in the presentation of the proposed programme and budget estimates for 1974 and of those for previous years is the difference between, on the one hand, the degree of detail with which operational activities are described country by country (annex 3, regional and interregional activities; 460 pages), an itemized account being given of objectives, staff and appropriations for each project, and, on the other hand, the cursory and stereotyped description of Headquarters activities (annex 2, 50 pages; annex 4, 18 pages), a mere listing of posts regarded as permanent - and that practically unvarying from year to year - being given, instead of a description, for each service. Certainly, WHO activities are directed mainly towards the field, but the relationship between action programmes (which, as we shall see, are very well described in some WHO documents), Headquarters activities and the various operational projects is simply not apparent in this presentation.

27. The new presentation of the proposed programme and budget estimates for 1975

The presentation of the proposed programme and budget estimates for 1975 endeavours to correct this defect: it includes both programme descriptions and "country statements" - a very interesting innovation for an agency - describing operational projects in a policy context. It should be stressed that WHO has made a considerable preparatory effort before putting a new programming system into effect. Internal working parties developed new formulas,<sup>1/</sup> reports by the Director-General kept the Executive Board informed of the efforts being made,<sup>2/</sup> and the opinion of the Board itself was requested on several occasions. The structure of the new budget (which includes 11 sections) is built around substantive programme sections, including:

- strengthening of health services (2 programmes, 8 sub-programmes)
- health manpower development (1 programme);
- disease prevention and control (3 programmes, 23 sub-programmes);
- environmental health promotion (1 programme, 8 sub-programmes);
- health information and literature (4 programmes and 5 sub-programmes).

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<sup>1/</sup> For instance, document ISD/73/2 of July 1973 on health programming by country; and ISD/73/1 on the development of an information system.

<sup>2/</sup> Report EB/43/36 of 6 February 1969; EB/45/40 of 19 January 1970; EB/47/15 of 28 November 1970 and A/25/24 of 13 April 1972.

Particular care has been given to the drafting of the "programme descriptions", which include (integrating regular-budget activities with those financed from extra-budgetary funds, and Headquarters activities with field activities):

- a statement of the objectives;
- review of activities;
- a description of the anticipated results of the actions undertaken under the budget, followed by tables giving a breakdown of appropriations by type of activity (regular programme and other funds).

The degree of precision in the descriptions would appear to be roughly comparable with that of the ILO budget, but the indication of activities financed from extra-budgetary funds, and of the relationship between headquarters and field activities, is unquestionably clearer. Lastly, the very large annex on regional activities (378 pages), which includes the country descriptions and the list of all the projects, gives a very complete picture of the organization's activities.

28. Attitude of the governing bodies of the various organizations concerning the programme budgets.

It may be inferred from the foregoing rapid description of the budgets of the five organizations that it would be fairly easy to make immediate appreciable improvements in each of these documents by incorporating the best features of every existing type of presentation. Before saying what features may be regarded as best, however, one should be certain that there is a broad degree of agreement on the ideal conception of the programme budget of an international organization. Doctrine on this point is in the process of being established, but it has not yet acquired a very great degree of precision. The situation in this respect may be described as follows:

- In the case of two organizations, the ILO and UNESCO, it would seem that the current presentations of the programme budgets may be regarded as satisfying the organizations' governing bodies. No big changes seem to have been requested for several years. The difficulties encountered as regards the conception of medium-term plans are not reflected in the conception of the programme budgets.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> UNESCO has considered a possible amalgamation of medium-term plans and budgets, but for the time being its reflections have had no practical consequences and the two exercises have remained separate.

- In WHO the new presentation of the 1975 budget has not yet been submitted for discussion to the policy-making bodies. It is, as we have seen, clearly oriented towards precise description of work plans, including all field projects (regardless of their sources of financing).
- In FAO, on the other hand, anxieties concerning medium-term planning have unquestionably had repercussions on the conception of the programme budget. The organization adopted for the financial period 1974-1975 a relatively new formula in relation to that for the period 1972-1973; it consists of including "in the Programme of Work and Budget an indication of how the sub-programmes had been rearranged, the effect of economies etc. on performance in 1972-1973, a medium-term objective and perspective as well as for the coming biennium, and a summary of the work plan with man-month as well as dollar estimates" (document CL 59/22, para. 41; October 1972). This new formula therefore entails the insertion of medium-term perspectives into the programme budget. Taken to the extreme, this approach could lead to the amalgamation of the medium-term plan document with the biennial budget. There is a danger that such a conception may impede all progress in programme budgets for several years, since the problem of their definition would thus be affected by all the misgivings and anxieties existing at the present time concerning the medium-term plans themselves.

29. Reactions to the United Nations programme budget: observations by CPC

The new presentation of the United Nations programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 has, at the time of writing, been submitted for consideration to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC),<sup>1/</sup> the Economic and Social Council<sup>2/</sup> and ACABQ.<sup>3/</sup> As regards CPC, its comments on the format, presentation and conception of the budget document form the subject of the recommendations contained in paragraph 96 (A). They relate in particular to:

- the need to state objectives clearly, concretely and in quantifiable terms wherever possible;
- the presentation of alternative means of action;

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<sup>1/</sup> Committee for Programme and Co-ordination: report on the fourteenth session, 11-15 June 1973. Official Records, fifty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 12 (E/5364-E/AC.51/72).

<sup>2/</sup> E/RES/1801 (LV) of 7 August 1973.

<sup>3/</sup> First report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975; Official Records, twenty-eighth session, Supplement No. 8 (A/9008).

- the statement of priorities;
- clear indication of the relationships between objectives and means of action;
- indication of time-limits;
- improvement of the programme structure and terminology;
- the introduction of a management information system and the adoption of systematic evaluation techniques;
- various improvements of detail in presentation;
- information on extra-budgetary resources by source of funds and on the allocation of indirect costs;
- lastly, the need to consider the programme budget as the first instalment of the plan.

30. United Nations programme budget: observations by ACABQ

The observations of ACABQ on the introduction of programme budgeting constitute paragraphs 9 to 22 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975. ACABQ, after paying a tribute to the work of the Director of the Budget Division and his colleagues, recognizes that the new system, although still falling far short of budgeting by programme, has provided a better insight into the substantive work of the departments. But it makes a number of suggestions and criticisms. It urges, in particular, that efforts to make further improvements should be regarded as essential, that competent officials should be recruited for this purpose, that there should be recognized centralization of responsibility, and that programme managers, most of whom "did not accord the necessary priority to direct participation in the programme budget process", should accord such priority in the future. It makes a number of practical suggestions concerning preparations for programme budgeting (para. 18(c)). It notes that "the concept of a modern resource management system has not been fully appreciated within the Secretariat" and that such recognition is essential in order to avert the danger that "form will become the main end result of the change to programme budgeting".<sup>1/</sup> It also concludes that programme budgeting should provide a means of monitoring programme implementation and evaluating the use of resources. Lastly, ACABQ supports the view expressed by CPC, and in particular stresses the need to apportion certain indirect costs among the substantive organizational units, to quantify the workload for existing projects, to present more information about the source and use of extra-budgetary resources, to give better

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<sup>1/</sup> The Committee does not, however, indicate what measures the Secretariat should have taken to give reality to this concept of a modern management system.

justification of incremental requests, to replace excessively "lengthy historical material" by more precise data while ensuring that the document is kept to a manageable size, and lastly to continue efforts concerning electronic data processing and the cost accounting system.

31. State of opinion on the subject of programme budgeting

The present position as regards the theory of programme budgeting worked out by the governing bodies of the five organizations may be summarized as follows:

- Three organizations seem to be of the opinion, with some differences of detail in conception, that the essential function of programme budgets is to describe the "work plans", in other words to explain clearly the activities to be undertaken with the appropriations approved, and the anticipated results. These organizations are UNESCO, the ILO and WHO.
- One organization - FAO - has not clearly dissociated the programme budget exercise from the medium-term plan exercise; consequently, the space devoted to "work plans" in the current programme budget is extremely limited.
- In the United Nations, the responsible committees have not yet clearly distinguished in their observations between the two types of document, but the strongest trend appears to be towards the provision of precise information on work plans in the programme budgets to the exclusion of any unnecessary elaborations.

32. Conditions for decisive progress

We shall see in the following chapters what difficulties are encountered in connexion with medium-term programming, the misgivings which this problem has caused will be described and an attempt will be made to define the process whereby these difficulties and misgivings could be overcome. But we shall not try to hide the fact that this process will entail substantial efforts extending over several years. In these circumstances, it seems essential not to miss what may be an opportunity to take a decisive step forward in programme budgeting without further delay. To succeed in this, it would appear to be sufficient to adopt a possibly provisional, but simple and easily understandable, conception which may be summarized as follows: a programme budget is a plan of work for two years. This means that the medium-term programme would be based on the medium-term plan documents, and that plans and budgets would not be mixed. When the medium-term plans have matured, the programme budgets can

and must, of course, look like "slices of plan", but pending a real definition of medium-term plans, programme budgets which merely described what the secretariats intended to do during the next two years, but which used very precise, very clear and if possible quantified terms and a standardized form for the five organizations,<sup>1/</sup> would constitute an extremely valuable step towards the development of a genuine programme system.

33. Presentation of a joint report by the five organizations (and UNDP) on programme budgets

It seems to be of fundamental importance that the governing bodies of the organizations should adopt a position on this aspect of the problem: there should be no difficulty in bringing their collective views on the subject into line, on the whole, with the conception of the UNESCO, ILO and WHO type of programme budget, in which most space is given to the work plans. This orientation could be supplemented by requirements concerning the quantification of immediate objectives,<sup>2/</sup> the presentation of expenditure from extra-budgetary funds so as to show its relationship with the programme financed from the regular budget, and the standardization of terminology and layout.

34. Possible layout of the report

This report, which should be submitted to the executive board of each organization, ACABQ and the Governing Council of UNDP, on the one hand, and to CPC and the Economic and Social Council with the comments of the aforesaid committees and boards, on the other, should cover:

(1) Harmonization of the presentation of the programme budgets of the five organizations and of the UNDP administrative budget, with a view to a general and rapidly attainable improvement in the following respects:

(a) Terminology, adoption of identical terms to designate the various parts of programmes (sections, chapters, major programmes, sub-programmes, programme components, etc.) having the same financial order of magnitude and corresponding to objectives at the same level.

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<sup>1/</sup> Cf. in particular resolution 2748 (XXV) of 17 December 1970 on harmonization and growth of programmes and budgets in the United Nations system.

<sup>2/</sup> Cf. the criteria adopted in annex II.

- (b) Presentation of tables - manning tables, tables giving the breakdown of programme components by type of expenditure, etc.; selection of the clearest types of tables, and of the levels (chapters or major programmes, programmes, sub-programmes, etc.) at which particular types of table should be presented.
  - (c) Presentation of expenditure from extra-budgetary funds: Expenditure from extra-budgetary funds should be exactly described in connexion with the programme components to which it is linked. Each project should be identified by indicating its purpose, the amount in dollars required, the staff needed and its duration. A method should be devised for avoiding repetition of the country-programming information supplied in the annex proposed in (e) below. The use of overhead funds should, moreover, be identified in each programme component.
  - (d) Descriptions of programme components: The relative importance to be attached to descriptions of general objectives and medium-term prospects on the one hand and to descriptions of the "work programme" for the current financial period on the other should be clearly defined so as to give more weight to the latter. In these work-programme descriptions, identical criteria should be selected for defining - as far as possible in quantified form - the results aimed at as regards research, training, promotion of ideas and standards, technical co-operation, etc.
  - (e) Country programming: A substantial annex should recapitulate expenditure by country from budgetary and extra-budgetary funds and provide evidential support, at least in summary form, for the country policy of the organization.
  - (f) Various annexes: A list of annexes the models for which ought to be harmonized, should be drawn up and should include, inter alia, the list of publications (giving the size of the impression), the list of overhead funds, a synoptic table of all the sources of funds administered by the organization and a budget summary by nature of expenditure.
- (2) Harmonization of the periods corresponding to the biennial cycles, particularly as regards UNESCO (one year out of step with the present cycle) and the UNDP administrative budget (transition from an annual budget to a two-year programme budget).



CHAPTER III

MEDIUM-TERM PLAN DOCUMENTS

35. The existing documents

The "medium-term plans" made their appearance much more recently than the programme budgets. Those already published at the time of writing were as follows:

UNESCO

16 C/4	31 August 1970	Long-term outline plan	85 p.	1971/76
17 C/4	April 1972	Draft Medium-term Outline Plan	276 p.	1973/78

ILO<sup>1/</sup>

GB/180/FA/6/4	May-June 1970	Draft long-term plan	64 p.	1972/77
GB/185/FA/13/16	March 1972	Draft long-term plan	120 p.	1974/79

FAO

CL 55/9	July 1970	Proposals concerning medium-term activities and programmes	32 p.	1972/77
CL 71/75	July 1971	Medium-term Plan	101 p.	1972/77
(No number)	June 1973	Medium-term Objectives	25 p.	(Not determined, starting in 1974)

United Nations

A/9006/Add.1 and Add.2	May 1973	Draft Medium-term Plan	193 p.	1974/77
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<sup>1/</sup> At the time when work on the drafting of the present report had just been completed, the ILO was publishing its third long-term plan document (GB/192/FA/10/1, February-March 1974. Draft long-term plan. 100 p. 1976/81). That document has not been taken into account in this report, but reference may be made to the fact that it tries to present an estimate of means of financing.

In WHO, a document published every five years since 1952 can be mentioned in conjunction with the preceding documents, although it is not formally entitled a medium-term plan; it is the "General Programme of Work for a Specific Period". The latest document in this series is A24/A/1, March 1971, for the period 1973/77 (five years). Despite the fact that WHO is engaged in studying a new medium-term-plan format, the aforesaid document will be included in the general survey of the documents carried out in this chapter.

### 36. Diversity of these documents

In general, therefore (WHO being the exception), this is a recent experiment which began no earlier than 1970. Moreover, it is a new type of document, for which - despite the previous existence of the most varied "programme documents" - there was no pre-established model. Some appreciably different ideas have thus been adopted by the secretariats and by the intergovernmental committees responsible for considering these documents. This has resulted in substantial differences between the various agencies (for example, in the size of the documents, which vary between 25 and 276 pages) and some appreciable fluctuations within one and the same agency in the conception of the document. The chief resemblance is that the structures of these plans are for the most part almost the same as those of the corresponding programme budgets: the order of the parts is that of the "major programmes" or chief "areas of action".

### 37. The fundamental difficulty

In other respects, the conception of these documents varies greatly, but the impression is gained from reading them that the difficulties encountered have always been very considerable, perhaps even in most cases almost insuperable. The crux of the problem seems to be how to link the general objectives enunciated at the world level with a number of studies, publications, symposia or operational projects whose impact on the solution of the problems faced cannot but be regarded as marginal. Efforts have been made to surmount this obstacle, but it can hardly be said that any one of the agencies considered has been successful in doing so.

### 38. Approaches adopted in the documents

The description of all these documents, each of which represents a fresh attempt, would be a very useful, though tedious, exercise. It therefore seems better to study the approaches adopted by their writers. Four main approaches are distinguishable:

- choice of the method of presenting the major programmes;
- definition of the problem;
- formulation of objectives; and, lastly
- calculation of financial requirements and choice of priorities.

39. Choice of the method of presenting the major programmes

The choice of a method of presentation (and, as we have seen, the arrangement followed in the programme-budget descriptions) gives an initial indication of the way in which the organizations have endeavoured to conceive the planning exercise. Generally speaking, the "habits of mind" which show through in the texts of the budgets are also discernible in the texts of the plans. The ILO and the United Nations, for example, have adopted a standard arrangement for describing the contents of programmes or major programmes. The United Nations, for instance, systematically sets out the following: (a) general objectives, (b) recent accomplishments, and (c) a list of measures to be taken during the life of the plan. The ILO, in its second plan, describes the eight "fields of action" of the Organization<sup>1/</sup> and adopts the following pattern for each:

- the basis (statistical or legal) of ILO action;
- main achievements;
- main problems;
- the major objective or objectives;
- programme emphasis.

The remaining organizations, on the other hand, do not employ such a systematic pattern. UNESCO, in its two plans (despite their difference of conception and scope), tries to bring out the most characteristic aspects of this or that field of activity, rather than follow a standard form of presentation. This is also the case with FAO, which sets out to describe its main lines of activity for each programme, after giving a fairly brief survey of the situation calling for action.

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<sup>1/</sup> These are virtually the same as those in the programme budget, there being slight differences in formulation (see para. 15 above): human rights, the World Employment Programme, human resources development, social security, conditions of work, occupational safety and health, industrial relations and participation, and industrial activities.

40. The example of the WHO programme documents

The WHO document entitled "General Programme of Work for a Specific Period" is very detailed in its arrangement, but too short (25 pages in all and one or two pages for each major programme) for any conclusions to be drawn from it as an attempt to rationalize presentation. I feel, however, that mention should be made at this point of the "programme documents" in which the Executive Board of WHO is presented with a fairly detailed medium-term survey of one or two substantive divisions each year.<sup>1/</sup> These are not plans showing the financial resources to be utilized in the future, but simply programme descriptions; the quality of the presentation is perhaps unequal, but as a whole the documents are both clear and precise, and some of them (those on smallpox eradication, for example) conform more or less to the following standard layout:

- the problem; a description of the situation (in the major regions of the world - an illustrative map is sometimes included);
- action taken so far to solve the problem (past and present activities);
- the programme still to be carried out and proposed action in the medium-term period under consideration.

A layout of this kind, and in particular the section devoted to a concrete description of the situation that requires action, has the advantage of making the problems, as well as the objectives, far more specific and far clearer (in terms of localization, quantification, etc.). The fact that each document runs to between 40 and 50 pages would not seem to be an obstacle to the use of such a layout for setting forth a global medium-term plan for the organization, since precise data can easily be summarized. The problems to be dealt with must of course be fully defined,

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<sup>1/</sup> The following documents have been examined: EB 39/12 of 6 December 1966 on smallpox eradication; EB 41/12 of 11 December 1967 on the same subject; EB 43/31 of 27 January 1969 on cardiovascular diseases; EB/43/23 Corr.1 of 6 February 1969 on malaria eradication; EB 45/26 of 10 December 1969 on immunology; EB 47/30 of 22 December 1970 on health legislation; A/24 A/3 of 2 April 1971 on the human environment; EB 49/30 of 13 December 1971 on nutrition; A 25/11 of 20 April 1972 on industrial medicine; EB 51/9 of 29 November 1972 on veterinary medicine.

and the necessary data must already have been collected; obviously this is not always the case with every programme in every one of the organizations.<sup>1/</sup>

#### 41. Definition of the problems

The difficulty of defining clearly the problems which have to be faced when selecting objectives is clearly apparent from the texts of the different plans. The degree of precision achieved never seems very high, whether a special paragraph is devoted to the problems as such or whether the definition of the objectives makes it possible for the problems to be defined implicitly or explicitly. In the absence of an accepted doctrine on the subject, any measurement of the degree of precision attained in this field must obviously be arbitrary. I nevertheless propose to comment in the following paragraphs on certain criteria, concerning localization, typology, quantification and stage of development.

#### 42. Localization

Most of the organizations, when mentioning or describing problems, refrain from specifying the geographical area involved. Depending on the circumstances, the method of presenting the problem, whether in FAO, the United Nations, UNESCO or the ILO, consists either in:

- not mentioning its localization, which implies that the problem is dealt with on a world scale or, more often, at the level of all developing countries - for example: "The protein problem is both large and complex" (FAO); "The problems arise at the stage of execution, and the first to be faced is that of structures ..." (UNESCO); "The main problems in human settlements are the result of complex cause-effect relationships" (United Nations); or in
- using expressions such as "in many countries", "many member States ..." (ILO).

It is conceivable that in certain special cases (human rights or land reform), political factors may prevent situations and problems from being described on a geographical basis, but this is not the case with most other subjects; the obstacles

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<sup>1/</sup> It seems necessary to mention that the ILO has also for some years been undertaking "in-depth" studies of particular substantive divisions. Thus, the Governing Body has made a thorough examination of five technical programmes: Occupational Safety and Health (between May 1970 and November 1972); Social Security (February-June 1972); General Conditions of Work (November 1972 and November 1973); Workers' Education (November 1972 and February 1973); Management Development (November 1973). The document of February-March 1972 on Social Security (GB/184/FA/12/9), for example, includes a historical survey of the problem and of the role of the ILO before giving an account of prospects, trends and programme conception and priorities.

to this kind of precision seem to lie more in the absence of precise information or in the view that such information cannot be summarized briefly enough. In fact, the "world dimension" of the problems which the organizations have to face definitely seems a fundamental difficulty which can never be easily overcome. Yet descriptions of problems at the regional level (in the case of the United Nations regional economic commissions, for example) do not achieve any greater degree of precision.

#### 43. Non-existence of typologies

Typologies are scarcely ever employed in the plans, either, despite the obvious fact that most problems do not look alike, and indeed possess entirely different characteristics, depending on the characteristics of the various countries concerned and, for example, on their level of development. It might therefore seem logical to distinguish between kinds of countries, or at least between kinds of problems, which may differ from one class of country to another; the typologies adopted will of course vary according to the field under consideration. An examination of the UNDP country programmes, for example, reveals quite clearly that the kinds of projects requested by the technically most advanced countries (e.g. Brazil, Argentina and the eastern European countries) generally have nothing in common with what is requested by less-developed countries, and that the degree of development existing in this or that sector entails a substantial variation in the kinds of requirements. Apart from the now classic distinction between the "25 least developed countries" and the others - a distinction which in fact is rarely employed in problem description - I have found no examples of typological analysis in the various documents examined.

#### 44. Quantification

The use of numerical data is again quite exceptional. The provision of figures and percentages in connexion with the problems of illiteracy in the second UNESCO<sup>1/</sup> plan can be regarded as a rare example. For problems of equal magnitude, for example

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<sup>1/</sup> "The major objective proposed to Member States for the 1973-1978 period is that of reducing the world illiteracy rate, which was 34.2 per cent of the adult population (15 years of age and over) in 1970, and ensuring that the absolute number of illiterates is not appreciably higher in 1980 than it was in 1970, thus reversing the constant trend towards a marked numerical increase in illiteracy. If the 1970 figure of 783,000,000 illiterates is not exceeded in 1980, it will mean - if population forecasts are correct - that the illiteracy rate has fallen to 27.7 per cent." (Document 17 C/4, section 1.25, Literacy, para. 1256).

those posed by the World Employment Programme, the ILO gives no figures;<sup>1/</sup> admittedly, in a field of that kind, the collection of numerical data forms an integral part of the objectives of the programme itself.<sup>2/</sup> Yet the authors of the plan did not see fit to mention the known data, even in the form of orders of magnitude, which would at least have served to highlight the problem. The same is true as regards most major problems in the other organizations.

45. The stage of development of problems

Conversely, the stage of development of problems is described fairly frequently, but more often than not in somewhat vague terms, without any dates or precise historical information being given. What we find is "growing concern", the effects of new phenomena and restatements of problems given as justification for changes in the direction of programmes. In this connexion, the unavoidable restrictions on the size of documents is doubtless the main reason for the lack of precision.

46. Formulation of long-term general objectives

The clear formulation of objectives, on the other hand, has been regarded by all the organizations as the obvious goal of the programming exercise. Most of the documents examined draw a fairly clear distinction between general objectives and the specific objectives for the period under consideration; the latter are usually indications as to means of action. Only a selection of examples could give any idea of what the authors of the plans regard as "general objectives" or "objectives for the period under consideration". As a whole, general objectives are formulated so imprecisely that in certain cases it may be asked whether so much space really needs to be devoted to them. Clarity would certainly be gained and more pages would be available for providing information on work plans or on numerical data if whole paragraphs were replaced by simple two- or three-word titles. The difficulty of describing objectives on the world scale and the novelty of the exercise can be the only explanation for the length of certain passages which tell the reader absolutely

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<sup>1/</sup> Long-term Plan for the Period 1974-1979 (GB.185/FA/13/16), chapter II, paras. 31-33.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., para. 39: "vigorous efforts should be made to improve labour force statistics in order to be able to formulate realistic quantitative targets for employment."

nothing. The examples quoted in the footnotes below are in fact representative of a fairly large number of pages, especially in United Nations and FAO documents, which could well have been deleted.<sup>1/</sup> The ILO and UNESCO have avoided the snare of over-generalized descriptions more successfully.

47. The formulation of programme objectives for the duration of the plan  
(United Nations/FAO)

There is a considerable disparity, not only between the plans of the different organizations, but also between the descriptions of the various programmes of a given organization, as regards the degree of precision achieved in the formulation of programme objectives for the duration of the plan. One finds both simple enumerations of spheres of action and definitions of fairly concrete and precise aims. In some passages there seems to be a tendency to describe permanent functions without proper regard for the fact that the plan is of limited duration. Statements such as "Assistance will be given to Governments in enhancing the participation of youth in development", "Techniques of training in and promotion of popular participation, including the training of experts in their application, will be tested and disseminated", "Assistance will be given to Governments in the identification of appropriate social welfare policies and plans", and so on, do not provide a very clear idea of

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<sup>1/</sup> "Action is required at the national, regional and international levels to achieve more rapid progress toward eliminating poverty, accelerating development, establishing equality of men and women both in law and in practice, and in integrating women fully in the total development effort. The pace of social change and development remains slow in many countries and points to the acute need for the formulation and wide application of effective strategies for social as well as economic development." (United Nations, Medium-Term Plan for the Period 1974-1977, Social development and humanitarian affairs).

"Water Conservation

100. Water is a key element in man's environment, linking climate, the land surface and the biosphere, and required by man for domestic supplies, industry and recreation. This resource is limited, and only by viewing the hydrological cycle as a single system can it both be developed and conserved. Agriculture, as the main user of water, has a vital interest and FAO is playing a key role in the planning and management of water development ..." (FAO, Medium-Term Plan, 1972-1977, chapter VI, para. 100).



United Nations activities or working methods in the field of social development and humanitarian affairs during the life of the medium-term plan. To say that "a sharply increased emphasis" is called for "in FAO's activities in the field of soil conservation both with regard to action programmes and to development of appropriate techniques" tells us little, either. Although in a number of fields these organizations sometimes give information which is rather more specific, particularly about the nature of studies to be undertaken or completed, a few isolated remarks in what is in any case an over-generalized text can in no way constitute a plan.

48. The formulation of programme objectives for the duration of the plan  
(ILO/UNESCO)

The objectives to be followed for the duration of the plan are undoubtedly spelt out most clearly by the ILO, even if its programme descriptions are still too generalized and badly related to its problem descriptions, and by UNESCO, although the latter organization is also niggardly when it comes to giving quantitative data. Generally speaking, however, the plans do not really indicate any "intermediate objectives" which, expressed in terms of a specific date and, wherever feasible, numerical data, would mark a step forward in the eventual solution of a particular problem. Here again some progress would seem essential, both as regards the elaboration of a doctrine on the notion of an objective and in respect of data collection and processing and the choice of a clear method of presentation. UNESCO document 17 C/4 (the second plan) unquestionably offers the highest degree of precision which has been achieved in this field, but, as we shall see later, its resemblance to a "six-year budget" seems to have posed a serious problem at the General Conference of the Organization; this shows that the whole concept of medium-term plans in the international organizations still remains to be defined.

49. Calculation of the financial requirements and choice of priorities

It is in fact the problem of the kind of decisions which may result from the consideration of a medium-term plan by the intergovernmental committees responsible for defining an organization's policy that governs one of the fundamental aspects of such a plan: that of the financial assessment of the resources to be employed in order to attain the objectives. Marked differences in methods appear in this respect. The ILO, for example, refrains from attempting any quantitative assessment of financial requirements. In the introduction to the second plan, the Director-General said that no indications could be given of the resources needed to carry out the programmes until the views of the Financial and Administrative Committee and the

Governing Body as to the proposed activities had been ascertained; but no attempt to calculate those resources seems to have been made once the views in question were known.<sup>1/</sup> On the other hand, the United Nations and UNESCO (in the second plan) chose to give exact figures. It should be noted, however, that not the slightest explanation is given of the relationship which, in the United Nations, the descriptions of objectives may have with the very detailed staff and appropriation tables by which they are accompanied; and this considerably limits the scope of the exercise. In UNESCO, however, document 17 C/4 gives very detailed figures in support of the proposed percentage increases, which reflect proposals concerning the order of priority of the corresponding programmes. The dollar figures in turn reflect the percentage increases. In the FAO plan, increasing, stable or decreasing appropriation trends are indicated. The following alphabetical key

- A = increasing more rapidly
- B = increasing steadily
- C = remaining stable
- D = decreasing

is used to denote the trends proposed for each sub-programme as regards budgetary and extra-budgetary funds. These trends are translated into dollars at the programme but not sub-programme level. Another method, which is simpler because it entails no conversion of increases into dollars or staff requirements, is the one adopted in the first UNESCO plan; it was to indicate nothing more than the percentage increases proposed for each programme during the period of the plan. The final choice between the various possible formulas naturally depends on the role which the governing bodies of the organizations decide to assign to medium-term plans. We shall see later that agreement on this point appears somewhat remote.

#### 50. Other programme documents

A few other "programme documents" remain to be considered very briefly if we are to have a complete picture of the programming activities of the various organizations. The different "programme committees" of the United Nations and the agencies have obviously not waited for programme budgeting or medium-term planning methods to be adopted before examining, in their various ways, the programmes of the organizations. The secretariats, for their part, have always had to plan the activities of their divisions, and in particular those of their substantive divisions, somewhat in advance.

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<sup>1/</sup> See para. 58 below.

In other words, a considerable number of "programme documents" have existed in the past, and still exist, either for internal use, in connexion with the organization of the work of the secretariats, or for external use, i.e. to enable the "programme committee" to define the approaches which they hope to see adopted. The problem of the retention or elimination of these documents, or of their possible harmonization, is just another part of the whole question of programming, and some attention should therefore be devoted to them. It would in fact seem possible, without having to examine all these documents, since they are very numerous, to suggest a rough classification. At least three categories must be distinguished:

- general surveys;
- detailed studies;
- internal working documents.

51. General surveys

The documents presenting the governing bodies with a general programme survey, such as the document which the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs was in the habit of submitting to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council,<sup>1/</sup> and the documents which UNIDO used to submit to the Industrial Development Board (documents ID/B/80 of 2 March 1971 and ID/B/97 of 27 March 1972), should in principle be discontinued after the introduction of programme budgeting. \*Such documents do not seem to exist in FAO, the ILO or UNESCO. The United Nations will doubtless have to follow the example of those organizations, although this year the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has seen fit to produce a special document which gives more details than the budget itself and is undoubtedly clearer without being much bulkier (document E/5329 of 10 May 1973),<sup>2/</sup> while UNCTAD has submitted documents to the Trade and Development Board (document TD/B/434 of 16 April 1973) explaining the UNCTAD programme.

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<sup>1/</sup> The last of these, which appeared in 1972 in respect of 1973, is document E/AC.51/60 of 23 May 1972.

<sup>2/</sup> This 63-page document is undoubtedly far more specific than the text of chapter VII of the 1974-1975 programme budget, which runs to some 40 pages of much smaller type. A better conception of the presentation of "work plans" in the budget will obviously remove the need for such a document in the future.

52. Detailed studies relating to certain parts of the programme

In more general terms, the existence of "programme documents" which are actually more detailed than the budgets themselves does not seem justifiable unless they are special documents relating to a given programme or group of programmes and not documents which survey the entire work of an organization. Indeed, it is perfectly reasonable that, in the United Nations, the functional commissions of ECOSOC for example, the specialized committees, the Trade and Development Board and the Industrial Development Board, and, in the various agencies, the executive boards or programme committees, should have the requisite special documents for considering either the programme relating to their specialized field or whichever part of the programme they feel deserves special attention. I have already (cf. para. 40) quoted the example of the WHO and ILO programme documents dealing with certain substantive activities; the principle of this kind of review seems to me an admirable one. It remains for a doctrine to be developed on this subject in order to make possible the adoption of a model formula which is not only the most suitable for the particular requirements of the various programmes but also the one best geared to the medium-term planning exercises. A complete inventory requires to be drawn up of what exists (or would be desirable) in this connexion. What a programme document actually consists of is also something that has to be defined, for very many study documents relating to a particular part of a programme come quite close to being programme documents.

53. Documents capable of providing a conceptual basis

In addition, careful consideration should perhaps be given to the kinds of documents that are capable of providing a conceptual basis for medium-term planning, such as FAO document C 69/4 of August 1969 on the "Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development". Documents of this kind no doubt aim at serving a very different purpose and are not written solely with the agencies' programme planning in mind (e.g. the ILO documents on employment policy, and even the forward-looking parts of the United Nations World Economic Surveys), yet they cannot fail to affect the ways in which the organizations' activities are planned, and it would be useful to consider what regular contribution they might make. At all events, so far as a large number of documents are concerned, a harmonization-of-methods study seems to be called for.

54. Detailed internal work plans

Another kind of document whose generalized use would be very helpful - and one in respect of which studies could begin immediately with a view to co-ordinating the methods of the different agencies - is the internal work plan, which gives an extremely

detailed description of the activities which are to be undertaken. The documents in question are called "Programme Activity Details" in UNESCO, "Programme Decision Minutes" in the ILO and "Programme Elements Proposals" in FAO. These detailed work plans are drawn up for all headquarters activities and for the duration of the budgetary period. In UNESCO, they even give the names of each professional staff member involved; in the ILO, the "decisions" allocate the necessary appropriations to section chiefs and at the same time describe the related work. Systems exist for making adjustments during a given year. My personal view is that such a method, which is roughly the equivalent for headquarters activities of what "plans of operation" are for field projects, is standard practice in good administration, but it is not followed by the United Nations, WHO or UNDP.

55. Remarks on these documents and on the possible consequences of medium-term plans as regards administration and management

I feel that a number of remarks are called for on this subject:

What is involved is a necessary corollary to the establishment of cost accounting, which is being introduced in most of the big organizations.

A broadening of the approach to this exercise should be contemplated, even by comparison with the practice at present followed by UNESCO, FAO and the ILO, for with the adoption of medium-term plans, it should be feasible, not indeed to draw up a "detailed work plan" for four to six years, which is manifestly impossible, but to derive from the programming of substantive activities the advantage of being able to programme a number of administrative or related activities, such as the recruitment of professional staff (a long-term recruitment plan has already been adopted in the United Nations), the field recruitment of experts, publications production, equipment purchases, computer use, and so on. In other words, I think that all the organizations concerned should decide as quickly as possible to adopt a "detailed work plan" for the periods covered by their budgets and to introduce a number of forecasting methods, particularly in respect of staff recruitment, for the period covered by the plan.

56. Initial conclusions to be drawn from the above comparisons

As regards medium-term plans, therefore, it seems clear that there are extreme differences of conception; but this is no mere question of form. These differences clearly reflect uncertainty as to the real nature of the planning exercise: the formal defects are therefore actually symptomatic of problems of substance. An analysis of the reactions of the governing bodies to this question clearly shows that these problems of substance are in fact the ones that must be solved.

CHAPTER IV

THE REACTIONS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES

57. Convergence and divergence

The only excuse which the author of a report can have for using a few pages to remind the delegations of member States of their own deliberations is the need to recapitulate a process spreading over a number of years or the need for comparative inter-organizational study. Both these conditions are met in the present case, and a comparison unquestionably has to be made to bring out the convergences as well as the divergences. Medium-term plans give rise to much misgiving, and in recent years there have been many changes of attitude in the organizations. There is in fact far more divergence than convergence, a circumstance which clearly shows the uncertain state of theory on this subject. To obtain a clear view of the situation, it is essential to examine the reactions of the organizations' governing bodies.

58. Reactions to the medium-term plans: Governing Body of the ILO

In the ILO, the process has taken the following form.

The Director-General submitted the first medium-term plan to the Governing Body at its one hundred and eightieth session (May-June 1970). The Financial and Administrative Committee considered the plan during that session and prepared a report on it (GB.180/8/36). In general, this report indicates that the plan was well received and that it had ever made possible the discussion of a number of substantive problems. The comments on form related to the plan's excessively general character, the lack of indication of financial resources and the need for considerable improvements on the occasion of the submission of the following plan. The consideration of the second plan was begun at the one hundred and eighty-sixth

session of the Governing Body (June 1972). The decision to establish a working party of 14 members was taken at the following session, and the report of that working party was considered at the one hundred and eighty-eighth session (November 1972). This report<sup>1/</sup> deals with the principles and methods of medium-term planning in the ILO and the substantive proposals contained in the plan concerning the various fields of action. These substantive observations are important: they relate to the main directions of ILO activity (relationships between programmes, priorities and new proposals) and show that the exercise has aroused obvious interest. The observations on form relate, in particular, to:

- the method of presentation of objectives, which do not provide sufficiently precise criteria for the formulation of the programme and for subsequent evaluation;
- the structure of the plan, which does not facilitate analysis of the various methods or "means of action" used to achieve the objectives;
- acceptance of the procedure of "in-depth studies"<sup>2/</sup> at the rate of six per biennium;
- the inadequacy of the information provided on possible means of establishing priorities and on programme costs;
- the recommendation to follow more closely in future the recommendations on planning made by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies;
- the excessively vague and philosophical nature of the proposed plan;
- the need for closer links between the priorities of the plan and the objectives of the Strategy for the Second Development Decade.

It should be noted that this discussion was preceded by written consultation with member States (and the members of the Governing Body individually) and that many precise and detailed replies were submitted (GB.188.LTP.3, included in the appendix to the working party's report).<sup>3/</sup> The ILO is in the process of preparing a third plan (1976-1981) in which it will endeavour to follow the above recommendations.

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<sup>1/</sup> GB.188/11/24, accompanied by appendices in document GB/188/11/25.

<sup>2/</sup> Cf. footnote to paragraph 40 above.

<sup>3/</sup> It is impossible to summarize them here, but they, too, demonstrate the interest aroused by the planning exercise among member States.

59. The FAO medium-term plan: preliminary observations by the Council

In FAO, the first preparatory document (CL 55/9) - the first outline prepared pursuant to resolution 9/69 adopted by the Conference at its fifteenth session - was considered by the Council at its fifty-fifth session (November 1970). This document was well received and the Council endorsed the method based on the selection of a number of "areas of concentration". It nevertheless observed that the document was too general in nature, did not adequately define priorities and failed to give quantitative indications of cost. The need was stressed to consider the FAO programme in a more general context (world agricultural situation, Second Decade and country programming). As regards priorities, emphasis was placed, in the discussion of the substance, on the priority to be given to training and further training for specialized personnel in member countries abroad, but the Council recognized that it "could not adequately consider nor reach agreement on priorities in such a debate, particularly as priorities were bound to differ from region to region and country to country". This same concern about the selection of priorities as a very important matter is to be found in the recommendations of the various FAO regional conferences (CL 55/15). The consideration of the medium-term plan (C 71/15) began in September 1971 in the Programme Committee (CL57/5) and was continued in the same year in the Council (November 1971, fifty-seventh session; CL 57/REP). These first examinations concluded with a favourable assessment of the document, which was considered to be clear, even though a further effort seemed necessary to define strategies and objectives, to determine priorities, and so on. In the same month, at its sixteenth session, the Conference of FAO in turn conducted a detailed examination of the plan, and after its deliberations adopted resolution 6/71, which approved "the medium-term plan as a general framework for the planning and programming of the activities of the Organization" and in particular requested the submission in future of preliminary sub-programme proposals to the specialized committees, a better presentation of priorities, and the presentation of a revised plan for the period 1974-1979 to the seventeenth session of the Conference.

60. FAO medium-term plan: change in the attitude of the Programme Committee in May 1972

The attitude of the Programme Committee changed considerably at its twenty-first session, in May 1972 (document CL 59/7). Several factors are mentioned as accounting for this radical change. They include:



- the deterioration in FAO's financial situation;
- the adoption of the above-mentioned resolution 6/71, which requested the committees of the Council and the regional conferences to review sub-programme priorities;
- the difficulties experienced by the Committees on Fisheries, Agriculture and Forestry in carrying out this task;
- the warning given by the Director-General of the threat of further financial problems affecting both the Regular and Extra-Budgetary Programmes.

The Programme Committee also seems to have been impressed by the difficulty of integrating the national priorities defined within the context of country programming and the possible role of FAO in defining priorities at the world level. The Committee pointed out that country programming "placed the decision on sectoral allocations of UNDP resources on the countries themselves". On that basis, "the Committee considered that the term 'Medium-Term Plan' was a misnomer. It should not be regarded as or called a 'Plan'. It should be a statement of 'medium-term objectives'". The Committee also noted that it was necessary "to avoid repeating detailed information at the sub-programme level in a separate statement on Medium-Term Objectives". The Committee gave the following definition of the future document: "This [statement] could ... deal concisely with the [following] issues ...: the general development situation and future trends, the appropriate strategies and policy options, the prospects for resources from all sources, the broad programme implications for FAO, including the integrated and multidisciplinary approach, with emphasis on effectiveness, integration, balance and flexibility in the use of financial and manpower resources. This kind of statement, coupled with the hard detail of the Programme of Work and Budget, would be more a realistic and illuminating statement on the Medium Term than brief sub-programme description and tables of projections and gradings for the extra-budgetary as well as the Regular Programme". The Committee considered that for the immediate future it would be preferable to keep a general statement on those lines separate from the Programme of Work and Budget. It also discussed the problem of priorities. It is mentioned that there had been a tendency to place a high priority on two areas of concentration, namely the mobilization of human resources and agricultural development planning. The Committee stressed, however, the importance of the problems of education and training. It "agreed that the elimination of low priorities was not necessarily a matter of eliminating sub-programmes, but a rigorous examination and elimination of low-priority activities within sub-programmes ... the Committee felt doubtful about the value of the so-called Areas of Concentration." It supported the use of them, however, but suggested that they should be renamed "Areas of Emphasis".

61. FAO medium-term plan: decisions taken by the Council in November 1972

At its fifty-ninth session, in November 1972, the Council (paras. 40-49 of its report, CL 59/REP) supported and reiterated the observations of the Programme Committee. It stressed the impossibility of participating in the definition of priorities for the allocation of extra-budgetary resources because of country programming. It expressed concern about the determination of priorities: "The Council considered whether in its approach a distinction should be made between the consultative, advisory and operational roles of the Organization and, in particular, whether the main emphasis should be laid on the global aspects of the programme in determining priorities, but it was felt that no clear conclusions could be reached on this." The Council recognized that priorities varied from region to region and from country to country. In fact, the document entitled "Medium-term objectives" (C 73/10), of August 1973, submitted for the seventeenth session of the Conference, to be held in November 1973, no longer has the character of a medium-term plan.

62. First UNESCO medium-term plan

In UNESCO, consideration of the first medium-term planning document (16 C/4), which had been called for by the General Conference at its fifteenth session, in resolution 33.1, was begun at the eighty-fifth session of the Executive Board (September-November 1970). In its resolution 5.2 (document 85 EX/Decisions), which followed a very thorough examination (eight working meetings; document 85 EX/SR.1.20), the Board emphasized that that document represented an important step forward in the evolution of the Organization's methods of work and expressed the view that it raised fundamental questions on which the General Conference should formulate directives. To that end, it recommended the method which the General Conference should adopt in examining the document and itself gave an outline of discussions on aims (peace, development, human rights and priorities), the means (the budget and the Secretariat), and the methods (the regional centres, intergovernmental conferences and the participation of National Commissions). With regard to future C/4 documents, the Board requested that planning (C/4) and programme-budget (C/5) documents should be prepared simultaneously by the Secretariat, and it even wondered whether they should not be amalgamated. Resolutions 7.1 and 42 of the sixteenth General Conference (November 1970) recommend in general terms the continuation of the planning effort, endorse the growth rate (7 per cent) proposed by the Director-General for the following two biennia, confirm the wishes of the Executive Board concerning the

simultaneous preparation of C/4 and C/5 documents, and invite the Director-General to consider, in consultation with the Executive Board, the possibility of amalgamating the two documents.

63. UNESCO: preparation of the second plan

In October-November 1971, the Director-General submitted to the Board, at its eighty-eighth session document 88 EX/27, relating to "issues which affect short-term and medium-term programming". That document, prepared after written consultation with member States, asked the Board eight questions concerning methods of defining the programme, growth rates and the structure of the Secretariat. During the discussion, two information papers (88 EX/INF/3 and 4) on the presentation and contents of documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5 were also submitted to the Board. In connexion with document 88 EX/27, the Special Committee on the methods of work of the Organization prepared a report, the discussion of which by the Board resulted in the adoption of a very detailed resolution (3.1, para. VII of document 88 EX/Decisions), which gives "guidelines concerning the form and content of document C/4 and its relation with document C/5.<sup>1/</sup>" Resolution 3.1.VII outlines the purpose and functions of C/4 and C/5 documents, and lays down guidelines for their contents and presentation. The main point is the clear distinction between the two documents. The medium-term outline plan should describe "the main lines of action to be followed by the Organization and the concrete results that should be sought", and "the conceptual basis and practical implications of these proposals and the choices they entail". It should at the same time establish a relationship with "the priority needs of member States, especially where expressed in Country programmes", and "should take account of the need to co-ordinate the outline plan with the medium-term programmes of other organizations of the United Nations system, and particularly with the resolutions ... relating to the Second Development Decade". It should in particular:

- "indicate ... the objectives and problems on which the efforts of the Organization should be concentrated ...;

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<sup>1/</sup> Another resolution, 5.3, concerning issues which affect short-term and medium-term programming, invited the Director-General to take into account the observations and suggestions made by members of the Executive Board in the course of the discussion (document 88 EX/Decisions, p.27).

- show the stages by which it is proposed that these objectives could be achieved and these problems dealt with ...;"
- propose alternative courses of action;
- indicate the criteria to be used for evaluation purposes.

The programme budget must, for its part, "comprise the programme for the following biennium and should be regarded as the budget and management document of UNESCO for this programme". It should be sufficiently detailed and present clear and concise work plans. It is the only document to have binding financial effects.

64. UNESCO: the reactions caused by the second plan

Documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5 were presented by the Director-General to the Executive Board at the eighty-fifth session (May-July 1972). Prolonged deliberation (89 EX/SR 1.27) concerning the conception and format of these documents resulted in the adoption of a resolution (item 5 of document 89 EX/Decisions of 2 August 1972) containing recommendations which marked a distinct change of approach. While recognizing that its directives and those of the General Conference had been observed, and that the availability of those two documents could help the Conference to determine the general policy of the Organization and to take decisions on the two-year programme budget, it noted that the manner of preparation of documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5 had resulted in repetitions and excessive volume of documentation which might complicate the task of the General Conference and should therefore be avoided in the future. It expressed the view that the value of the medium-term plan would be further enhanced if the objectives proposed for the Organization, both generally and within each area of activity, were presented more clearly and included an indication of their relative degree of importance. In addition, it should be noted that in paragraph 11 of this resolution, the Board approves the growth rates proposed for future budgets within the period of the plan, namely 8 per cent for the period 1975-1976 and 7.5 per cent for the period 1977-1978.

65. UNESCO: towards a third plan

The deliberations of the General Conference at its seventeenth session, in turn, resulted in the adoption of resolutions 34 (1, 2 and 3) and 35.1. The most important is resolution 34.1, whose main provision is to invite the Director-General "to prepare, taking into account the suggestions of Member States and in consultation with the Executive Board, and to submit to the General Conference, at its eighteenth session, a document comprising an analysis of the major world problems in the fields of the Organization's competence as well as a table of objectives,

structured and arranged in order of priority, indicating the contribution UNESCO intends to make to the solution of these problems in the course of the following six years, together with the appropriate information concerning timing and, by way of indication, the necessary resources and the real rates of growth. This document once adopted should serve as a basis for the presentation to the General Conference at its nineteenth session of a Draft Six-Year Outline Plan".<sup>1/</sup>

Two very important new elements thus emerge in this text:

- the notion of the prior definition of a policy in the form of a list of world problems on which UNESCO can take action;
- the decision to spread the preparation of the following plan over four years (in two stages of two years).

The preparation of document 18 C/4 was undertaken on the basis of these recommendations. In particular, after written consultation with member States, in accordance with UNESCO practice, the Director-General submitted to the Executive Board document 93 EX/A of 31 July 1973 containing "issues relating to the preparation of the document on medium-term objectives". The summarized observations of member States demonstrate the interest displayed by delegations in the continuation of that difficult exercise. One important point to be noted is that, in view of the diversity of the lists of "major world problems" proposed by member States, the Director-General was prompted to ask the Board (question 2) whether it was "willing to recommend that the attempt systematically to define a set of major problems should be abandoned". The document also offers, in particular, a choice between various methods of presenting indications on resources and growth rates. It also seriously calls in question the very possibility of presenting alternatives (question 21).<sup>2/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The other parts of resolution 34 invite the Executive Board to make proposals to the General Conference concerning the method of using document 18 C/4 and on the relationships to be established between documents 18 C/4 and 18 C/5, and documents C/4 and C/5 in the future; and approve the rates of growth suggested by the Director-General for the biennia 1975-1976 and 1977-1978. Resolution 35 contains the calendar for the preparation of the programme and biennial budget and of the document on the draft medium-term objectives.

<sup>2/</sup> Decision 93 EX/Dec. 5.2 concluded the Board's discussion of this document. It affirms in particular that "the Organization's future objectives must be defined on the basis of a formulation of the major world problems which are of concern to UNESCO."

66. Reactions caused by the first United Nations plan

Lastly, in the United Nations, reactions to medium-term plans have been partly confused with reactions to programme budgets. The observations concerning the detailed expression of objectives, quantification, alternative solutions, etc., seem to have been addressed to both types of documents. The only observations concerning the distinction between the plan and the budget are the following: CPC stated in paragraph 25 of its report that "the relationship between the medium-term plan and the biennial work programme and budget should not be one in which the plan is merely a projection of the programme budget, as seems to be the case. Rather, the relationship should be one whereby the programme budget was conceived as an instalment of the plan, with precise identification of resources". ACABQ, for its part, considered that medium-term plans leave much to be desired and that "it would indeed appear that the underlying concept is not always fully appreciated".<sup>1/</sup> It went on to say (para.18(f) of its report):

"The construction of the plan certainly does not suggest that a thorough review has been undertaken of the means by which the Organization's goals are achieved. In the Advisory Committee's opinion, such a review, based on a critical appraisal of the continuing programmes and programme performance, is a prerequisite of effective planning of future activities and the optimum

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<sup>1/</sup> ACABQ did not, however, specify how this underlying concept should be appreciated.

use of available resources. The Committee trusts that it will be possible to devote more time and attention to these matters before the next medium-term plan is proposed".<sup>1/</sup>

Whether the reasons for this situation lie in the inadequacy of the analyses undertaken by the secretariats, in the misgivings of the intergovernmental bodies, or in the fundamental difficulties of the enterprise, this review of reactions in the various organizations would seem to call seriously into question the possibility of defining rapidly a precise doctrine of planning.

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<sup>1/</sup> Just after work on the drafting of the present report had been completed, (December 1973) the General Assembly adopted an important resolution on the formulation, review and approval of programmes and budgets (resolution 3199 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973). This very important resolution, which cannot be quoted here in full, requests the Secretary-General, in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7:

- "to put special emphasis in the future on the preparation of the medium-term plan, which should provide the framework for the biennial programme budget,"
- "in consultation with the various organizations of the United Nations system, within their fields of competence, to intensify and further harmonize United Nations activities in all areas, including the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, so as to ensure that the efforts of the system will produce maximum results;"
- "in preparing the programme budget for 1976-1977, to take into account the views of the Fifth Committee and other competent organs on ways and means to improve the form, content and structure of the programme budget and, in particular:
  - (a) To ensure programme co-ordination among major organizational units;
  - (b) To provide information on the allocation of indirect costs of programmes to which they relate;
  - (c) To provide information on extra-budgetary resources by source of funds;
  - (d) To give relative weight in terms of percentages of each programme and programme component in relation to the other;"

67. The problem of "intergovernmental machinery"<sup>1/</sup>

Concern with the need to contemplate the reorganization of the "intergovernmental machinery" has manifested itself only in the United Nations; the problem has apparently not yet given rise to any particular difficulties in the other organizations. ACABQ has stressed the importance of the problem for the United Nations by making its solution the first condition for the improvement of the programming system. And here I think that paragraph 16 of the Committee's first report on the proposed programme budgeting system should be quoted in full:

"First, the Committee still believes that 'a fresh look at the existing machinery of intergovernmental and expert organs concerned with formulating reviewing and approving programmes and budgets' must take place (A/8739, para.5). However, the Committee remains convinced that 'practical experience may prove a better guide than theoretical disquisition' (A/8739, para.67), and such a reassessment should be made only after experience has been gained from the initial programme budget".

The problem is therefore posed: it is in fact that of the respective spheres of competence of ACABQ itself and of CPC, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the specialized programme review committees, particularly the Second Committee of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council itself.<sup>2/</sup> No indication of a solution has so far been given, with the possible exception of the reference made by the Secretary-General as early as 19 November 1970 in document A/C.5/1335 (para.16) concerning the need for "Member States to take concrete action which would concentrate the authority to approve the projects and to determine the organizational programme and budgetary policy in as few intergovernmental bodies as possible, ideally in a single body." This problem is perhaps not yet extremely urgent, but evading it will obviously become increasingly difficult as progress is made in the programming experiment.

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<sup>1/</sup> See footnote at the beginning of chapter IX.

<sup>2/</sup> The above-quoted resolution 3199 (XXVIII) has even (paragraph 8) given official recognition to its existence by entering this topic on the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.



68. General observations

The reactions of the various organizations to the problems posed by the programming experiments now being undertaken concurrently within each organization do not provide the basis for a definitive conclusion. The only observations which I think should be made for the moment are the following:

- (1) A large number of questions, some of which are very precise and others very vague, have been posed: they must be answered.
- (2) Any further accentuation of the divergencies which seem to be appearing in the directions taken by the medium-term planning experiment would jeopardize normal co-operation among the organizations in the United Nations system. It would therefore seem desirable to work out a formula which would permit meetings, not only between programming specialists within the secretariats, which are already taking place, but also between members of the various intergovernmental committees.
- (3) As several governing bodies have emphasized, country programming problems must be considered within the context of their relationships with medium-term programming. We shall now try to begin the examination of this question.

CHAPTER V

COUNTRY PROGRAMMING

69. Overlapping of the problems caused by country programming and medium-term programming

Country programming, as practised by UNDP for nearly three years now, involves of course only the use of the voluntary funds administered by UNDP. Obviously, however, this programming exercise, covering several years (five years), cannot be separated from the medium-term programming practised in the agencies, for reasons which are well known but which I think should be mentioned:

- a very substantial part of the extra-budgetary funds used by the agencies and the United Nations comes from UNDP and, so far as most of these big organizations are concerned, constitutes the basis of their operational activities;
- a substantial part of the research, studies, training, information work and promotion of ideas or standards carried out at the headquarters of the agencies with their regular programme funds (not counting technical assistance support activities) is directly related to those operational activities or represents their indirect continuation, accompaniment or support, and there is thus very close overlapping between operational activities programmed by the country programming method and regular-programme activities of the agencies or the United Nations programmed by the "medium-term plan" method.

70. Absence of any link between the two systems

However, it cannot be said that in the present state of affairs there is even a tenuous link between the two programming systems. Everything seems to go on as

if the problems tackled were independent. We have seen that operational activities financed with extra-budgetary funds occupy a very modest place in the planning documents of the agencies and the United Nations. While the WIO budget gives very detailed information, it does so on a project-by-project basis, without explaining the methods of project selection; UNESCO, on the other hand, tries to present an "integrated budget" with brief descriptions of the most important projects; FAO confines itself to statistical information at the "sub-programme" level, while the ILO and the United Nations mention only the total of probable extra-budgetary resources. Moreover, the preparation of country programming documents appears to be based on a general approach, which does not facilitate the establishment of logical relationships between the major problems of world-wide significance with which the agencies are concerned and the particular problems singled out in each country as being suitable for operational projects. The situation will no doubt change, but the present state of affairs seems to be as follows:

71. Theoretical foundation of the present country programming system

The theoretical model of country programming, as defined in the Capacity Study and endorsed in paragraphs 2-12 of the Consensus approved by the UNDP Governing Council at its tenth session, seems to be designed to ensure consistency between the diagnostic analysis of the situation in a particular country and the list of projects approved for that country. In any case this is stated in the "Guidelines and Instructions for the Formulation and Annual Review of the UNDP Country Programmes", which broadly restate what is said in the Consensus: "The programming of UNDP assistance at the country level ... involves the identification in advance, for a period of three to five years, of the use of UNDP inputs in relation to the country's development objectives"; the programme should "be formulated by the Government in co-operation, at an appropriate stage, with representatives of the United Nations system, the latter under the leadership of the Resident Representative of UNDP". It is expressly stated that the Government "has the ultimate responsibility for deciding which of those (national development plan) objectives should be the subject of its programme of UNDP assistance".

72. Impossibility of obtaining a general view

The choice has indeed, therefore, to be made on a country-by-country basis in the light of considerations which are valid for the individual countries and which may lead those countries to regard UNDP assistance as complementing, sometimes

marginally, other assistance or other means of external financing. There is consequently no reference to major problems such as employment, literacy, industrialization, public health or agricultural development considered at the world level, i.e. to the general and even practical approach to them adopted by the big organizations. There are, of course, allusions to the role of the "consultation and advice" which the agencies should furnish on a sectoral basis for the preparation of those country programmes, and to the planning assistance which the United Nations system should be able to provide for that purpose. In the present situation, however, the contribution made by the organizations of the United Nations system to programming in the sectors in which they specialize does not seem to have been conducive to the establishment of any kind of link between an over-all regional or world approach to a given problem and what might or should be a systematic compilation of country diagnoses. The contents of most of the "Position Papers" furnished by the agencies for that purpose and of the "Background Papers" (prepared by Governments with the assistance of the UNDP Resident Representative, and sometimes one of the regional economic commissions of the United Nations) do not appear to contradict that view in any way.

### 73. Country programming documents

I have examined a considerable number of country programming documents (and the relevant background papers). At the time of writing, 82 had been published; 19 had been adopted at the Governing Council's thirteenth session (February 1972), 16 at its fourteenth session (June 1972), 23 at its fifteenth session (February 1973) and 24 at its sixteenth session (June 1973). Nearly all of these country programming documents are drafted in the following form (in accordance with the "Guidelines and Instructions" mentioned above). They comprise:

- (a) An introduction, in which the Government explains its conception and interpretation of the country programming experiment.
- (b) A statement of the country's principal development objectives and priorities; this important section is usually divided into several paragraphs and tables describing:
  - the main features of the country's economic and social situation,
  - the principal development objectives,
  - the development strategy,
  - the prospects and requirements as regards resources (especially external), with indication of shortages.

A table of technical assistance resources available for the programme period, showing the relative role of UNDP and the United Nations system, is generally provided.

- (c) A sector-by-sector description of the needs to be met by UNDP resources. This description ends with a list of projects (in most cases the most voluminous part of the document) which are either assembled separately in an annex or attached to the description of each sector's needs. Various tables (projects listed according to different criteria: executing agencies, year-by-year apportionment of costs, execution time-table, sectoral totals, etc.) are added to the document. This broadly-followed pattern accords well with the intentions of the reform's initiators. A study of these various exercises does not, however, give the impression that the reform has produced entirely satisfactory results. The following comments are called for.

74. Lack of internal coherence in every exercise

The coherence of each exercise has clearly been sought along the following line of reasoning: economic and social situation → development objectives → external-financing needs → available resources → contribution of the United Nations system and UNDP to those resources. In other words, the United Nations contribution, even if expressed sectorally in the context of existing needs, is in any case regarded as residual and, in view of its relatively marginal importance, the opinion of the countries themselves on that point is very definite. A great many countries have observed that the internal coherence of UNDP programmes is secondary to the coherence of a country's own development plan. Thus, the Government of Cuba states that "the programme submitted by Cuba for the next period ... is not in itself a coherent programme; as was emphasized in the discussions on the capacity of the United Nations system, its coherence lies in its relationship with the national development programme and the fact that it is part of that programme". The criterion of selection advanced by Cuba is that the activities concerned should be of a kind "which for a number of reasons cannot be carried out through bilateral economic and financial co-operation". Venezuela views the UNDP programme as part of the "Inventory of requests for international technical co-operation" submitted by the Government in July 1971 to the representatives of 23 countries providing technical co-operation and to the representatives of UNDP, OAS, IBRD and IDB. Peru remarks that it is difficult

in a brief description to establish clear connexions between UNDP projects and the objectives of the plan, and that "the question of priority for one project over another means little since it is obvious that only a small fraction of the country's needs is included in the indicative planning figure". A country like Colombia, which sees great value in the new country programming approach, says that the criterion used in the choice of UNDP projects is the result of "a set of considerations, such as the continuance of projects representing a commitment already assumed ..., the priority assigned by the Government to strengthening its machinery for institutional planning ..., the execution of projects of special importance to the country's growth potential ... and the priority accorded by the Government to the strengthening of its public administration". In its general criteria for selection, Colombia has also taken into consideration "the United Nations system's experience in certain areas", but it did not specify the nature of that experience.

75. Lack of a common methodology for defining types of projects

Furthermore, no common methodology is applied or apparently applicable for determining the types of projects which should be requested from the United Nations. Generally speaking, the indicative planning figure - albeit criticized by all Governments as inadequate - is divided among almost all economic sectors and a large number of small projects. Thus, among the 14 Latin-American countries which have submitted programmes, the proportion of the indicative planning figure concentrated on projects costing more than \$500,000 exceeds 80 per cent in only three countries (Cuba, Ecuador and Chile) and 50 per cent in only three others (Peru, Brazil and Colombia); and in the remaining countries it ranges from 13 per cent (Costa Rica) to 47 per cent. The existence of a guiding principle for the identification of particularly urgent priority problems which can be solved by external technical assistance is evident only in a few countries and for only part of the programmes. Brazil has decided to "concentrate UNDP co-operation in the area of scientific and technological development", since it considers UNDP's multinational character better suited to effective action in that area. Argentina, for its part, explains that the new system of pluri-annual programming has made it possible to correct existing distortions in the distribution of efforts among the various sectors of the economy and to institute a new distribution more consistent with the objectives of the plan and with the relative contribution of each sector to the generation of gross domestic product; among the criteria applied in selecting technical assistance projects, it mentions that the co-operation received "must be directed,

as a matter of priority, towards applied science and technology", and that "the knowledge and technology contributed must be of a kind which is not available in Argentina". In other cases, a problem peculiar to certain countries or at any rate identified by them as such prompts them to concentrate on certain major projects (sugar-cane bagasse in Cuba, land reform in Chile and Peru, petroleum in Ecuador, the civil service in Venezuela, etc.). On the whole, however, these countries consider it essential to distribute the allocations as fairly as possible among the various sectors.

76. Lack of originality in the United Nations technical co-operation system

In other words, the role assigned to the United Nations system through UNDP in the general scheme of external technical assistance possibilities is neither individualized nor specialized, because of the lack of real originality in the kind of solution proposed. The often-emphasized advantages of political neutrality, independence and internationalism offered by international technical co-operation arranged through the United Nations system do not in practice lead to original formulae. The country programme for Thailand seems to be particularly revealing in this respect.<sup>1/</sup> The contribution of UNDP to external assistance received by Thailand averages \$4 million a year out of a total of about \$42 million (i.e. a little under 10 per cent). The regular programmes of the agencies and various funds (including the Fund for Drug Abuse Control) account for \$3.9 million. Before the introduction of country programming, the UNDP projects were divided among all the economic sectors and the number of on-going projects at the time of the establishment of the programme was considerable (99 compared with only 25 new projects). The main policy in choosing new projects has been to concentrate on the Northern region. Faced with the problems of determining the best way to use external assistance, the Government of Thailand, considering that three of the country's four natural regions were underdeveloped (the Northern, North-eastern and Southern), divided the responsibility for technical assistance geographically, as would seem logical. It reserved the Southern region for bilateral assistance from the United Kingdom, the North-eastern region for United States assistance and the Northern region for UNDP and United Nations assistance. The following projects were thus grouped

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<sup>1/</sup> (DP/GC/THA/R.1 and DP/GC/THA/R.1/RECOMMENDATION of 11 December 1972, 122 pages in all).

together under the UNDP Programme:<sup>1/</sup> the Northern Region planning project (\$658,500), the establishment of an agricultural centre (\$1 million), a horticultural project (\$65,900), the Mae Sa watershed management project (\$647,000), assistance to Chiang Mai University (\$54,700) and the industrial services institute project (\$1,311,100); the contribution from the rest of the United Nations system comprises UNICEF assistance to a training centre for the Hill Tribes, WHO activities (Regular Programme support for the anti-malaria campaign), and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control project to encourage the replacement of opium poppy cultivation by other crops. For the UNDP projects alone, the group mentioned above represents only a quarter of the indicative planning figure<sup>2/</sup> (\$3.7 million out of \$15 million), but if the other activities of the United Nations system that have been mentioned are taken into account, it can be seen that this really is the central idea which has guided the Government in its use of the technical co-operation obtained from international organizations. This alignment of UNDP and the United Nations system with bilateral assistance seems to be a logical consequence of a rather unsatisfactory situation.

#### 77. Lack of definition of the role of the agencies

Generally, the diagnoses made in the individual country programmes are solely the responsibility of the Government of the country concerned. This principle is recognized in the Consensus, but does not preclude the possibility of the Government considering (if only to discuss or contradict) any advice which the specialized agencies might be able to offer on the nature of the problems in sectors within their competence; to my knowledge, however, no reference is made to the contents of such "technical diagnoses by sector" furnished by organizations of the United Nations system.<sup>3/</sup> In other words, as in the case of agency programme documents, only very brief information is given about operational activities, and country-programming documents at most only hint at the assistance which the agencies might give

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<sup>1/</sup> The figures in brackets are the value in dollars of the UNDP component of the project.

<sup>2/</sup> The remainder of the indicative planning figure is divided among quite a substantial number of projects (124 in all), of which 11 cost over \$500,000; only four of these large projects are new.

<sup>3/</sup> Although there are, of course, references to projects involving such studies (planning assistance, human resources surveys, etc.).



occasionally with planning in specific sectors, or at the provision of a technical basis for a general diagnosis of the economic situation. This may not be merely an oversight in presentation. There is probably also no clear general understanding of the role which the international organizations should or could play in that field.

78. Lack of consolidation and of any possibility of specialization

In such circumstances it is not surprising that no consolidation of country programmes has so far seemed feasible. No serious move in that direction could usefully be attempted on the basis of the existing documents. The possibility of consolidating the diagnostic country studies which each of these programmes should include seems ultimately, however, to be the main justification for this entire programming exercise. The important thing is not merely to attach brief economic and social analyses to project lists of the conventional type, but to be able to work out from an inventory of needs by country the most effective kind of action which the United Nations system, because of its special character, would be able to take to meet certain categories of needs. Only a method which included thorough analyses in sufficient detail to make that kind of research possible could provide the international organizations with the means of specializing in certain types of technical co-operation activities. In such a field, specialization indeed seems to be the only way of achieving some measure of effectiveness, or of increasing the effectiveness already achieved.

79. Possible avenues of research

In the case of country programming, as in that of medium-term planning, one is therefore led to the conclusion that profound changes in the very conception of these exercises would be needed before they could realize their full potential. The foregoing survey has already indicated some possible and desirable avenues of research, in particular:

- possibility of the adoption by all organizations with technical co-operation responsibilities of real country programming for their activities (whether financed under their regular programme or by extra-budgetary funds):
- the establishment in that context of technical diagnoses by country of the economic and social sector for which they are responsible;
- methods of consolidating these economic sectoral studies in each country at the national level (all sectors combined) and at the international level; and

- lastly, exploration of the possibilities of specialization by the international organizations in specific areas of technical co-operation.

80. Results of this general survey

Thus, as a result of the examination of the existing documents - programme budgets, medium-term plans and country programmes - and of the reactions of the governing bodies to these first attempts at programming and planning, an initial evaluation can be made of the experiment now in progress.

- It would seem that formal improvements could be made without great difficulty to some of the existing procedures: that is particularly the case with "programme budget" presentation, where the main need is to describe work plans clearly, quantify "intermediate" objectives better, standardize terminology and harmonize the form of a few tables. This would probably also apply to the general adoption of "detailed work plans" in all the organizations.
- In medium-term planning and country programming exercises, on the other hand, the search for formal improvements might in present circumstances divert attention needlessly from important and difficult substantive problems which must be solved. These problems, which concern in particular
  - the relationships to be established between international programming and national planning,
  - the marginality of operational activities, and investigation of the possibilities of specialization,
  - the links which may exist between country programming and medium-term programming,
  - the possibilities and methods of determining priorities at the world-problem level, and the possibility of finding alternative solutions, and
  - the conception and the actual purpose of the medium-term planning exercise in the international organizations,

are indeed those already listed in the introduction to this report (chapter I, para.8), but they assume a particularly gloomy aspect after this review of the present situation. The progressive improvement of existing institutions and procedures will not provide a solution. What seems to be needed is an effort to recast the very conception of the entire exercise.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING:  
EXISTING PRIORITIES AND PRESENT OBJECTIVES

81. An essential preliminary description  
of what the international organizations  
are doing

In discussing ways of defining the main problems, selecting priorities and establishing objectives, it should not be forgotten that problems have already been posed, priorities have already been really accepted and objectives are actually being pursued in each organization. Any consideration of method-improvement should therefore be preceded, it would seem, by a description of these problems, priorities and objectives and by an indication of the procedures leading to their definition. This means giving an account of what the international organizations are doing in the economic and social field and then assessing the degree of concordance already achieved between activities in their various fields of competence for the purpose of convergent action by the international community. To be valid, such a description, even if limited to the five organizations covered by this report, would require a special, lengthy and difficult study based on a number of criteria the acceptance of which would have to be secured in advance. In the absence of such a detailed study, however, an outline may be sketched so as to define at least approximately some of the elements of the problem that has to be resolved here.

82. Relative ease of defining problems  
in the case of WHO

The main problems to be faced are defined quite broadly, for instance, in WHO. The field of public health is one of those in which Governments can most easily find a basis of agreement. Over and above all political, social or cultural differences,

the campaign against disease and the protection of human life correspond on the world level to generally recognized and respected values. It is a sociological constant that relief can more easily be mobilized for the diseased than for the victims of poverty, illiteracy or even famine. This community of approach at the level of feeling and philosophical outlook is complemented by a very largely identical scientific and technical approach. Physicians speak a common language. For all these reasons, WHO seems to have discovered the bearing of its programme at a very early stage and without great difficulty. On a number of levels (epidemic control, etc.), it plays the part of an agency providing regulation and co-ordination services internationally in the same way as do WMO, ITU or UPU in other fields. Its very strong regional structure has given it a geographical framework which has made easier the task of putting the needs of member States together, and hence of formulating its programme. It is still essentially, however, an agency for technical co-operation with the developing countries, and it is the only one of the big agencies which is in a position to finance a very large proportion of field projects of this kind from its regular budget.

83. Basic orientations of WHO:  
Recent changes in its priorities

WHO has a regular budget of \$100 million<sup>1/</sup> and receives every year about \$93.5 million from extra-budgetary sources (of which only \$21.7 million are from UNDP). Of this total, about \$157 million can be taken to represent funds available for programmes, excluding administrative and general policy expenditure.<sup>2/</sup> The relative importance attached to the organization's major programmes brings out the fact that the first priority is given to "Strengthening of Health Services", which receives 40 per cent of all the available funds indicated above, i.e. an annual amount

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<sup>1/</sup> All the budget figures given in this chapter are annual. In most cases, except as otherwise indicated, we have taken the figures from the budgets for 1974. Changes made to the budget estimates after publication have not been taken into account. For WHO, for example, the final figure for the 1974 regular budget as given in the budget for 1975 would be \$104.3 million. Changes like this, however, do not affect the orders of magnitude.

<sup>2/</sup> Cf. Budget estimates for 1974: operating programmes, functional presentation by main programme activity.

in 1974 of \$62.5 million, of which \$25.8 million comes from the regular budget. For its part, "health manpower development", which represents a set of activities very close to the first, receives in all about 12.5 per cent of the total programme funds (some \$20 million, \$11 million of which are in respect of the regular programme). These two main programmes account, therefore, for a little more than half of the organization's activities. The funds devoted to disease control amount to 23 per cent of the total programme funds, 19 per cent being allocated to communicable diseases and 4 per cent to noncommunicable diseases, i.e. about \$36 million in all. The environmental health programme receives 13.5 per cent of the total funds, or \$10 million, of which \$9 million come from the regular budget. Lastly, "other activities" (statistics, miscellaneous work and prophylactic and therapeutic substances) receive 11.5 per cent of the total. These figures call for two comments:

- (a) In 1968, activities connected with communicable diseases represented alone 28 per cent of the total programme funds, as against only 19 per cent today, and programmes for strengthening health services only 17 per cent as against 40 per cent in 1974. This comparison reveals that, over the last six years, an important change has occurred in the organization's priorities, the campaign against communicable diseases, the spearhead of the organization since its inception, having given place to activities designed to strengthen national infrastructures.
- (b) The indications supplied in the budget on the geographical distribution of the use of these funds among the regions show that the organization is still essentially oriented towards the developing countries.<sup>1/</sup>

84. The greater difficulty of the problems facing the other three big agencies

It is clearly not so easy for the other three big agencies - UNESCO, FAO and the ILO - to define the kind of problems they should be attacking. Agreement on the social, cultural and political levels is much more difficult to achieve in their fields - whether they be education, science, labour, industry or agriculture - than in the sphere of health. For all three of these organizations, the technical co-operation area which has developed since the 1960s to the point of completely

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<sup>1/</sup> The inclusion in the extra-budgetary funds of the budget of the Pan American Health Organization no doubt explains why expenditure on behalf of countries in the American Continent still represents (despite the equalizations made possible by the distribution of funds from other sources) a greater proportion of the total amount than expenditure for countries in other continents.

upsetting the balance of their programmes is rather superimposed upon than integrated within the body of their previously existing activities. It is therefore much more difficult for them to avoid dissipation of effort.

85. UNESCO priorities

The UNESCO budget reveals that this organization is relatively poor as compared with WHO. Its regular budget comes to some \$56.2 million, and the total amount of the available extra-budgetary funds is about \$50 million. In the de facto priorities of the United Nations system, educational problems are thus classified as being of an importance well below that of health problems. This is, no doubt, a direct reflection of the sociological data which were mentioned in paragraph 82 above. In annual figures, programme funds (i.e. excluding general policy and administrative expenditure) come to about \$36 million from the regular budget and \$50 million of UNDP funds. Of this total of \$86 million, priority is unquestionably given to the education sector, which receives about 47 per cent of the total (\$40 million, of which \$14 million is from the regular programme and \$26 million from the extra-budgetary funds). The exact and natural sciences sector comes second with about 30 per cent of the total (\$25 million; \$7.5 million from the regular budget and \$17.5 from UNDP funds). Since, however, these figures include an amount of about \$13 million per annum for higher scientific and technological education, educational activities may be said to represent half the work in this sector (if this method of calculation is adopted, the proportion of UNESCO programme funds absorbed by education may be put at 60 per cent, or about \$53 million). The organization's other two sectors divide between them one fifth of the amount of the programme funds: the social sciences and cultural sector has 9 per cent of the total, or \$8 million, including \$6.7 million from the regular budget; and the information sector has 11 per cent, or \$9.7 million, \$7.5 million of which comes from the regular budget.

86. Diversity of the programmes

Although the technical co-operation programmes financed from extra-budgetary funds represent a larger amount of the total available programme funds than do the regular programme funds<sup>1/</sup>, and although most of the activities financed in this way

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<sup>1/</sup> To the extent that administrative costs are excluded.

relate to the creation or development of educational establishments, technical co-operation in education is just one important objective for UNESCO among many others. Perusal of the plans and programmes, and of the Executive Board summary records, reveals that the organization's interests are divided among a very large number of extremely varied topics. Research and studies have a dominant place in this work, and this orientation is reflected, too, in the existence of a very large number of publications. UNESCO is a big publishing house as well.

87. Educational methods and development

Even in the education sector, which deals essentially with the development of education, it is clearly the tendency of the organization to consider problems at the level of all countries, including the developed countries. The very general formulation of the programme (educational policy and planning, equality of access to education, educational programmes, structures and methods, etc.) is in full accordance with this tendency. The fact, emphasized by the Director-General of the Organization in his introduction to the draft programme and budget for 1973-1974, that "a far-reaching reform of the system and procedures of education is essential as the only practical means of ensuring its quantitative expansion - or, in other words, its democratization - and its qualitative improvement, and hence an increase in its internal and external efficiency" clearly shows that UNESCO regards itself primarily as a research institute, and that it considers defining a new methodology just as important as applying well-tried methods to the development of education. This indicates the difficulties that educational specialists may have in reaching agreement on the formulation of the problems to be resolved and the priorities to be established.

88. Exact and natural sciences and "Intergovernmental programmes"

The exact and natural sciences sector - over and above its studies and research and its technical co-operation activities concerning the development of higher education - applies the "intergovernmental programmes" method very systematically. In this respect, UNESCO acts as a driving force in co-ordinating the member States' efforts on a number of topics of common interest: the Intergovernmental Programme on Man and the Biosphere, the International Geological Correlation Programme, the International Hydrological Decade and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission all exemplify the same method, which consists of organizing the sharing of tasks among Governments with a view to attaining a common goal. There can be no doubt that such

a method (which, incidentally, is applied by other agencies in a number of fields) could be generalized and systematized. All the main final objectives of the international institutions are, in fact, common to the organizations and to their member States, and a clear division of responsibilities in the pursuit of an objective is a vital prerequisite for the definition of an effective strategy.

89. Social sciences, information and inter-sectoral problems

The two sectors, social sciences and information, have undeniably many more difficulties in defining their orientations and priorities. The work of the social sciences sector consists mainly of research, studies and publications, together, of course, with a large number of meetings and a few training activities. The protection and restoration of the cultural heritage (in pursuit of which aim UNESCO has, as everyone knows, mobilized large investment funds for the purpose of saving famous monuments) have a special place in the programme of this sector. The information sector, owing no doubt to the great political sensitivity of the problems for which it is responsible (freedom of information and development of communications, action to promote international understanding), has even more difficulty in defining its objectives. Lastly, the Executive Board and the Director-General started discussions some years ago on the advisability of developing "inter-sectoral" programmes. The list of these programmes, which form chapter O of the Medium-Term Outline Plan for 1973/78 - human rights and peace, youth, man and the environment, population, drug abuse - clearly reveals the importance attached by the organization to its universal vocation. It will be realized that, in a situation of this kind, the choice of priorities by UNESCO is a complex and difficult problem, certain aspects of which are even virtually impossible to solve.

90. The ILO priorities

The efforts made by the ILO to distinguish the main lines of its programme on the occasion of the drafting of medium-term plans also bring out the seriousness of the difficulties encountered by that organization in reconciling different types of approach as regards the right to work, the defence of workers' conditions, vocational training and general considerations concerning economic and social development. The ILO regular programme represents an annual expenditure of \$41.9 million (according to the 1974/75 programme and budget). Of this total, the funds available for programmes amount to some \$30 million. The form of presentation adopted, however,



separates out from among these programme costs the management of field programmes (about \$7.7 million) and conference services and publications (\$7.3 million). Direct expenditure on the major programmes in the regular budget thus amounts to only \$14.3 million. To this must be added the extra-budgetary funds, which, according to the same document, probably amount to about \$44.5 million per year. From this we shall calculate the percentage of the funds directly allocated to each of the major programmes out of a total of \$58.6 million, with the proviso that this basis of calculation is slightly different from those adopted for WHO or for UNESCO. This global sum is divided among seven major programmes, which, in order of importance of the volume of their activities, reveal the following percentages:

	(in millions of \$)			Proportion of total funds %
	Regular programme	Extra-budgetary funds	Total	
1. Human resources development	2.2	31.8	34	58
2. Social institutions development	2.6	5.0	7.6	12.9
3. Employment planning and promotion	1.3	5.4	6.7	11.4
4. Conditions of work and life	2.7	1.7	4.4	7.5
5. Central research and planning	2.7	0.4	3.1	5.2
6. Industrial activities	1.3	0.25	1.55	2.6
7. International labour standards	1.5	0	1.5	2.5
TOTALS	14.3	44.3	58.6	100.1

91. Preferential orientation towards economic problems

This joint presentation of direct programme funds and extra-budgetary resources (which does not appear in this form in any of the ILO documents) shows clearly the imbalance created by the growth of operational activities financed from outside the budget. While the regular programme seeks to maintain a degree of equality between, on the one hand, activities oriented towards economic development (human resources and employment) and, on the other, legal, institutional, regulatory and social activities (conditions of work and life, international labour standards and social institutions, the latter three major programmes representing 47 per cent of the programme funds included in the regular budget estimates), technical co-operation

activities are almost exclusively in the former category; the World Employment Programme and vocational training absorb 69.4 per cent of the total funds. The imbalance would seem even greater if we added to these figures the support costs of the field programme mentioned above, the majority of which concern the same activities. The "central research and planning" programme, which consists essentially of information-gathering activities and studies (on the consequences of technological developments for the relationship between trade and employment, on social indicators, on the employment of migrant workers, on labour statistics, etc.), also falls within the same field of interest. Thus, nearly 80 per cent of programme funds are concentrated on essentially economic problems. This orientation makes the ILO a research institute concerned with economic development problems and technical co-operation in the employment field much more than with legal or institutional problems or with setting standards. This trend is becoming more and more pronounced but does not appear to have found its final form. However, this observation can be made only if account is taken of activities financed from extra-budgetary funds. This demonstrates the fallacy of a budgetary presentation which fails to give a proper description of operational activities financed from outside the budget.

92. The priorities of FAO as a technical co-operation agency

In the case of FAO the volume of activities financed from extra-budgetary funds<sup>1/</sup> far exceeds twice the amount of the regular budget and indeed reaches three times that amount for the period 1972/1973. In these circumstances it is easy to see in what a false light problems may be put to the FAO organs called upon to take decisions on the regular budget, the amount of which represents scarcely more than one-quarter of the entire programme of the Organization's activities, whereas there is no real means of taking account of the activities financed from outside this budget.<sup>2/</sup> The over-all annual figures are the following:

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<sup>1/</sup> FAO receives about one-third (between 31 and 32.8 per cent) of UNDP funds.

<sup>2/</sup> A separate document entitled Review of FAO Field Programmes has been submitted on this subject for the years 1972/1973 (C 73/4 of August 1973). It thus deals only with current or completed programmes, and does not cover programmes which ought to be co-ordinated with the next regular budget.

For 1972/1973: \$41.2 million for the regular budget and \$115 million for extra-budgetary funds;

For 1974/1975: \$50.5 million for the regular programme and \$112 million for extra-budgetary funds.

However, administrative, political and miscellaneous expenses should be deducted from these figures. The 1972/1973 budget<sup>1/</sup> presents the distribution of budgetary and extra-budgetary funds between the five "areas of concentration" in the following manner (the annual figures are given here):

Programme	Regular programme	Extra-budgetary funds	Total	Percentage of total
(million dollars)				
Mobilization of human resources	3.8	36.5	40.3	31.6 %
Increasing yields	3.1	34.5	37.6	29.1 %
The protein problem	2.0	13.1	15.1	11.9 %
War on waste	1.9	8.8	10.7	8.5 %
Saving of foreign exchange	3.2	10.5	13.7	10.8 %
Agricultural development planning	4.8	5.5	10.3	8.0 %
Total	18.8	108.9	127.7	99.9 %

The real size of the extra-budgetary funds is brought out still more clearly in this presentation, since they represent about five times (and for the first two major programmes more than ten times) the amount of the regular programme funds. The percentage breakdown by value of the various major programmes does not provide any very precise picture of the main lines of activity of FAO, since the breakdown of expenditure between the "areas of concentration" shows only the primary importance attached to human resources on the one hand and to increasing yields on the other (these two programmes account for more than 60 per cent). However, the formulation of these areas of concentration does not make it easy to see whether they differ in their final objectives (war on waste and increasing yields both seek the same objective) or in the means employed. This method of grouping together the most

<sup>1/</sup> We have had to choose this period because the information supplied by the various documents, and in particular by the programme budget for 1974/1975, is quite inadequate with respect to extra-budgetary funds.

diverse programmes would certainly be worth improving in order to make it easier to understand exactly what are the activities and objectives of FAO. At all events, the above figures show quite clearly that it is overwhelmingly oriented towards technical co-operation with developing countries. The annexes to the 1972/1973 programme budget show that for 1970<sup>1/</sup> five major divisions each administered 12 to 16 per cent of the budgetary funds: Fisheries 14.3 per cent, Forestry 16 per cent, Agricultural Services 13 per cent, Animal Production and Health 13 per cent, Land and Water Development 16 per cent. These last three divisions come under the Agriculture Department and, together with the Plant Production and Protection Division (9 per cent), collected a total of about 51 per cent of the extra-budgetary funds. The only other division receiving a large share of these funds (10 per cent) was the Rural Institutions Division. The operational activities of technical co-operation thus seem to be very evenly distributed between the main substantive divisions of FAO.

93. Complexity of the economic and social activities of the United Nations

The economic and social activities of the United Nations itself are, beyond question, highly complex in composition. These activities are entrusted to various units: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the four regional economic commissions, and the secretariats of UNCTAD and UNIDO. Such matters are also dealt with by a large number of relatively independent programmes, the most important of which are UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control. It is no secret that the problem of co-operation among these units has not been completely solved, although co-ordination of all the economic and social activities of all the organizations in the United Nations system should be one of the basic tasks of the United Nations. It cannot be said that this task is fully performed.

94. The role and place of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

(a) Technical co-operation activities

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which serves as secretariat to the Economic and Social Council, has made great efforts in this direction but they have been only partly successful. The annual volume of this Department's

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<sup>1/</sup> I have found no document providing a similar breakdown for subsequent years.

activities under the regular programme represents \$16 million; it also administers the greater part of the \$8.7 million under section 19, "Regular Programme of Technical Assistance"; and it receives about \$70 million in extra-budgetary resources. It carried out several different categories of tasks.

Some of these tasks, such as the collection and dissemination of statistical information at the world level, represent international "public service" functions and are of clear and recognized value.

The tasks of technical co-operation are performed on a large scale, as is clear from the figures already quoted. Some are directly related to the Department's fundamental task of economic and social thinking at the world level; this applies to co-operation in statistical matters (\$4.9 million), public administration (\$7.3 million), social development (\$6.3 million), population (\$5.3 million), public finance and financial institutions (\$1.9 million) and, above all, planning (\$9.4 million), which together account for half the extra-budgetary resources (\$35 million). Other technical co-operation activities, costing roughly the same amount, are entrusted to the Department although their connexion with its central concerns is not very evident: transport and tourism (\$6 million), natural resources (\$18.2 million) and human settlement (\$7.7 million). It should perhaps be noted here that the volume of funds now administered by this Department, totalling about \$95 million, is greater than that administered by the ILO (\$68 million) and slightly less than that administered by UNESCO (\$106 million). The proportion of extra-budgetary funds to regular programme funds is particularly high; as at FAO, it amounts to about three times the total of the regular budget.

#### 95. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

##### (b) Establishment of a world framework for economic and social development

The main line of this Department's activities is undoubtedly that of general thinking about economic and social problems at the world level, which is carried on through a great many studies and research projects. The main item in this exercise has been the preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, which efforts are now being made to bring under systematic and periodic review and appraisal. In addition, however, the Department has undoubtedly been responsible for launching a series of operations concerning the great contemporary problems: a few years ago, international trade until UNCTAD was established, and industrial development until UNIDO was established; in 1972 the environment; today, population and multinational corporations, for example. It should nevertheless be noted that most of the Department's activities in these fields

have exhibited a centrifugal tendency. The study of new problems has often given rise to new institutions, but there has been no continuous consolidation of current activities as a whole. Consequently the big agencies responsible for the sectors of education, agriculture, employment, industry, trade, health and so on do not find in this Department the interlocutor needed in order to give them the global approach which, as we have just seen, they are seeking to an ever-increasing extent. Dialogue between the economists (of the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies in particular) on the one hand and the educators, agricultural engineers, trade and employment specialists, physicians, trade unionists, etc., on the other has not been begun in a systematic way. It seems essential that, in the future, this effort at consolidation and dialogue should be given an organizational framework which will satisfy the requirements both of the agencies and of the member States. It may perhaps be thought that the solution to this problem might lie in broadening the conception of the International Development Strategy.

96. The secretariats of the regional economic commissions

The secretariats of the regional economic commissions share a little over \$20 million under the United Nations regular budget (Europe \$5.1 million, Asia \$5.3 million, Latin America \$6.3 million, Africa \$6.6 million, Beirut \$700,000) and administer some \$15 million of technical co-operation funds (Asia \$5.2 million, Latin America \$6 million and Africa \$4.7 million; the remainder is negligible). The areas of technical co-operation for the three commissions which have a budget of this kind are concentrated essentially on planning (\$6.6 million in all), natural resources and social development. These organs are in essence research departments whose efforts extend over a great many areas - all those within the competence of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, plus a few others such as agriculture, trade and industry - and their secretariats are split up into as many divisions as there are sectors of research. In most cases, their studies are intended for the Governments of countries in the region concerned, but it is extremely difficult to evaluate the use actually made of them. One of the major problems that seem to face these commissions is their relationship with the substantive divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs or with the big agencies: the degree of liaison maintained, where there is any liaison at all, is very slight.

97. UNCTAD

The secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has so far serviced three quadrennial sessions of the Conference. Its essential function is to carry out studies in preparation for negotiations. The annual volume of funds available to it totals \$13 million under the regular budget and \$10.2 million from extra-budgetary sources. Its technical co-operation activities are devoted essentially to "trade promotion" projects. It is difficult to determine from the UNCTAD plan for the period 1974/1979<sup>1/</sup> whether the studies distributed between the various divisions conform to a general design. Activities relating to international trade research, trade expansion and economic integration, commodities, manufactures, shipping, trade with socialist countries, financing related to trade, transfer of technology and insurance do not seem directly related to the organization of the "processes of negotiation" which are in principle the secretariat's essential function. Only some of this work corresponds to objectives such as the organization of a system of generalized preferences, the institution of codes of conduct, "intensive consultations" on commodities and bilateral negotiations between developing and socialist countries. What is apparent is that, although UNCTAD cannot hope to obtain spectacular or even significant results, it performs the useful task of compiling and disseminating information on international trade statistics, in particular, and maintains a certain level of expert knowledge of current problems. But it would seem beyond question that this very large research organization needs new ideas offering more tangible hopes of practical results. It seems open to question, in particular, whether the development of "better analytical typologies of differences among developing countries, according to their economic structures and the policies being pursued, particularly with regard to their external sectors", or research on economic integration would not be worth considering as research topics capable of yielding more specific solutions than those being obtained at present. On the other hand, the UNCTAD secretariat must unquestionably be given credit for a substantial contribution to the drafting of part of the Development Strategy.

98. UNIDO

In UNIDO the "technical co-operation" aspect again comes to the fore. The funds available to this autonomous unit within the United Nations amount to \$15 million

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<sup>1/</sup> Part of the United Nations medium-term plan.

under the regular programme and \$39.2 million from extra-budgetary sources.<sup>1/</sup> In the case of UNIDO, therefore, technical co-operation activities account for 2.6 times the regular budget figure.<sup>2/</sup> In these circumstances it is not surprising that UNIDO should consider its essential task to be "to provide direct assistance in industrialization to developing countries, at their request, through operational programmes".<sup>3/</sup> Hence all the activities of the three main programmes of UNIDO - industrial technology, industrial policies and programming, and industrial services and institutions - are essentially oriented towards technical co-operation. Admittedly UNIDO carries on a fairly large number of studies and research projects, in addition to compiling and disseminating information, but the bulk of its work is action-oriented.

99. Analysis of the five organizations' economic and social activities by total appropriations

This quick survey of the programmes of the five largest organizations in the United Nations system has been needed in order to determine the nature of the activities to which programming methods should be applied. Studies and research, on the one hand, and operational projects, on the other, are not programmed in the same way. It is clear, however, that the essential activities of these organizations fall into one or other of these two categories. A general review, on the basis of the foregoing summary analysis, shows that:

The total annual funds available to the five organizations, irrespective of the kind of expenditure concerned, are as follows (in millions of dollars, reference year 1974):

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<sup>1/</sup> 1974 figures; these amounts are expected to increase to \$16.5 million under the regular programme and \$45.6 million from extra-budgetary sources in 1975.

<sup>2/</sup> It is worth noting in this context that technical co-operation funds for industry represent only about 35 per cent of the funds provided for agriculture.

<sup>3/</sup> Medium-term plan for the period 1974-1977, Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 6A, page 146.



Organization	Regular programme	Extra-budgetary funds	Total
(in millions of dollars)			
WHO	100	93.5	193.5
ILO	41.9	44.5	86.4
UNESCO	56.2	50.0	106.2
FAO	50.5	112.0	162.5
United Nations	213.8	170.4	384.2
Total	462.4	470.4	932.8

Out of this total of just over \$930 million, the amount corresponding to the programmable economic and social activities referred to in this report comes (after deducting the amounts corresponding to political, legal, administrative and conference activities) to approximately \$650 million and - making due allowance for any errors, of the order of 10 per cent, that may result from differences between one budget and another in the presentation of this expenditure - may be analysed as follows:

Organization	Regular programme	Extra-budgetary funds	Total
WHO	83.1	73.9	157.0
ILO	30.0	44.3	74.3
UNESCO	36.0	50.0	86.0
FAO	18.8	108.9	127.7
United Nations (economic and social affairs)	24.7	70.0	94.7
United Nations (regional economic commissions)	20.0	18.0	38.0
UNCTAD	13.0	10.2	23.2
UNIDO	15.0	39.2	54.2
TOTAL	240.6	414.5	655.1

100. Relative scale of the various types of activities

Technical co-operation activities, which absorb 100 per cent of extra-budgetary funds, also occupy, as we have seen, a very important place among the activities financed out of the regular programmes. This applies both to field projects,

largely comparable with those of UNDP (as is the case with a very large part of the regular programme of WHO, with the United Nations regular programme of technical assistance, and in isolated instances with the other organizations), and to activities comprising assistance to member States, which are in some cases extremely difficult to separate from more general research activities. By means of cost accounting and a stricter and more precise presentation of programme budgets, it will doubtless be possible eventually to determine the exact composition of regular programme activities - something that cannot be done accurately at the present time. However, in view of the preferential orientation towards technical co-operation which is evident in WHO, FAO and UNIDO, and the activities comprising various forms of assistance to member States which are carried on in the other organizations, it seems possible to assume that approximately \$500 million - in other words, about three quarters of programme activities - represent operational activities of technical co-operation and that the remaining quarter is more or less evenly divided between general studies and research on economic and social principles and methods relating to all the countries of the world, on the one hand, and specific studies or activities oriented towards technical co-operation problems in the broad sense, on the other.

101. Characteristics of the main organizations or autonomous units

Once these orders of magnitude are known, it becomes easier to grasp the relative roles of the various organizations we have just been considering. Very briefly, the following classification may be established on the basis of the quick review we have just made of the various organizations' activities:

two organizations and one autonomous unit - WHO, FAO and UNIDO - are oriented mainly towards technical co-operation;

two organizations - the ILO and UNESCO - which carry on substantial activities of technical co-operation strive to maintain a balance between these operational activities and their traditional activities in the sphere of research, studies, promotion of ideas or standards, and assembly of a general framework;

the relatively autonomous units - UNCTAD and the regional economic commissions - carry on some technical co-operation activities but are essentially large study and research organizations;

lastly, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs carries on - and maintains a fairly clear distinction between - large-scale activities of technical co-operation in relatively varied sectors, on the one hand, and research activities aimed chiefly at assembling a general framework of principles and methods (Development Strategy) and launching new activities, on the other.

This classification demonstrates some variety in the characteristics of the different organizations. It does not show any sign of complementarity in the organization of their work or even what knits them together.

#### 102. Existing priorities

With regard to the technical co-operation activities and "other activities" between which the funds available for programmes are unevenly shared, it may nevertheless be noted that there is a high degree of stability in the distribution of funds between the various technical co-operation activities. If the analysis made in this chapter on the basis of the budgetary figures for 1974 is compared with that made in our report "Programming and budgets in the United Nations family of organizations" in 1969<sup>1/</sup> on the basis of the figures for 1968, it will be seen that over a period of six years only very minor changes have occurred in the distribution of the total appropriations between the various economic and social sectors. Health still holds first place with approximately 25 per cent of the available funds, followed by the agricultural sector (agriculture, forestry and fisheries) with 20 per cent and, very much further back, by education (general and scientific) and industry, which account for approximately 10 per cent each. Only a few slight changes may be noted: UNIDO's share has increased slightly and overtaken that allocated to natural resources (which nevertheless remains very substantial). We have already noted the change which has taken place in the WHO programme for the "strengthening of health services", and three regional economic commissions have started some technical co-operation activities. On the whole, however, these are minor developments. The introduction of country programming has brought no fundamental change in the structure of the existing system for fixing priorities. It is, of course, fair to say that the number of millions of dollars allocated to a particular sector is not a very precise measure of the importance attached to a particular activity; that in any case the

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<sup>1/</sup> A/7822 of 3 December 1969, paras. 2.13 and 2.14.

amounts involved form a very modest part of the total flow of technical co-operation; and lastly that, at the world level, this type of finding is of only limited significance in so far as the characteristic requirements of palpably different countries are merged in a single whole. However, since the technical co-operation procedures followed by the international organizations are in the final analysis highly comparable, the orders of magnitude indicated above are not entirely meaningless.

### 103. General character of the "other activities"

Although it is difficult, for lack of numerical data, to give percentages, it is quite clear that "studies and research" hold an absolute predominance among the headquarters activities of the organizations. To give one example, a statistical calculation which we made on the basis of document E/5329 concerning the programme of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the biennium 1974-1975 - a document which has the merit of presenting separately each basic unit of each component of the programmes of activities - gives the following result: of a total of 250 basic units, 113 represent studies and research and 10 publications (results of studies), as compared with 47 units representing technical co-operation activities and 7 the preparation of manuals, while the other 73 represent work done in administering or preparing programmes for various activities. Thus, practically half of all these activities take the form of studies and research. This proportion is undoubtedly either higher or similar in the case of UNCTAD, the regional economic commissions, UNESCO and the ILO. These predominant study and research activities have some other characteristics worthy of note:

The end use of these activities (and the same applies to the quantitative indicators which should express it in precise terms) is never very clearly stated; the impression gained on reading through the programmes is that too much of this work is kept for internal use and hence is not subject to sanction either by the public or by the various conferences or committees.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> In very many cases, too, work requested by resolutions of intergovernmental bodies does not give rise to any real discussion. It is merely "noted". This situation accentuates the need for a review of the relations between secretariats and policy-making committees.

These studies seem to be conducted in isolation, without any very clear general plan for the United Nations system as a whole. They can scarcely be said to complement one another, and seem to be in sore need of a common framework.

The efforts of all the organizations in the direction of a thorough and comprehensive examination of the problems of each sector (Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development; World Employment Programme, Educational Planning, Education and Employment, etc.) provide an additional reason why a general plan and a common methodological approach should be devised as rapidly as possible. All these efforts should perhaps also be linked more directly with those made under the heading of operational activities.

104. Necessary reaction against the tendency of programmes to expand

There is one last remark which, in my opinion, must be made: the concern and scepticism which have always been aroused by the scope and, in particular, the multiplicity of the tasks listed in the plans and programmes of the international organizations are probably largely justified. That these organizations should incorporate in their programmes practically every conceivable subject - whether it be peace, human rights, population, environment, youth, development strategy, narcotic drugs, technical assistance, technology, science, social problems and so on - that they should find it feasible to do so, and that they should at the same time succeed in proposing solutions and even in obtaining some results in each of these sectors, would appear to be very much against the odds. The degree of universality considered to be essential, and hence the multiplicity of activities, is decidedly greater in the United Nations, UNESCO and the ILO than in FAO, which is more specialized, or in WHO, which operates in an even more clearly delimited sector. The tendency for programmes to expand their spheres of action is nevertheless very widespread. Whether the reasons are to be sought in the universal and ambitious scope of the various charters and constitutions, in the large number of centres of interest for member States and of activities initiated by their delegations, or in rivalries among the secretariats, the phenomenon is so general, so constant, and so obviously incompatible with the paucity of these organizations' resources that it could not fail to cause a reaction. This reaction finds expression in the demand for programming, in the desire that priorities should be set or major problems defined; it remains for us to consider how far this process of rationalization in the quest for greater efficiency is likely to succeed.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES, AND  
THE NECESSARY REVIEW OF DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

105. Complexity of the problem

Brief though it may be, the above description of the economic and social activities of the five organizations at least explains why the problem of streamlining such a conglomeration is not a simple one. It is not merely a question of adopting modern programming methods or applying ready-made prescriptions or established processes such as PPBS, integrated management systems or linear programming techniques. The confrontation of ideals, interests, methods, political philosophies and cultures which occurs continuously through the economic and social activities of the international organizations cannot be facilitated or clarified by the mere application of modern management techniques, which were devised primarily for industrial and commercial enterprises, and accessorially for certain administrative activities at the national level. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a very widespread need to devise simpler and clearer programmes and to cut out unnecessary or palpably ineffective activities in order to concentrate on essentials, and some way must be found of meeting that need.

106. Contradictory requirements

Even though the first attempts to apply programming have yielded a few not altogether insignificant results, they have undoubtedly failed to solve the essential problems in this respect, and the makers of these attempts are themselves fully aware of the fact. There is still a very widespread feeling, which is finding even increasingly urgent expression, that much remains to be done in order to "define priorities", "identify the major problems", cut out unnecessary

or less necessary activities and react against the unrestricted expansion and attenuation of programmes. But it is common knowledge that once an item has been included in a programme, removing it is extremely difficult, even though the study it required has been completed or it is no longer of any obvious interest. The routine of the international organizations is very naturally conservative, because of the extreme difficulty and frequent impossibility of reaching agreement on selection criteria. It is even perfectly consistent with the logic of the existing system that, at the same time as an effort - albeit unsuccessful - is being made to rationalize and curtail programmes, many new items are being placed on the agenda, with the effect of making the programming problem even more difficult to solve.

107. Grouping or curtailment

In these circumstances, as the outline plans so far presented clearly show, a far greater effort is being made to group all existing activities under titles or labels intended to give an impression of unity or comprehensiveness than actually to eliminate programmes or sub-programmes regarded as less important or incapable of reaching their effectiveness threshold. In the light of the contradictory pattern of existing policy constraints, there is no wonder that to take this course was the first reaction of those responsible for the programming exercises. It has now become necessary, however, to go further.

108. Trends in research

Everything that has been said so far, however, clearly shows that, in order to go further, it is essential to avoid both the purely theoretical and the excessively pragmatic approaches, neither of which is capable of grasping the moving and living reality of the international organizations. The work to be done is more difficult and more complex: an attempt must be made to understand why the play of the existing procedures impedes or prevents the matching of policy requirements and efficiency techniques, to ascertain whether the kind of relationship existing between secretariats and policy-making committees could not usefully be modified, and to identify the kinds of modern techniques which could be adopted according to type of problem, while distinguishing in particular between technical co-operation activities and other activities. Lastly, it is

necessary to think of procedures whereby a process of progressive change could really be started. Such efforts can only be collective: in this study we shall merely try to indicate along what lines they might be made. In that spirit, the present chapter will try to demonstrate the need:

- for having "descriptive estimates" (devis préalables) made by the secretariats, so that priorities and objectives can be identified by the policy-making committees;
- for reviewing the pattern of relationships between secretariats and policy-making committees as regards the establishment of appropriation limits and the formulation of programmes.



I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES AND  
THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING "DESCRIPTIVE ESTIMATES" (DEVIS PREALABLES)

109. Uncertainty of terminology

The expression "definition, or selection, of priorities", which is very widely used in the United Nations and FAO for example, is not always differentiated, as in UNESCO, from the expression "definition of major problems". Problems, priorities and objectives are terms which unquestionably denote a very general desire to obtain a better programming system, but which do not have any very precise meaning and, in particular, do not convey the same meaning to all. In this chapter, therefore, we shall propose a number of brief definitions in order to clarify at least the meaning attributed to each of these notions in the present report.

110. Tentative definitions: problems

The word "problem" will denote a sphere of action recognized by the great majority of member States and, more precisely, a series of difficulties and shortcomings in the economic and social system which it has been decided sooner or later to eliminate. The fundamental fact here is the identification - the recognition of the existence - of these difficulties or shortcomings as such, which presupposes a minimum common philosophy. It is, of course, also necessary that these difficulties should be identified or recognized by the great majority of member States and that this majority should express a minimum common desire to adopt measures or a series of measures regarding them. We have seen above in this connexion that health problems in WHO seem much easier to identify than problems relating to education and agricultural development.

111. Priorities

The word "priorities" will denote the spheres of action - the problems already identified and recognized - which are considered to be the most important or the most urgent, and which must be placed in the foreground and mobilize the maximum effort. The adoption of a single order of priorities in the classification of a series of problems presupposes an even greater community of philosophical approach and desire for action than the mere identification and recognition of a problem's existence. Within the bounds of inevitably limited appropriations, a classification presupposes choices which can, not to say must, lead to:

- the elimination of problems regarded as insufficiently important or incapable of yielding sufficiently precise results;
- the preferential distribution of available funds for dealing with certain problems at the expense of others; the percentage distribution of the funds of a particular budget among various types of activity is the clearest reflection of a certain order of priorities; in other words, once the problems have been identified, it is a matter of selecting those which are considered to be deserving of action and to say how the available or mobilizable resources will be distributed among them.

112. The notion of an objective

The word "objective" - "desired result" or "aim pursued" according to the dictionary definitions - obviously represents the precise and positive expression of the activity undertaken in a specific area, the state which will be achieved when some of the difficulties or shortcomings under attack have been finally eliminated with the solution of the problem or of part of it (cf. para. 110 above). In other words, what is lacking here is not so much a definition, which in any case will always be too general to be precise, as a classification of the main types of possible objective, i.e. a typology. A certain number of standard classifications are, of course, already in existence. Since the use of the word is of military origin, the method to be adopted in order to attain an objective is also very often designated by terms of military origin, such as "strategy" or "tactics". Consequently, through the use of the notions of "strategic objectives" or "tactical objectives", it may be possible to establish a relatively clear distinction between results of different types which, to use another terminology, are also sometimes called "general or final long-term objectives" and "immediate or intermediate objectives". But such distinctions are, after all, somewhat superficial, and, in order to establish a more precise typology, it would seem that at least the following three characteristics must be taken into account:

- the degree of attainability;
- the degree of abstractness;
- the degree of responsibility in pursuit of the objective.

113. The notion of an intermediate-stage objective

The degree of attainability in a way defines the length of the path to be followed and has a bearing on the types of methods, strategies, tactics or programmes to be applied. It is therefore an essential criterion. There are some objectives which are known to be unattainable with existing resources but which are nevertheless considered, at least theoretically; in the case of some other objectives, it is not known if or when they can be attained, but they are stubbornly pursued all the same (medical research activities, for example). There are remote objectives, whose time-horizons are uncertain but which will probably be attainable after a few decades of collective effort, and other objectives which, on the contrary, can certainly be attained within a given period, which may be a few years (medium-term objectives) or a few months (immediate objectives). It can clearly be seen how the various objectives can be classified within this scale of attainability: normative objectives (peace, human rights, etc.), development objectives at the world level (eradication of illiteracy, full schooling, eradication of contagious diseases, full employment, security of food supply, etc.), the objectives of a national development plan (construction of a certain number of dams, roads, schools, hospitals or dwellings), and objectives relating to the everyday activity of a particular enterprise or administrative department (manufacture or sale of a certain quantity of a particular product, publication of a document or book, training of a certain number of students in a particular discipline, etc.)<sup>1/</sup>. At this point, therefore, it would appear necessary to distinguish at least four categories of final objective: objectives of doubtful attainability, very-long-term objectives, medium-term objectives and short-term objectives. In addition, and perhaps above all, in the case of the objectives which are attainable only in the distant future (long-term final objectives), intermediate stages on the path leading to the final result must be considered essential. The notion of an intermediate-stage objective, therefore, is in this context indispensable.

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<sup>1/</sup> These examples show that the degree of attainability itself comprises two relatively distinct notions: the degree of certainty concerning the possibility of attaining the objective, and the length of time needed for attainment when the uncertainty is removed.

114. The nature of the objectives

The degree of abstractness also conditions the types of methods to be used: a concrete objective (construction of a building) entails the use of generally well-known methods of financing or of mobilizing technical resources. The less concrete the objective (whether it concerns intellectual training, economic development expressed as a percentage of GNP, or respect for human rights), the further removed from known and accepted methods becomes the implementation of a plan of operation to attain it; in most cases, therefore, it is necessary first to conduct methodological research and negotiate its acceptance even before any action can be taken. The purpose of the research and methods in question is, in fact, to transform and, as it were, translate this pursuit of an excessively abstract notion into concrete action and "means-of-action objectives". In addition, there is very often a parallel between the degree of abstractness and the degree of attainability. It hardly seems possible, however, to establish here a scale of abstractness: it is rather by nature of the objective that a classification seems needed, for objectives can be distinguished from each other according to what they relate to: investment, training, promotion of ideas or standards, research, definition of bases of agreement or negotiation, technical co-operation, and so on.

115. The apportionment of responsibilities

Lastly, it is extremely important to determine degrees of responsibility in the pursuit of an objective: a clearly defined apportionment of responsibilities and the allocation of a precise task to each participant - in short the efficient organization of work - are the acknowledged conditions of success. In this respect, however, a distinction must be drawn between objectives which are pursued by a single organized group (e.g. an army, administrative authority, enterprise or Government) and those which are pursued by a number of such groups (a number of Governments, several agencies, etc.). In the first case, only organization and possibly discipline are needed; in the second, owing to the distribution of responsibilities, negotiations prior to action have to be arranged. The terminology to be used is not always very easy to settle. In any event, among the collective objectives, it is necessary to distinguish those for which the apportionment of responsibilities is clearly defined and those for which this apportionment of responsibilities is yet to be done. The sharing out of tasks (establishment of an "intergovernmental programme", for example) can, in fact, itself be an objective.

Consequently, when programmes are being established - or resolutions formulated - for the international organizations, the following should be clearly distinguished:

- national objectives for individual governments (national development plans);
- intergovernmental objectives, accepted by a number of Governments or by the membership of an international organization (these objectives involve on the part of each Government subscribing to them a particular easily identifiable effort, either in the form of a contribution of money or personnel or in the form of the acceptance of principles or methods, etc.);
- the objectives assigned to the international organizations by those same Governments (various kinds of assistance to member countries, methodological research, definition of common principles or conditions of labour, promotion of ideas and standards, etc.).<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The action of the international organizations is comparable in a way to that of a catalyst. Regular-programme funds, extra-budgetary funds and counterpart contributions from the Governments of the countries in which the projects are carried out flow together for the purpose of attaining a particular objective. The determination of the Governments concerned by these projects is obviously absolutely fundamental in this combined effort. The amount of the counterpart funds is an indication of the extent of this determination, but what is even more important is that the projects in question should be integrated at the country level. It may therefore be in order to ask whether the country programmes which it is proposed should be shown in the budget of each organization should not only, on the one hand, give particulars of the counterpart contributions as well as of the regular-programme and extra-budgetary funds but also, on the other hand, establish a qualitative and quantitative relationship between the totality of the action provided for by these programmes and the country's plan. More generally still, the role of the international organizations should conceivably extend to the determination of sufficiently precise conceptual frameworks to make it possible for major common objectives to be pursued simultaneously - and with an apportionment of tasks - by the Governments of the countries concerned, the organizations in the United Nations system and the international organizations outside that system, and even by the partners to bilateral assistance. That, however, would involve the use of stricter methods than those employed at present.

116. Variation of method according to the degree of prior agreement

These somewhat theoretical considerations seemed essential in order to pose the problem with some degree of clarity. It does not follow, however, that the necessary distinction between these three different aspects of a single procedure means that they must be considered in an immutable order, i.e. first identify the problems, next define the priorities and, only lastly, specify the objectives. Such a theoretical approach would be dangerous and might increase the confusion. In fact, the method to be followed in such a sphere must vary according to the degree of agreement existing at the time when the research is undertaken. In certain areas, as we have seen, the international community has already recognized the existence of certain problems and even of certain priorities. In others, on the other hand, the volume of work outstanding as regards definition and negotiation is considerable.

117. Experience of UNESCO in defining "major problems"

The example of the experiment which UNESCO is now conducting in the selection and definition of major problems, as described in the above-mentioned document 93/EX/4 (cf. para. 65 above), clearly shows the difficulties inherent in such an exercise within this organization's areas of competence. The replies received to a question which had been asked in extremely general terms have not so far given any indication of a programme concentration technique. In this connexion, it would appear essential to quote a number of extracts from document 93/EX/4:

"16. Programme concentration calls for a rigorous choice of the major problems to be dealt with by UNESCO and for a set of criteria which can be used in the selection of objectives.

...

17. The selection of 'major problems' is probably the most difficult task. This point is fully recognized in most of the communications from Member States. Belgium and Canada have expressed some reservations about the desirability of even attempting to single out given problems. The former is of the opinion that instead of what it considers as a negative approach, the objectives of UNESCO ought to reflect in a positive form its mandate as set out by the Constitution and resolutions of the General Conference, and the latter points out that any attempt to define world problems is bound to be linked to the particular socio-cultural values which condition the perception of these problems.

...

19. As for the United Kingdom, 'to attempt an analysis of major world problems is no light undertaking, but it will be necessary to seek a degree of consensus on the subject among Member States.'

...

20. ... Switzerland observes that '... choices can only be made at the level of objectives.'

...

21. France .... questions the value of a 'global re-examination', and instead opts for a selection of objectives.

...

22. The inventory of problems which emerges on the suggestions of Member States is quite broad and varied and does not facilitate an effort of concentration. While recognizing that it would be most helpful if the General Conference, with the assistance of the Executive Board, could reach an agreement on a list of 'major problems', the Director-General believes that such a task is a most arduous and hazardous one and shares the view that it is at the level of the objectives that one can apply valid selection criteria."

This conclusion by the Director-General of UNESCO on the application of selection criteria at the level of objectives seems to me to provide an essential clue to the solution of the problem. The types of objective involved must, however, be clearly specified, and care must be taken to measure the consequences that may be entailed by the organization of a "choice at the level of objectives".

118. The need to establish descriptive "estimates" (devis préalables) to facilitate choices

The definitions given above of the notions entertained regarding problems, priorities and objectives clearly show the close connexion between the three notions, which are, in fact, only different aspects of a single complex intellectual approach towards clarification of an often very obscure set of data. In fact, the choices of the organizations' governing bodies must be as clear-cut and enlightened as possible. In the areas of competence of the international organizations, as in those of Governments, enterprises and individuals, decisions are not taken in the abstract; they require a precise description of all their possible consequences, including the financial consequences. In other words, choices can have true significance and practical consequences only if they are based on precise "estimates". This means that, before the policy-making committees are asked to make choices or

judgments, every substantive division of the secretariats should be called upon to carry out substantial preliminary work to elucidate the problems which may arise within its areas of competence. This work of elucidation should comprise as exact a description as possible of the existing situation and its development prospects, and it should bear upon the various methods of considering the problems, the real chances of effective action to solve them, and estimation of the costs of the various measures which may be considered. The adoption of such a rigorous method, however, would involve reconsideration not only of the present working methods of the secretariats, but also of the types of relationship existing between them and the policy-making committees.



II. THE PATTERN OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SECRETARIATS AND  
POLICY-MAKING COMMITTEES

119. Final objectives and immediate objectives in the international organizations:  
from the adoption of resolutions to the formulation of work programmes

From the examples discussed above, it can be seen straight away that the final objectives of the international organizations in the economic and social field are for the most part highly abstract. They are not easily attainable, and the sharing out of tasks calls for a considerable effort of negotiation. The definition of these final, long-term objectives, however, is essentially a function of the adoption of resolutions by the delegations of the member States in the various governing bodies by which the activities of the organizations are directed or guided. On the other hand, the daily activities of these same organizations include the much more immediate objectives (publications, meetings, studies, projects) which make up the work programmes of the secretariats or the plans of operation for field activities.

120. Relations between policy-making committees and secretariats

To attempt to bridge the gap which in the great majority of cases separates these two categories of objectives - in other words, to reduce the marginality of the economic and social activities of the international organizations - is therefore a matter of reconsidering the procedures for establishing the two types, i.e. of developing effective techniques of problem identification, selection of priorities and definition of objectives. This raises the question of the respective powers and functions of the policy-making committees and the secretariats.

121. Avoiding confusion between levels of responsibility

Moreover, there is no reason whatsoever to try to conceal or to pass over the fact that the introduction of programming must produce a change in the distribution, as between the "executive" and the "legislative" arms of the international organizations, of the power to initiate proposals and the decision-making power. But this entails a risk - which should be eliminated - of serious misunderstandings. The "executive" (in this instance, the secretariats and their heads) may fear that a particular conception of programming will mean transfer to the policy-making committees of a decision-making responsibility which in its view it should retain. The legitimate desire of member States to exercise effective control over the secretariats and to have a proper assessment of the results achieved must not indeed

lead to a system which would allow the various programme committees themselves to decide on the detailed arrangements for action to be undertaken. Such a conception would produce additional confusion, and a definition of the levels of responsibility is therefore absolutely essential.

122. The three-step pattern of the present division of responsibilities

The present system (in the absence of real programming) copes very badly, in fact, with the problem of the division of responsibilities between the policy-making committees and the secretariats. The division is according to a three-step pattern, which works more or less as follows:

- (a) At the first step, the member States, through the governing bodies, lay down the long-term general orientations, instructing the director-general or the secretary-general of the organization to pursue those distant, ambitious and ill-defined objectives, innumerable examples of which are to be found in the programme budgets or medium-term plans (some of them have been quoted in paragraph 21 above).
- (b) At the second step, starting from these general considerations and within appropriation limits which they feel can be accepted by the policy-making committees, the secretariats draw up work programmes (which are not all described in the same degree of detail in the budgets) on sight of which the corresponding committees are asked to make the necessary appropriations, i.e. to approve the budget.
- (c) Lastly, at the third step (at which programme budgets are adopted), the programming and financial committees discuss and comment on the proposed work programme. Generally speaking, however, they make only very minor changes, mostly in connexion with the amount of the appropriations requested, but rarely do they seek to make far-reaching changes in the structure of the programme.

It should be added that work on evaluating the results achieved after budget implementation still lies within the realm of theory, and that, despite the reports on implementation and calls by the governing bodies for improved methods of appraisal, no real check is kept on the secretariats. In addition, the general guidelines for programme content that might enable the policy-making committees really to lay down the main lines of action are still very vague and imprecise, and the true initiative is to all intents and purposes left in the hands of the secretariats. The difficulties encountered by the organizations in identifying priorities or major

problems in advance have been overcome, as we have seen, only in very few instances. This assertion should doubtless be qualified by the fact that there is a continuing dialogue between the policy-making committees, the directors-general of the organizations and the heads of the principal substantive departments or divisions: obviously, the programmes drawn up by the secretariats do reflect the general trends and the orientations desired by the vast majority of member States. It is nonetheless true that there is a definite need for the establishment of procedures whereby choices can be made more systematically and with greater clarity.

123. Requirements to be considered in establishing a new pattern of relations

In fact, if a new pattern is to be drawn for possible relations between the policy-making committees and the secretariats within the context of a programming system, the following considerations have to be borne in mind:

the important work of preliminary elucidation, which is essential to enable the policy-making committees to identify problems, priorities and objectives more easily, can be done only by the secretariats;

it has to be fully realized that the introduction of long-term programming necessitates consideration of a new dimension - the actual duration of the planning period - in the decision-making process;

if medium-term plans are to act as instruments that can really help to define a policy, they must, together with the programme budgets, entail financial decisions;

lastly, it is necessary to keep decisions on appropriation limits apart from the programme definition processes.

124. Nature of financial decisions relating to medium-term plans

Clearly, there will be true medium-term programming only when the plans, as is now the case with budgets, entail financial decisions - until that time, planning efforts will be confined to vague guidelines containing no element of compulsion and, in the end, having no real impact on the organizations' activities. If the situation is to be otherwise, the nature of the financial decisions which may be taken in connexion with a plan must be defined. Naturally, this does not mean that a plan has to be a six-year budget or that biennial programme budgets must give way to the plans as documents with a financial sanction. What has to be done is to devise a suitable link between the two decision-making processes. Medium-term plans cannot

be budgets, because the details of activities necessary in pursuit of a specific objective cannot be forecast more than two years in advance. Orders of magnitude in the form of approximate appropriations for the medium-term period can, however, be determined. Though Governments may well be reluctant to enter in advance into financial commitments over such a long period, they might not have much difficulty in agreeing that the expenditures of the international organizations should continue over a six-year period at the existing budgetary level, increased by a certain percentage every year or two years. It is just that percentage which could be negotiated. In other words, to determine the appropriation limits for the plans it would be enough to reach agreement on a percentage increase, even as a rough figure (e.g. between 5 and 7 per cent, or between 8 and 10 per cent, etc.)<sup>1/</sup>. An indication of that kind would be enough for an attempt to classify priorities within the approximate appropriation limits thus established. Moreover, there is no reason why the policy-making committees should not, thanks to that system of determining percentage increases, give a first indication of the very broad priorities they wish to see attached to a particular sector. The General Conference of UNESCO has already experimented with such a method, and the percentage increases it approves for education, science, other areas and administrative costs vary considerably. Nevertheless, such a method can apply only to broad sectors and not to more specific objectives or problems. It could not therefore be a substitute for the "descriptive estimate" method of decision-making here advocated. At all events, this way of fixing orders of magnitude would be perfectly compatible with the type of decisions taken when biennial programme budgets are submitted for approval - an entirely different exercise which consists in making appropriations of precise dollar amounts for particular programmes of work.

125. The necessary separation of the task of determining the appropriation limits from that of drawing up the programmes

Moreover, it seems to me essential that the determination of the appropriation limits for the plan should be independent of the process of elaborating programme proposals. No person, enterprise or Government has ever been able to establish its programme of activities and hence of expenditure simply in terms of its own wishes, since a budget must be drawn up in relation to income. Though there is often no

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<sup>1/</sup> The percentage could, of course, be set at zero when circumstances required financial austerity. In the long run, however, such a decision would mean the slowing down or even the stoppage of the international organizations' activities.

doubt some interaction between the costs to be covered and the income to be collected, no one can systematically gear the estimates of his income to his plans for expenditure. To simplify and clarify negotiations on this question in the international organizations, it would seem particularly desirable that a clear distinction should be made between the two exercises of determining the possible amount of expenditure and laying down programmes. It would even seem to be highly desirable that decisions on the appropriation limits for regular programmes should be taken by the organizations' Assemblies or General Conferences before work is started on preparing the plans, and that, as regards extra-budgetary funds, contributing States should indicate several years in advance how much they are prepared to pay for the entire duration of the plans.<sup>1/</sup> This would rule out any misunderstanding regarding the possible financial implications of the planning and programming method.<sup>2/</sup>

#### 126. Procedure for defining priorities

The main advantage of such a system, however, would be to make a procedure available at last for the definition of priorities. We shall review in detail below the operation which the substantive divisions should carry out in establishing their proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives (see paragraph 118 above). It must be made clear now, however, that in establishing these possible objectives various possible financing levels should be taken into account. In other words, the authors of the proposals should be guided essentially by considerations relating to the measurable threshold of effectiveness, and consider programmes of varying scope corresponding to different levels of ambition as to the possible achievements, and hence to costs which are also different. If this were done, the total of the figures accompanying the proposed possible objectives of an organization's various programmes would always inevitably exceed that of the appropriation limits approved for them. Thus, when applied to a set of proposals accompanied by figures adding up to far more than its total amount, an appropriation limit determined by criteria that have nothing to do with the nature of the programmes would provide a quasi-automatic procedure for defining priorities. It would furnish the policy-making bodies with exact estimates for selecting the programmes they would be prepared to support, those they would like

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<sup>1/</sup> A system of this kind has been introduced in UNDP, and has made possible the establishment of "indicative planning figures".

<sup>2/</sup> cf. footnote to paragraph 128.

to see cut back and, lastly, those they would phase out. Moreover, the competition it would arouse among the substantive divisions would induce them to vie with one another in presenting the best medium-term intermediate-stage programme, and this would no doubt be all to the good.

127. Obtaining a conspectus

This does not mean that the heads of the secretariats should not express any views to guide the governing bodies in their choice. On the contrary, their opinions, accompanied by general reflections on the adumbration of a comprehensive programme, are indispensable. It is clear that the "sectoral country studies" decided upon and prepared by the substantive divisions should also be used for the preparation of consolidated reports,<sup>1/</sup> first for each country, then by region and eventually at the world level, and that these consolidated reports should help the Directors-General of the organizations to obtain a conspectus of the programmes proposed. The method of submitting to the governing bodies both detailed proposals from which choices have to be made and general comments to facilitate these choices would of course be more heedful of their prerogatives than that of submitting a completely worked-out programme to which only minor changes could be made.

128. A possible new five-step pattern of relationships between the policy-making committees and the secretariats

The pattern of relationships between the policy-making committees and secretariats that would be created by the adoption of the body of measures considered above would be as follows:

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<sup>1/</sup> See chapter VIII, paragraph 153.

- First step: the governing bodies of the organizations and of UNDP would determine (by the adoption of a percentage) the order of magnitude of the financial appropriations acceptable for the next six years;<sup>1/</sup>
- Second step: the secretariats would make specific proposals for medium-term intermediate-stage objectives for the whole body of problems falling within the province of each organization, with different levels of execution, and the corresponding cost levels, being indicated for each proposal;
- Third step: the governing bodies would make their choice from among these proposals according to the total amount of the appropriations available to them; problems, priorities and objectives would thus be defined and the organizations' plans for the next six years established;
- Fourth step: the biennial programme budgets would then give details, in two-year instalments, for carrying out the plans thus established; the adoption of the budget would determine precisely, as at present, the organization's available resources and work plan, but it would do so within the context of a comprehensive policy laid down beforehand in the plan;
- Fifth step: towards the end of the period for carrying out the plan, the policy-making committees would appraise the results obtained and at the same time begin to think about the following stage, i.e. the next plan.

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<sup>1/</sup> Attention should no doubt be drawn to the evaluative nature of the operation of defining the orders of magnitude of the financial appropriations. There is always bound to be some interaction between the order of magnitude for the financing of a particular programme and the general view of that programme which may be entertained. The aim here, therefore, is rather to facilitate discussion than to set strict limits which in any case, if set before the programmes were even considered, might seem arbitrary. Moreover, such a procedure can appropriately be applied only to normal activities belonging to the organizations' traditional tasks in the economic and social sphere. It should not be applied to an undertaking which by its nature or scale is exceptional. The obviously somewhat unorthodox nature of such a method should not, however, militate against its use, in view of the special situation created in the international organizations, first, by the procedure for calculating the member States' compulsory contributions and, second, by the difficulty of reaching a policy agreement between rich and poor countries on the nature and scale of economic and social activities.

This outline of the principles underlying the procedures to be applied must now be considered in greater detail, taking the complexity of the existing machinery into account.

129. Difficulties created by the existence of different decision-making processes

The pattern just proposed may give the impression that the governing bodies can determine all the work programmes of their organizations, and this is not true. The budgets they have to adopt concern only the regular programmes. It would therefore be unrealistic to suppose that the adoption of medium-term planning could invest the governing bodies with powers they do not now possess as regards policy in the matter of the use of extra-budgetary funds, which are well known in most cases to be very substantial in relation to the regular-programme resources. The FAO Programme Committee showed that it was aware of this problem when it expressed, as was mentioned in paragraph 61 above, its deep concern about the impossibility of incorporating national priorities in the definition of regional and, even more, of world priorities. As country programmes are drawn up one by one, in principle by the Government of the country concerned but in actual fact in the course of negotiations in which the secretariats of the agencies and UNDP play a leading role, it is clear that the policy-making bodies of the organizations are excluded from this process and are thus unable to provide general directives. Understandably enough, they find this situation anomalous. Efforts to establish a reasonable methodology of planning thus immediately come up against the fundamental difficulty created by the existence of separate decision-making processes for the regular programmes and for the programmes financed from extra-budgetary funds. This difficulty has now assumed a new form, namely the existence of two different systems of programming with no point of contact between them: medium-term programming for the regular programmes, and country programming for programmes based on extra-budgetary funds.

130. Medium-term programming and country programming

The existence of these two entirely independent systems of programming, which differ in both methods and results, is actually a reflection, apparently on a minor scale, of a well-known situation. Although, however, the system of differentiating between the management of voluntary funds and of compulsory contributions to the agencies' regular programmes has survived until now, despite the difficulties caused by disputes between the agencies and UNDP over questions of competence or



interpretation, a more fundamental division is emerging, due to an obvious lack of complementarity that verges on the absurd. It is essential to my mind that this state of affairs should be remedied without delay. For reasons both of policy and of institutional efficiency, I do not think that the solution would be to subordinate either the "executing agencies" (including the United Nations) to UNDP (which was the tendency underlying the Capacity Study) or UNDP to the agencies. Nor do I think that the real answer to the problem is provided by the solution now formally adopted by UNDP, which is that in theory each Government should define its own technical co-operation programme. While superficially irreproachable, this solution is basically fallacious and does nothing to advance the interests of the member States concerned.

131. The nature of technical co-operation and the logic of country-programming

In fact, this type of solution would be really meaningful only if the United Nations system was regarded as nothing more than a system of complementary and marginal bilateral aid. In that case, it would of course be quite legitimate to ask the Governments of the countries concerned to draw up their lists of projects themselves, as the international community would not feel the same need as a country providing bilateral aid to impose its views as to the kind of aid that should be given. Even so, it is questionable whether Governments should be required to furnish in support of their requests documents that are as complicated and difficult to prepare as the present country programmes. Logically, a conception of that kind would result much more naturally in the preparation of a list of projects with no supporting statement at all. The sums involved are so small that any requirement to produce a supporting statement can even be regarded as an unnecessary annoyance. Furthermore, the work of preparing country programmes is so laborious that Governments have to call upon the secretariats of UNDP and the agencies for assistance, and this tends to destroy the logic of the system.

132. Scope of the reappraisal entailed by the shortcomings of the existing procedures

The efforts to programme, i.e. to reduce to order, clarify and systematize, the activities of the United Nations system throw fresh light on the defects of the existing procedures and make it extremely difficult to accept them any longer. What such efforts bring out is that these two separate decision-making systems cannot be allowed to continue unchanged, and also that a particular conception of technical co-operation in the United Nations system must be abandoned or drastically revised.

In view of these considerations, a complex and difficult reappraisal is required and must be embarked upon without delay.

133. Structure of the intergovernmental machinery and method of providing information on programmes

When the decision-making procedures yield poor results, and particularly when they involve two series of steps leading to contradictory or unrelated decisions, there is a temptation to criticize the structure of the procedures themselves. This problem of the intergovernmental machinery, which ACABQ has already stated very clearly, cannot be evaded for long. While it is generally recognized that the advent of programming has been responsible for bringing it to the fore, there is also a universal awareness of its extreme difficulty and complexity. Because of this, it will never be tackled properly until all the other aspects of the problems involved have been considered. We shall therefore say no more at present than that one of the most obvious reasons for the divergence between the two systems of decision-making is that it is furthered by the documentation with which the two systems are provided. The way in which information is supplied to them is actually tantamount to presenting to them artificially as two distinct sets of components which in fact exist in close symbiosis within the same organization, or even to separating the head and the limbs of a single living organism. The documentation distributed to the policy-making committees, although unduly voluminous in most cases, is nevertheless very often inadequate because it is too selective. For example, as has been seen, the policy-making committees of the organizations are, save in exceptional cases, informed solely about their organizations' regular programmes and are given only the vaguest global information and figures on extra-budgetary programmes. The UNDP Governing Council, on the other hand, has to deal exclusively with the use of extra-budgetary resources, but is given no information about the possible interaction between the programmes thus proposed and the "executing agencies" own programmes. It is obvious that if the committees responsible for discussing different portions of a single set of activities are expected to take co-ordinated decisions, they must first be supplied with documentation that is sufficiently consolidated and intelligible for them to obtain the same general view of that set of activities. This does not of course mean that the information given to the UNDP Governing Council and to the governing bodies of the different organizations should be identical, but it does imply:

that the same information system should be used for all the governing bodies through which the member States<sup>1/</sup> take economic and social policy decisions;

that the system should enable each governing body to familiarize itself with and take into consideration the views of the other governing bodies, so that complementarity of decisions can be achieved through complementarity of information.

134. The true significance of an information system

If, as recommended in the Capacity Study (chapter VI), and as already requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1643 (LI) on the study which the Inter-organization Board<sup>2/</sup> has been asked to undertake, attention is being given to devising a modern and unified information system for the United Nations family, attention must also be given, not only to data collection and processing methods, but also to the way in which the end product will be made available to the policy-making Committees as material for their decision-making. We shall see below that, as far as technical co-operation is concerned, an information system can only be based on country studies. These studies should not be purely theoretical, however; what is important is that all the policy-making committees that have to take decisions should receive exactly the kind of information they require.

135. Relationships between the information system and the decision-making system of the policy-making committees

The relevant requirements seem to be, in particular, as follows:

The governing bodies of the organizations, responsible for approving the budgets and medium-term plans, should have at their disposal all the necessary elements for defining the technical co-operation policy they would like to see applied in their particular fields of competence (education, employment, health, the sciences, agriculture, etc.). At the time of preparation of the medium-term plans, the governing bodies should, when making their choices with regard to

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<sup>1/</sup> And, in the ILO, the representatives of workers and employers.

<sup>2/</sup> The Inter-organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities has in fact been given this task by virtue of the Council's approval of the proposal for studies made by ACC in its report of 25 April 1973 (E/5289, part I). Report of the Co-ordination Committee (document E/5389 of 2 August 1973).

their "other activities" generally financed under the regular programme, formulate their recommendations on the subject of technical co-operation policy.<sup>1/</sup> The recommendations should relate to methods, the types of projects and forms of aid regarded as most suitable and the geographical areas where certain kinds of action should be concentrated during the planning period according to the objectives pursued, etc. This presupposes that the information papers circulated to the governing bodies for the purposes of the preparation of the medium-term plans will contain the proposals of the various substantive divisions based on the consolidated country studies. The programme budgets in turn should refer in precise terms to those operational activities which are financed from extra-budgetary funds.

The UNDP Governing Council,<sup>2/</sup> which is responsible for approving the application of a technical co-operation policy in each country, should, before approving the country programmes, have before it, first, a paper from each regional office indicating the priorities proposed for the region on the basis of consolidated country studies and consultations with Governments and, second, the recommendations of the governing bodies of the various organizations for each principal economic and social sector.

The Economic and Social Council should be required to review the whole of the policy proposed for a planning period and to give special attention, with a view to making a general report, to the relations existing between the organizations' regular programmes and technical co-operation policy as a whole. The Council could then make general recommendations regarding the different plans and technical co-operation programmes for transmission in their turn to the organizations.

136. The need for a time-table for the preparatory work

The kind of information which the secretariats should make available to the policy-making committees thus seems to require the establishment of a fairly precise time-table for the preparatory work, since much of the information would consist of recommendations transmitted from one committee to another. In other words, the system of programming and planning entails not only a great deal of preparatory work

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1/ Financed both under the regular programme and from extra-budgetary funds.

2/ Together with the other committees responsible for managing voluntary funds.

and above all precise estimates for the establishment of the medium-term intermediate-stage objectives, but also the institution of a dialogue between the competent policy-making committees on the basis of a time-table which would necessarily have to extend over many months.

137. The importance of the regional level

The regional level seems to have an important part to play in the time-table for the preparatory work. For this, there are several reasons, which should now be considered. The first is that, as has already been pointed out more than once, the definition of priorities at the world level is of very limited significance in a great many cases. At the regional level, on the other hand, the problems of the various countries have many similar or common features owing to geographical proximity, cultural interpenetration, and, very often, common language and a comparable level of economic development. The conditions are thus fulfilled for making it much easier to reach an agreement on priorities. It may of course be objected:

that the geographical boundaries of the regions are not the same for all the organizations, and that very many difficulties will have to be overcome before generally acceptable regional frameworks can be determined;

that furthermore, within the present continental frameworks (which are those of the main regional economic commissions, for instance), there are considerable differences in economic and social situation between the various countries;<sup>1/</sup>

that it might be more reasonable to ask the countries to state their priorities, taking their level of development, for example, into account.

If country typologies were established, taking a sufficiently large number of indicators into account, there is no reason to suppose it would not be possible even to define relatively homogeneous categories within which priorities would be easier to establish. These remarks do not, however, constitute fundamental objections, for there is no incompatibility between using the existing regional frameworks for the purposes of a better definition of priorities and pursuing study and research on the kinds of problems which may assume similar forms in different countries, whether in the same region or not. On the contrary, the two lines of approach would complement

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<sup>1/</sup> In some cases, however, it would be possible to use the sub-regional frameworks that have already been defined.

each other and make for a better knowledge of the problems involved. As to the definition of the ideal geographical framework for the region, this is a matter of prolonged empirical research which the use, even on a provisional basis, of the existing regional frameworks should facilitate rather than obstruct.

138. The regional level and country programming

The second reason why the regional level should be of real importance for defining the priorities and objectives of international technical co-operation is that it provides the context in which a dialogue can most easily be arranged between the persons responsible for planning in the international organizations and the national planning authorities. In other words, it provides the ideal framework within which the Governments of the countries concerned should be asked to provide information as to the technical co-operation policy they would like to see applied, and as to the problems for which they would look to the international organizations for well-thought-out sophisticated and effective types of solutions. It is therefore at the regional level that the inherent originality of the United Nations system of technical co-operation might come to take shape, and it is at this level, too, that the point of contact might most easily be found between country programming and medium-term programming. In matters of technical co-operation, the country is both the starting point and the end of the road for every system of programming. It is not until the next chapter that we shall consider exactly what kind of consolidated studies the secretariats should prepare on the basis of the country studies. For the time being, therefore, we shall merely refer to the obvious importance of the regional framework in providing the Governments of the countries concerned with all the necessary means of information and contacts for drawing up their programmes without difficulty.

If these arguments are found convincing, therefore, regional consultations should be included in the time-table for the preparation of plans. The modalities of consultation would still have to be defined, but the present framework of the regional economic commissions and the regional organs of the various agencies could quite well be used for this purpose, even if, in some cases, more active and direct participation by Government representatives (and, in the case of the ILO, by employers' and workers' representatives) in working out the basic philosophy might have to be provided for.

139. Towards a system of decision-making based on complementarity and the establishment of a precise time-table

The remarks that have just been made on the improvements required both in the preparation of information papers and in the co-ordination of recommendations and decisions may somewhat complicate the pattern described in paragraph 128 above. The sequence of phases (prior definition of the appropriation limits; preparation of a set of proposals for medium-term intermediate-stage objectives by the secretariats; selection of proposals from these, culminating in the preparation of the medium-term plans; approval of the programme budgets in the context of the plans; and the final appraisal before moving on to the next stages) can be maintained, but the following details should be added:

It should be possible to arrive at some figure, even if it indicates only an order of magnitude, for the estimated total appropriation limits, including both budgetary and extra-budgetary funds, by economic and social sector, and to communicate this figure to the governing bodies which have to decide on their recommendations, particularly as regards technical co-operation policy, before they start discussing the content of the programmes they would like to see adopted. In the case of UNDP in particular, the Governing Council should therefore be required to give its views in advance on the indicative financial limits per sector for the duration of the plans. Such communication is not incompatible with the allocation of indicative planning figures by country, for by consulting the Governments of the countries concerned it may well be possible to discover in advance the way in which they would like to see the amount of their indicative planning figures distributed among the different economic and social sectors. Moreover, the stability, mentioned in chapter VI above, of the apportionment of extra-budgetary funds among the various sectors clearly shows that ways have already been found in practice of reconciling the free choice of projects by Governments in drawing up their country programmes with a stable proportionate allocation of funds by agency and even by substantive division. That being so, the phase of determining the order of magnitude of the appropriation limits, whatever the origin of the funds, could really be distinguished from the programme definition phase.

The documents prepared by the substantive divisions for proposing their medium-term intermediate-stage objectives should very clearly indicate, in the description of resources available, first, the sources of financing (budgetary or extra-budgetary) which it is proposed to use, and, second, the distribution

by region and country of the technical co-operation activities included in the work programme. This would make it easier for the programming services to prepare the consolidated documents to be used as a basis for decision-making by the competent regional or central committees of the organizations and UNDP; A joint time-table for the preparation of medium-term plans and country programmes should be drawn up in precise terms. It should indicate in detail the linkage between the work of the secretariats (country studies, proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives, various consolidated documents), the successive phases of consideration by the policy-making committees at the different levels and the transmission of recommendations from one committee to another.

140. Effects of the scale and duration of the preparatory work on the conception of the medium-term plans

It should perhaps be pointed out now that the system of complementarity here proposed between the work of the secretariats and the sessions of the different policy-making committees would inevitably have the effect of extending over several years (probably two) the preparation period for the medium-term plans and technical co-operation programmes. It seems important to emphasize, therefore, that such an effort can only be contemplated if the aim is the preparation of a "fixed-horizon" plan, like all national plans, and not of a "rolling plan".<sup>1/</sup> Moreover, it is only with fixed-horizon plans that a check can be kept on whether the objectives set for the plan's date of expiry have really been attained. In other words, it is the only technique compatible with an effective evaluation system.

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<sup>1/</sup> Under this system, when a two-year budget is approved, forecasts are immediately made for the subsequent four-year period, and the work of forecasting is recommenced when the next budget is approved. This is the system now being used in the various organizations.



CHAPTER VIII

REORIENTATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES  
AND OF STUDY AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

141. Need to review the content of the programmes:  
conceptions of technical co-operation activities and "other activities"

The changes in procedures that have just been proposed would thus make it possible to introduce some measure of complementarity into the decisions of the various committees entrusted with the formulation of technical co-operation policy, and would undoubtedly be conducive to progress. It is not by any means certain, however, that it will be possible thereby to eliminate easily all the drawbacks of the existing dual system of decision-making and, in particular, to solve in this way the problem of the marginality of operational activities; an improvement in review procedures is in fact likely to make the strictly localized character of field operations and the paucity of means available to the international organizations even more apparent. A mere adjustment of procedures would not by itself provide a solution to this problem: it is the actual content of the programmes that must be reviewed. The time has therefore come to enquire whether the very conception of technical co-operation in the United Nations system ought not to be re-examined. The conception of the international organizations' "other activities" must not, however, be excluded from this critical analysis: the fact that they are financed from the agencies' regular budgets (and that they are therefore not subject to the dual system of decision-making) has not prevented them, as has already been noted, from undergoing significant change to increase their impact. Indeed, all the efforts that are being made to introduce a programming system are meaningful only in so far as they help to improve the total efficiency of the United Nations system as a whole.

142. Prospects of increased efficiency

It was in fact the present level of efficiency of the organizations' programmes of activities as a whole which was called into question by the first programming experiments (both medium-term and country programming). The fact that programming documents make such disappointing reading, and that they establish no more than a very tenuous or purely verbal link between the great objectives declared and the programmes of work proposed, is not attributable to any lack of talent on the part of their authors or even perhaps to the deficiency of available means. It is also because, since they bring out the absence of any relationship between final objectives and plans of work, they make it imperative to ask whether the actual conception of the proposed activities is the one best suited to the international organizations. The mere raising of such a fundamental issue cannot of course lead to the immediate discovery of what different kinds of solutions, or of what entirely new conception, would make greater efficiency possible. It can, however, open the door to useful research. The direction in which such research might be pursued should therefore be indicated. In that respect, I feel that three features of the existing programmes of activities should receive attention:

- (a) the absence of complementarity between technical co-operation activities and "other activities";
- (b) the rather elementary methods used for formulating and implementing technical co-operation projects;
- (c) the dispersal of the research activities of which "other activities" mainly consist.

143. Absence of complementarity

There are of course some very widely accepted explanations of why the international agencies are relatively ineffective: a number of well-known political factors are thus put forward to explain why the bulk of the resolutions adopted on economic and social matters either unanimously or by a very large majority of member States are not translated into action as satisfactorily as might be hoped, and why, for example, the first review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy does not reveal any very strict implementation of the recommendations the Strategy embodies. Similarly, the extremely modest amount of the resources applied, compared to the magnitude of the problems to be dealt with, is often given as the reason why the international organizations' technical co-operation projects, even when they are

considered excellent, only very rarely have perceptible effects on the level of development of the countries concerned. Accordingly, in the two fields - which are kept clearly distinct in most cases - of the formulation of the general framework of principles and methods on the one hand and of operational activities on the other, ready-made and specific explanations are at hand to serve as a justification for accepting in advance a very modest level of effectiveness. So far, however, no effort appears to have been made to try to bridge the gap between those two fields or to enquire at all closely into the question whether the ineffectiveness observed is not partly due precisely to the maintenance of that strict separation. While a few scattered examples could doubtless be given of experimental projects aimed at checking the value of certain new ideas, I do not believe that any example can be cited of a systematic and co-ordinated execution of projects designed to facilitate the adoption of principles or the application of methods recommended in important resolutions of the various governing bodies. Nevertheless, the introduction of a structural complementarity between these two fields would open up certain interesting possibilities: thus, for example, operational projects designed to favour systematically the complementarity of industrial development in the various countries of one region could be of positive help in promoting integration policies which in many cases are proving somewhat difficult to carry out. Some efforts have no doubt been made in this direction, but so far no serious consideration appears to have been given to making them systematic and thereby endowing them with a considerable multiplier effect. The results obtained from the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade should make it possible to indicate lines of research in that connexion, but a more rational organization of the international organizations' technical co-operation policy could be even more directly helpful: that is the subject which will now be considered.

144. The rather elementary nature of the technical co-operation methods used

Our consideration of the principles on which country programming has been organized has already led us to question whether, in the last resort, the technical co-operation of the international agencies is not really bilateral assistance writ small. Raising the question in these terms makes it necessary to consider the methods applied. The one most generally used is that of sending experts (supplemented by the distribution of a few fellowships and the supply of some equipment). This system appears to be based on the idea that the transfer of technology is a comparatively simple operation, and on the belief that the problems of the developing countries, regardless of the socio-cultural differences between them and the developed countries

of the northern hemisphere, can all be solved by using the kinds of techniques employed in the latter. Despite the research carried out and the sporadic adaptations made, everything is still being done as if the international organizations, when presented with a demand from developing countries relating to all sectors and to all kinds of techniques, could adequately meet that demand, whatever the subject, through the type of project which consists of sending experts, granting fellowships and providing equipment. It is true that, in some sectors, this formula, despite many failures and inadequacies, has resulted in a few successes. The agencies have tried, on the whole, to "sell" their projects, i.e. to ensure the purchase, as it were, of what they produced more easily than others, and this has resulted in some cases in their proposing a number of original ideas; but on the whole, these isolated efforts have not led to a specialization that would have made it possible to draw a clear distinction between the action of the international organizations and projects in the same sectors "sold" through bilateral assistance with much more financial support. Attention can no doubt be drawn to a few technological or methodological research projects oriented towards innovation, and to a few original solutions adapted to the specific problems of certain developing countries. It is also true that special attention has been given to planning problems in relation to the various economic sectors in each country (planning problems in education, health, agriculture, etc.). A fair number of projects have thus been undertaken by all the large organizations to promote the training of planners at the regional level, to assist in the implementation of national plans, etc., in line with a certain idea of planning which the resolutions of the policy-making bodies had helped to shape and which reflected a deep and legitimate desire to endow all countries, even the least favoured ones, with the necessary technical means to enable them to identify their problems themselves and to devise and apply solutions for them. Efforts in this direction, however, have been neither great enough nor systematic enough to impart a genuinely original character to the international organizations' operational activities in the sphere of technical co-operation. Above all, no attempt appears to have been made to work out scientific methods of determining with some measure of accuracy the degree of urgency of the needs, or the analogies which may exist between problems arising in the different countries, or the types of specialized responses which the international organizations might be better able to make to those problems than other bodies by reason of their specific characteristics.

145. The dispersal of research and study activities

In the studies and research sector too - the importance of which in the agencies' regular programmes has been stressed above - programmes do not appear to have been formulated in accordance with any very strict methods or with any comprehensive view. The centres which formulate study programmes are still too numerous and poorly co-ordinated. No effort ever appears to have been made to establish a common methodology. The Development Strategy itself, which might have provided a general framework, or a guiding pattern, has hardly been used at all for that purpose. Lastly, the desire - in itself legitimate - to keep abreast of the most topical preoccupations has apparently eclipsed the effort to ensure some measure of continuity. Failure in some cases to indicate clearly, at the time when research was undertaken, for whom the studies were intended, and the classification of the results as working papers, conference room documents or publications without reference to any recognized principles, have undoubtedly deprived of some of its effect the enormous research effort made by the substantive divisions as a whole. The search for ways of meeting these needs for order and organization should therefore continue as part of the planning and programming effort. It now remains to be seen how, in the matter of technical co-operation, it may be possible to advance from the elementary stage to a methodology of the industrial and modern type - i.e. to devise a guiding pattern capable of making the whole body of studies and research more coherent - so as to give complementarity to the two branches of activity.

I. REORIENTATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

146. Methods to achieve such reorientation

The quest for a specific conception of technical co-operation by the international organizations which is both consistent with their mission and capable of producing a much greater yield will obviously require, should the decision be taken to embark upon it, large-scale theoretical and practical research. Moreover, the various operations - redeployment of a large proportion of the substantive divisions' activities, testing of new formulas for technical co-operation, a better definition of priorities, ascertainment of what specific activities are best suited to the international organizations, evaluation of the possible efficiency of new methods - will moreover require many years. As has been explained, however, the efforts involved in reaching the present stage of programming have already extended over a number of years, and what is at stake is so important that they must be pursued, even if what remains to be done is more difficult. For testing the various possibilities of reorienting this body of activities, the organizations and UNDP could certainly use empirical methods, at least to begin with. The possible lines of approach no doubt include, among others, the following: the systematic testing of new or still-little-used formulas; the granting of priority to research projects aimed at innovation; the wider use of direct training of personnel or the giving of fellowships to developing countries (instead of sending experts); the systematic search for operational formulas capable of strengthening, in the case of the least-favoured countries, the economy's capacity for receiving information or for management; and the encouragement of the promotion of planning institutions in all sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, elementary methods based on individual intuitions which are always open to question cannot by themselves reveal what specific types of operational activities are best suited to the international organizations' vocation. In order to avoid, in particular, the dangers of an involuntarily colonialist approach which are always present when the problems of under-developed countries are described or dealt with by nationals of developed countries, a somewhat stringent method will obviously have to be applied. The only one which to me personally seems usable is that of looking for any analogies which may exist between the problems confronting the Governments of the various countries in each economic and social sector, with a view to establishing the types of response which specialization of the international organizations would help to make most effective. Thus, if the necessary corrections and adjustments were made, the

transition could be made from the elementary, step-by-step approach to industrial series-production methods. For that purpose, typologies of problems by sector will be needed, so that formulas can be worked out for meeting the most widespread and urgent needs. This means that the only method available for working out a system of technical co-operation specific to the international organizations, as well as for laying the foundations of a rational programming and planning system, is that of making systematic analyses, stating alternatives if possible, of the economic and social situation in each country, i.e. to introduce a generalized system of country studies.

147. Country studies and formulation of medium-term intermediate-stage objectives

To define the types of specialization suitable for the international agencies in the matter of technical co-operation and to define the priorities and objectives which the United Nations system should set itself in this field are in fact two different formulations of an identical problem: the problem of concentrating all efforts in the places where the needs are most urgent and greatest and of using the most effective methods to meet those needs. It is therefore necessary to consider now:

- how the country studies which constitute the basis of any serious construction should be carried out;
- how the proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives should be established by the substantive divisions of the secretariats;
- what precise part could be played in these two exercises by consideration at the regional level.

148. Requirements of a complete "country-study" system

"Country studies" have of course already been undertaken in the organizations and in UNDP. Country programming in UNDP is based on background papers which constitute comprehensive consolidated country studies dealing with each of the economic and social sectors separately. The organizations have made some contribution to the formulation of these documents by preparing descriptive statements for the various economic and social sectors within their respective fields of competence ("position papers"). In addition, more detailed and thorough sectoral country studies have recently been prepared by FAO<sup>1/</sup> for the agricultural sector; a genuine programme of perspective

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<sup>1/</sup> "Country Perspective Studies"; the country papers on the strategy of forest development, prepared by the Forestry Division of FAO, may also be noted.

country studies has recently been framed in that organization. In UNESCO, country studies have been prepared for a number of years in connexion with joint operations with the World Bank.<sup>1/</sup> As its most recent budget shows, WHO has definitely adopted country programming for its own activities, an approach which requires background studies. The "country studies" referred to in the present report would thus not represent an entirely new undertaking: such an undertaking would, however, have to be made systematic, it would have to be treated as something that was always of immediate importance, and it would have to be carried out with a degree of precision that would permit the preparation of useful consolidated documents; above all, the whole body of programming procedures would have to be based on it.

It seems essential to say here that such studies should not be confined to the developing countries: they should also be made for the developed countries, for world problems cannot be properly defined unless the whole body of data is taken into account. The methods to be adopted for these studies - and particularly the kind of collaboration to be organized with the Governments of member States (or with regional international organizations not belonging to the United Nations system) - will no doubt vary according to the quality and volume of the data available in each country. In particular, special efforts will have to be made to help countries whose data collection system requires improvement. But however the methods applied may vary according to the degree of development of the countries concerned, the aim should be as homogeneous as possible a presentation of the country sectoral analyses, so as to facilitate the study of interrelationships and consolidation of the results.

149. Needs that justify the undertaking of country studies

If these requirements are recognized as necessary, the preparation of country studies will entail a vast amount of work. The undertaking will therefore have to be useful if the considerable efforts involved and the financing of those efforts are to be justified. This means that both the content and the form of the studies must be

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<sup>1/</sup> For example, the studies on education and development in Dahomey, education in Nigeria, etc. (confidential report), June and September 1971.



perfectly adapted to requirements.<sup>1/</sup> In view of the whole libraries of extremely varied documents, studies and publications that exist on the economic and social problems of the various countries, serious reasons must obviously be advanced for any work that would add to the existing documentation. Actually, it is not a matter of adding to the documentation, but of rendering it accessible and usable. When UNDP introduced the system of country programming, it soon became apparent that the preparation of background papers was a large and necessary task, for documents that were sufficiently comprehensive, precise, recent and informative to be used for that purpose were far from being available in every country. The organizations which at present prepare sectoral country studies have also become aware of the lacunae existing despite the abundance of documents. The very precise and important requirements not at present satisfied are as follows:

(a) possession of a full and detailed knowledge of the existing documentation;

(b) availability of consolidated documents

supplying homogeneously for all countries consolidated and complete information on all economic and social sectors in every country,

kept up to date with absolute regularity;

(c) availability of documents which are similarly homogeneous and kept regularly up to date but which supply for each economic and social sector of every country information sufficiently detailed for the establishment of medium- and long-term forecasts and diagnoses.

Information of this kind, which is at present not to be had, is indispensable to the organizations themselves for defining problems, detecting analogies and seeking the most effective and appropriate solutions. It would also, however, meet needs at least as important in the countries themselves. There is a very large potential market for publications giving information of this kind that is comprehensive, homogeneous and kept regularly up to date in the universities, the business world, the public

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<sup>1/</sup> It seems important to emphasize that in some cases the country studies should take the country's internal regional structure into account. Countries covering millions of square miles or with a population of several hundred million, or whose internal regional structure is stabilized and associated with some degree of autonomy, cannot be studied along the same lines as much smaller or less densely populated countries. This question should be given special consideration before standard models are set for the studies to be carried out.

administrations, etc.<sup>1/</sup> By producing such publications, the United Nations system would be rendering an international public information service which would fall well within the bounds of its mission and which would very usefully supplement the service already being provided by the Statistical Offices. Moreover, the United Nations system is the one best equipped for this kind of function that there is in the world. Lastly, receipts from the sale of these publications would certainly be far from negligible, and would considerably reduce their net cost.

#### 150. Methods and techniques of preparing country studies

For studies of this kind, it would be necessary to establish a strict method of preparation and an apportionment of work among the various organizations and levels of the United Nations system. To arrive at such a method, consideration would certainly have to be given to the establishment of an inter-agency country study committee or council, for which a group of economists specializing in development programmes would act as secretariat. Provided, however, that the responsibilities of all involved were clearly defined, the help of the Committee for Development Planning might conceivably be enlisted for the definition of methods, and that of the Inter-organization Board (IOB) for the information system. The co-operation of the Statistical Office of the United Nations would in any case be essential to provide technical support for the operation. As regards the apportionment of the work of preparing the studies, the following must be distinguished: the gathering of information; the preparation of in-depth studies on each economic or social sector; the preparation of consolidated country studies (for all sectors together); the work of keeping the documents permanently up to date; and, lastly, publication. It will also no doubt be necessary to carry out a special study on the apportionment of tasks among the various parts of the United Nations system. Suffice it to say here that the sharing out of the work is essential and that the following considerations should be taken into account:

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<sup>1/</sup> I am convinced that there exist a great many institutions, organizations, industrial and commercial firms, Ministries, foreign relations services, etc., which prepare country papers, often under difficult conditions, and with mediocre results in most cases. No doubt these documents are slanted towards problems peculiar to the body concerned which are sometimes very specific, but all these "country documents" have a large area of common ground, and for this reason official United Nations publications of this kind would have a very wide market.

As regards the gathering of information, all the central and regional organs of the organizations and of UNDP, and particularly the resident representatives, should of course take part in this work. This presupposes the setting up, on a scientific basis, of a central system of data collection and distribution (data banks) and the organization of documentation centres for rapid and easy consultation of all information wherever it may be needed. The Inter-organization Board should here be able to suggest the necessary solutions. Special responsibilities in this connexion should, however, devolve upon the substantive divisions, for example, as regards all information relating to the economic and social sectors for which they are responsible, and upon the resident representatives and the secretariats of the regional economic commissions as regards general information or information which does not come within the purview of a particular substantive division at the central level and in particular as regards bibliographical surveys.

As to the preparation of the studies, it is undoubtedly the substantive divisions which, in each organization, should be responsible for the work of preparation in their own fields of competence (country studies on fisheries by the Fisheries Division of FAO, country studies on education by the Education Sector of UNESCO, etc.). For the consolidated country studies (all sectors combined), however, the work of consolidation could be entrusted, under the supervision of one or more inter-agency committees, either to the secretariats of the United Nations regional economic commissions and the UNDP resident representatives or to a central body under conditions to be discussed and determined. It is very important to note, however, that there are two specific functions which must be performed by bodies having full and undivided responsibility for them: the permanent work of bringing the material up to date, and the work of publication and sale.

151. Possible technical "diagnosis" services by sector

The preparation of country studies should provide an opportunity for the substantive divisions, starting from technical bases and using the comparisons which their knowledge of other countries would facilitate, to establish their diagnoses on problems within their competence in a particular country. These diagnoses should not of course be published, except in a form accepted by the country concerned. At the same time, the possibility should certainly be left open of preparing more advanced technical diagnoses at the request of Governments. Services of this kind are already frequently performed by the international organizations for many Governments at their

request; consideration might be given to the idea of making this a general practice. This task would often involve, as has already been the case in the past, the sending of technical missions to carry out studies in greater depth, but this type of service is one which normally falls within the competence of the United Nations, and its effectiveness is certainly very great. It would also in many cases provide Governments with an independent outside diagnosis that would facilitate comparison with other diagnoses which are sometimes put forward less disinterestedly. As thus conceived, such a service ought therefore to make for the increased economic independence of developing countries, particularly the less developed ones.

152. Methods and techniques for using sectoral country studies in planning procedures

Publication of the descriptive studies referred to in paragraph 149, or the provision of additional aids for the preparation of "technical diagnoses by sector" in each country, however, would simply be important by-products of the introduction of a generalized system of country studies. The main purpose of such studies is obviously to permit rational planning of the organizations' activities, particularly those connected with technical co-operation. The methods and techniques for using the studies for this purpose must now therefore be carefully considered. The idea that it is possible to move straight on from a country study to a technical co-operation programme in the country in question has served as the basis for country programming in UNDP. The almost insurmountable difficulties created by such a system can now be appreciated. In describing these difficulties in paragraphs 73 to 78, it was pointed out that most of the countries concerned had themselves emphasized the theoretical and superficial nature of the exercise. The main defect of the system lies not in any inadequacies in the background papers, which are merely draft country studies prepared in the first instance rather hurriedly by the resident representatives and by the secretariats of the United Nations regional economic commissions, but essentially in the principle of proceeding direct from the study to the list of projects.<sup>1/</sup> In other words, it seems essential to replace this "short cut" by a "long way round". The point of departure would be not a specific study but a whole series of studies, leading to a

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<sup>1/</sup> It could even be said that UNDP country programmes confuse three distinct operations: the descriptive study, the diagnosis of the situation in the various sectors, and the programme itself (i.e. the list of projects). These three operations should, on the contrary, be kept apart: they pose different technical and policy-making problems and should be given separate treatment.

General Programme of Technical Co-operation for the United Nations system that would offer a breakdown either by country programme or by medium-term plan for each organization (so far as concerns the technical co-operation component of the plan). I even feel that it is necessary, for practical reasons and reasons of policy, to make a distinction between two sequences: one aimed at the identification of problems, priorities and objectives through the regional committees, the governing bodies of the organizations and the Governing Council of UNDP, and the other at the development of techniques and methods proper to United Nations technical co-operation, and requiring more detailed studies and more advanced research.

153. First sequence

The first sequence (described in paragraphs 135 and 139) consists essentially in the preparation by the secretariats of the organizations and UNDP of the consolidated documents indispensable to the intergovernmental (or tripartite) committees concerned. In this regard, a distinction should be drawn between:

documents intended for the regional committees, namely:

- (a) (as preliminary information) a descriptive list of the technical co-operation activities of all kinds being undertaken in the region (differentiating between those of the United Nations system and any others);
- (b) consolidated reports by economic and social sector,<sup>1/</sup> at the regional level;
- (c) a global consolidated report (all sectors combined, by region);

documents intended for the governing body of each organization:<sup>2/</sup>

- (d) a summary of the descriptive progress reports on technical co-operation activities in all the regions;

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<sup>1/</sup> A list of economic and social sectors, corresponding to the principal fields of competence of the five organizations, should be prepared for approval (Health, Agriculture, Education, Science, Industry, Employment, etc.), together with a list subdividing the major categories according to the field of competence of the substantive divisions, specifying precisely the responsibilities of each division.

<sup>2/</sup> In the case of the United Nations, these documents should be supplied to ACABQ and CPC.

- (e) the recommendations from the regional committees concerning problems, priorities and objectives;
- (f) a summary of the prior decisions taken by all the organizations and by the Governing Council of UNDP on the appropriation limits for the planning period;
- (g) the substantive divisions' proposals regarding medium-term intermediate-stage objectives; and

documents intended for the Governing Council of UNDP:<sup>1/</sup>

- (h) the documents referred to in (d), (e) and (f) above, and,
- (i) reports from the UNDP regional offices on the technical co-operation policy they recommend for each region, after consulting the governments concerned.

Lastly, a global consolidated paper - the General Programme of Technical Co-operation of the United Nations System proposed as the final objective for this series of documents - could be prepared and submitted for comments by the governing bodies of the organizations, the UNDP Governing Council and the Economic and Social Council. These, then, are the documents that might usefully serve the system of complementary decisions described in paragraphs 135 to 139.

#### 154. Second sequence

##### Experimental in-depth studies and diagnoses dealing with a certain number of volunteering countries

The second sequence should correspond to a different kind of work and contribute to continuous enhancement of the United Nations system of technical co-operation. The point here is to determine as scientifically as possible those methods which can produce maximum results and to define the specialities of each organization. In the first place, therefore, more knowledge should be acquired, so that the methodology of the studies themselves can be improved. The most useful step in this direction would be to organize experimental in-depth studies and diagnoses dealing with a certain number of volunteering countries, for essentially methodological purposes. These

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<sup>1/</sup> Also intended for the administrations of other sources of extra-budgetary funds.

studies should relate to the same countries for the five organizations. Only a small number of countries, four or five at most, should be studied. They should be selected bearing in mind the willingness to co-operate of the Governments concerned, the extent of the studies already available on those countries, and the need for a reasonable diversity of types of countries. There should be close collaboration with the Governments, so that the countries in question can derive maximum benefit from the in-depth studies. The possibility should be explored of securing the co-operation of the other organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and perhaps other international organizations as well. Lastly, subject to the consent of the countries concerned, the widest possible publicity should be given to the results, in the form of descriptive studies that can serve as a model for later series of publications, and of studies on the methodology of diagnosis.

155. Second sequence (continued)

Studies on analogies and typologies

In the second place, teams of specialists (acting in close liaison with the programming services) should endeavour, on the basis of the data supplied by the country studies, to identify as rapidly as possible problem typologies, i.e. analogies whereby such and such a type of problem could be characterized as affecting several countries in roughly the same way.<sup>1/</sup> Such studies should lead on to reports, for submission to the organizations' governing bodies, that would try to suggest the type of response for the type of problem identified. If carried out on carefully pre-selected sectors, these studies would make it possible to define little by little the fields in which the organizations could specialize and so achieve maximum effectiveness. From these joint efforts (in-depth country studies, research into analogies and typologies), a body of theory could gradually be built up regarding the technical co-operation methods best suited to the international organizations.

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<sup>1/</sup> Such research should of course provide the occasion for a dialogue between the organizations of the United Nations system and universities where research of the same kind is conducted for very similar purposes. A dialogue like that should pave the way to established procedures for collaboration. Speaking more generally, I would say that the possibilities of such collaboration do not yet seem to have been sufficiently explored.

156. Establishment of medium-term intermediate-stage objectives

A description of all the methods and techniques for using country studies was essential to a better understanding of the importance to be attached to the work of the substantive division in establishing the medium-term intermediate-stage objectives whose essential role in plan preparation has already been mentioned on numerous occasions (paragraphs 118, 126, 128 and 153(g)). Further details now seem necessary regarding the possible content of such documents, which it seems might be outlined as follows:

- (a) General situation report on the sector considered. An exact description of the situation in each economic and social sector for the countries of the world as a whole (using regional descriptions as half-way points wherever possible)<sup>1/</sup> should lead to identification of the problem or problems to be solved, and of the geographical areas affected (with maps if necessary), as well as to detection of similar situations in the various countries. A qualitative and quantitative appraisal of the data on each problem should be submitted.
- (b) Historical background, existing methodology and effectiveness thresholds. No programme could be drawn up without taking stock of the progress already made with each problem identified. Preparation of a succeeding stage therefore requires a historical account of previous efforts (the efforts of all those attempting to solve the problem), an assessment of their results and the speed with which they have been achieved, a recapitulation of the existing methodology, a critical examination of its effectiveness and, more especially, through a survey of successes and failures, a study of the effectiveness thresholds of the action to be undertaken. If research on a new methodology seems necessary, the types of research to be done and their chances of success should be stated.
- (c) Consideration of long-term strategy. An appraisal should be made of what still has to be done to attain the final objective. In some cases, the road remaining to be travelled is relatively short, but in others the goal is

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<sup>1/</sup> The material for these would be provided by the consolidated regional documents (paragraph 153, (a), (c) and, especially, (b)).



still a long way off. According to the nature and attainability of the objective, a long-term strategy (or alternative strategy (or alternative strategies) should none the less be sketched out to provide a frame of reference in choosing the features of the succeeding stage.

157. The different types of possible objectives and the division of responsibilities

It should be possible to determine the next medium-term intermediate-stage from the preparatory work that has just been described. This would entail precise identification of the objective for that stage and an exact division of responsibilities in the pursuit of it. The intermediate-stage objective in question could be, as appropriate:

a preparatory-phase objective: a study in great depth of the data of a problem, the comparative testing of different methods of finding a solution and the elaboration of alternative solutions, the preparation of action plans for the following stages, the preparation of negotiations on the division of responsibilities, and the preparation of methodological material (a manual) or the training of specialists;

a "beginning-of-actual-attainment" objective: for example, the reduction by x per cent of the rate of smallpox, illiteracy or underemployment in countries A, B, C, etc.; or

an objective combining elements of the two preceding types.

Except where it corresponds to a very early preliminary phase, it is essential that the intermediate-stage objective should include the clearest possible definition of the apportionment of responsibilities between:

on the one hand, the Governments of the member States themselves, the bilateral or multilateral systems of technical co-operation, and the other international organizations that may be involved (particularly the World Bank); and,

on the other, the international organization most concerned, whose role and type of intervention could thus be more clearly defined; only too often, programmes are drawn up without any knowledge of what the other participants may be doing

in the field in question; the preliminary work provided for in point (b) of the preceding paragraph,<sup>1/</sup> that is to say, a full account of what exists or has already been done in a particular field, is thus essential.

We shall merely recall here that, in accordance with the suggestion made in paragraph 126 above, a distinction should be made, in the definition of medium-term intermediate-stage objectives, between the different kinds of results that may reasonably be expected, depending on the magnitude of the financial resources available. The substantive divisions should no longer base their estimates of the appropriation limits for the different types of action they contemplate in their plan of work on the figures for the previous years, increased by a percentage varying according to how optimistic they are. The information they have to supply to the organizations' governing bodies should be mainly concerned with the nature of the results to be expected at the various possible financial levels from the types of action that come into consideration, or in other words according to the cost-benefit ratios. This would be the same thing as defining effectiveness thresholds. Only thus could the governing bodies' decisions on the mass of proposals single out the most effective forms of action while discarding others, and thus in the end make rational policy formulation possible.

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<sup>1/</sup> And in paragraph 153 (a), documents for the regional level, and (d), documents for the central level.

II. REORIENTATION OF STUDY AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

158. A pattern for the definition of problems, priorities and objectives for "other activities"

Could the decision-making pattern just proposed for technical co-operation activities financed from extra-budgetary funds be used, mutatis mutandis, for the other activities of the international organizations financed under their regular programmes? There is no doubt that it could, so far as concerns regular-programme activities akin to technical co-operation in the broad sense, whether they consist of publications, the preparation of handbooks, training activities, seminars, diagnostic missions, project support in the field or even direct intervention in the form of projects comparable to those of UNDP (these last, it is true, are rather uncommon except in WHO). The only difference is that such activities are within the organization's exclusive competence. It would, however, be desirable that the UNDP Governing Council should be informed about them (for the same reason as the organizations' governing bodies are informed of problems relating to activities financed from extra-budgetary funds), so that the proposed exchange of recommendations on the general programme of technical co-operation would really have a bearing on the whole problem. The "country study" and "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objective" methods could also with advantage be applied to other activities (relating only accessorially to technical co-operation), for to my mind these methods seem very general, and they could be extended to a very large number of problems, particularly those which affect all countries, whatever their degree of development. Even when a problem is undeniably world-wide (e.g., drug control, the environment, human rights, etc.), it very rarely affects all countries in the same way, to the same extent or from the same angle. A geographical description implying country studies is therefore very often possible. Even activities connected with the promotion of ideas or standards could benefit from less elementary methods. The "market study" type of document would give them a more scientific basis, but in this case, too, a geographical context would be required. Studies and research directed towards the establishment of a general framework of principles and methods in the economic and social spheres must, however, be given separate treatment.

159. Need for a general guiding structure for studies and research relating to a framework of principles and methods

For this type of study and research, whose importance had been made clear in chapter VI (paras. 100 and 103), the following factors must be taken into account:

- Although this type of study and research could benefit considerably from country studies (where they exist), it is a question here not only of consolidating previous work (as in the case of the preparatory documents referred to in paragraph 153 above), but of defining desirable orientations, and that is a task requiring future-oriented research and imagination.
- A common approach by the five organizations (and, subsequently, if possible, by all the organizations of the United Nations system, including the financing institutions) might be particularly fruitful. The division into economic and social sectors, which is indispensable for analysis and research, becomes arbitrary and dangerous when principles and methods for the future have to be defined. When that is the aim, it is scarcely possible, for instance, to deal with education without reference to employment, with employment without reference to industrial policy or with industrial policy without considering its relation to other sectors, etc.
- The framework for research and collaboration which could be provided by the preparation of the next Development Strategy, for the 1980s, seems well-suited to a collective effort of this kind. The trend of development which has led from resolution 1710 (XVI) on the first International Development Strategy, for the 1960s, to resolution 2626 (XXV) on the International Strategy for the Second Development Decade, could thus, supported by the whole body of programming efforts, be continued towards the elaboration of a fuller and more precise document for the 1980s.

The rapidly changing pattern of contemporary economic and social relations between countries has created, not only in the developing countries but all over the world, the need for a set of principles and methods which could serve as a frame of reference and offer guarantees for the definition of their national economic and social policies.

The development of the conception of the Strategy towards greater precision could be pursued in two areas: that of the main economic and social sectors and that of the regions.

160. Indicative World Plans by Sector

In describing the present trends of their programmes, we have seen that the organizations are finding it increasingly necessary to adopt a global approach to problems. The studies and research on the World Employment Programme, the Indicative World Plan for Agriculture, modern trends in education, the conception of health services, and the World Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development are clear proof of this. Consequently, in order to establish closer links between the organizations' programmes, to fit them more easily into the general context of world economic and social problems and to give the Economic and Social Council an opportunity of determining whether these various global approaches by sector are concordant, it now seems necessary to include "Indicative World Plans by Sector" in the International Strategy, so as to associate the big organizations directly with the preparation of the Strategy. Taking as their example the indicative world planning exercise performed by FAO, the organizations might try to establish Indicative World Plans for Education, for Science and Technology, for Employment, for International Trade, for Industrial Development and for Health, etc., attempting to follow a common method, and then to see how the problems in different sectors are related to each other. When these plans have been included in an abridged form in the Strategy itself, they should as far as possible conclude with a body of clear-cut and specific principles and directives capable of providing useful guidance to Governments in the formulation of national economic and social policy.

161. The Ten-year Regional Indicative Plans

For the same reasons as those given in paragraph 137 above concerning the role to be given to the regional level in defining priorities, it should undoubtedly be possible to achieve a much greater degree of precision in the definition of principles and methods at the regional than at the world level. The inclusion of "Ten-year Regional Indicative Plans" in the International Strategy might well, therefore, provide a useful framework for making the research undertaken more coherent. The essential aims of such an approach to the problems of the Strategy should be to achieve, not only more precisely-defined objectives, but also a better identification of regional problems, a differentiation of priorities as between the regions in a manner more in accordance with real needs, improved co-ordination of national development plans and of development policies in general, and a clearer idea of the opportunities for co-operation, and, possibly, for integration, at the national level.

It seems necessary to bear in mind that the problems involved are not short-term ones, such as those described in the annual regional surveys of the United Nations regional economic commissions, but problems of economic and social structures and of policies for modifying those structures. The objectives to be contemplated in the regional indicative plans should not only relate, therefore, to the recommended growth rates for the gross national product, but should also have to do, for example, with the rate of school attendance, industrial and agricultural investment policies and their co-ordination, possible common-infrastructure projects, methods of cultural co-operation, monetary and trade policies and the financial resources for carrying the plans out, etc. The proposed documents, whose preparation should be greatly facilitated by the establishment, as recommended, of country studies and diagnoses by the international organizations, should contain, for example:

- a description of the current situation and the prospects for the region under consideration, with particular reference to the economic and social policies of the different countries of the region as reflected in the national development plans; the complementarity of those policies, particularly as regards industrial, agricultural and infrastructure investment, etc.; common or similar problems in different countries of the region; and the region's external trade;
- an identification of the region's principal economic and social problems, in other words, a diagnostic study of long-term regional priorities;
- a list of the measures which the member countries in the region concerned might be prepared to take in concert, particularly as regards investment policy and the establishment of institutional machinery for co-operation; and a definition of the lines along which the region should pursue its policy of co-operation with the rest of the world;
- the part which the international organizations should play in the region during the period under consideration.

162. Harmonization of the proposed reorientations

The reorientations thus proposed for technical co-operation and for studies and research would lead to a better convergence of these two branches of activity thanks to a number of factors which may be briefly recapitulated below:

- the common basis they would be given by making the production of country studies a general practice;
- the complementarity which will have to be established between the secretariats of different organizations or main departments in the work of preparing the country studies and various consolidated documents, and in work on the indicative plans by sector and by region;
- the information system proposed for the various governing bodies, which would make for a fuller and more comprehensive view of problems, and complementarity of decisions, thus facilitating the exchange of the governing bodies' recommendations on questions that are common, or akin to those falling strictly within their fields of competence;
- lastly, the special function of the regional level as regards the collection of basic data, the definition of priorities and the choice of long-term orientations through the ten-year indicative plans.

There is no doubt that this complementarity could be established more systematically, and that it will not be satisfactory until technical co-operation projects provide an effective means of promoting implementation of the basic recommendations on the framework of principles and methods. Complementarity of this kind cannot be organized in advance, however; it depends first and foremost on the decisions of the member States, but there is every likelihood that it will begin to operate as soon as the necessary conditions have been met. I believe that this would be the case if the recommendations made here were approved, and if a start was made with putting them into effect.

CHAPTER IX

PROBLEM OF THE "INTERGOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY"<sup>1/</sup>  
AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR A SECOND STAGE IN THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF A PROGRAMMING SYSTEM

163. Outstanding questions

The purpose of the present report was only to sum up the results so far obtained in the matter of programming and planning and to suggest orientations for overcoming in a succeeding stage the serious difficulties brought to light by appraisal of the existing situation. It was out of the question to consider here every aspect of a problem which will require numerous studies or to make detailed proposals for a very complex body of implementation measures that can only be worked out gradually. Our sole aim was to ascertain whether a start could be made with a second stage in the construction of a programming system. The present report gives an affirmative reply to this question, and proposes:

a method which, starting from the "country studies", and passing through various stages of consolidation and the presentation in particular of a selection of "medium-term intermediate-stage objectives", would yield a number of proposals;

a system whereby, through a series of recommendations and complementary decisions, problems, priorities, and objectives would be selected by the competent governing bodies as a whole;

lastly, a possible reorientation of technical co-operation activities and research on the framework of principles and methods, to increase the efficiency of the system as a whole and ensure greater complementarity.

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<sup>1/</sup> The expression "intergovernmental machinery", although convenient, is too elliptical. For it to include the ILO, as implied in the present report, the words "and tripartite" should be added. The complete formula should in fact be: "Machinery of intergovernmental, tripartite and independent-expert bodies which deal with the formulation, consideration and approval of medium-term plans and programme budgets."



There are two series of questions still to be considered:

those concerning the desirability of modifying the "intergovernmental machinery"; those relating to the type of measures to be considered for starting the second stage in the construction of a programming system, should the orientations recommended in the present report meet with a basically favourable reception.

164. Manner in which the problem of the "intergovernmental machinery" arises

Reference has already been made in paragraph 67 above (chapter IV) to the manner in which this problem was raised by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as early as 1970, and later by ACABQ in 1973. The position on this question can now be summed up as follows:

- (a) The problem of the "intergovernmental machinery" has two quite distinct aspects:

One concerns almost exclusively the United Nations itself: unlike the other organizations, the United Nations does not possess an executive council competent to deal with both programmes and budgets. Until now, ACABQ has been primarily concerned with financial questions; and, moreover, ACABQ is a committee of experts. Its reports are studied by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, which is also concerned with administrative and financial matters. As for programmes, they are examined by numerous committees - including the Industrial Development Board (of UNIDO) and the Trade and Development Board (of UNCTAD), which specialize in the programmes of these two autonomous units - and subsequently, in a comprehensive manner, by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, whose reports are addressed to the Economic and Social Council, which in turn refers matters of this kind to the Second Committee of the General Assembly. It would certainly be an advantage if the process of considering the programme budgets and medium-term plans of the United Nations itself could be further centralized (taking at the same time into account the distinction, which this report recommends, between the determination of appropriation limits and the consideration of programmes).

The other aspect of the problem concerns all the organizations of the United Nations system. The first question which arises in this connexion (and which has been considered above in chapter VII, paragraphs 129 et seq.) is the duality of the system whereby decisions are taken in matters of

technical co-operation (the regular programmes are considered by the agencies' governing bodies, whereas extra-budgetary funds are within the competence of the UNDP Governing Council). Then there is of course the problem, as old as the Charter itself, of the relations between the Economic and Social Council and the governing bodies of the agencies, or, more precisely, of obtaining a general view and carrying out a comprehensive survey of the economic and social programmes of the United Nations system.

- (b) It is not essential, I feel, to solve this extremely complex problem immediately; in the first place, I do not believe that the necessary conditions for its solution exist at present and, moreover, it would be very useful, before any decision is taken on this point, to try out the various correctives which have so far been proposed to the existing system: an improved information system in the form of the series of consolidated documents described in paragraph 153, and a complementarity of decisions through the exchange of recommendations by the various governing bodies. This experiment could, in addition, suggest possible simplifications difficult to visualize at present, or bring to light new and unforeseeable difficulties. In other words, it would help the problem to mature.

165. Possibility of an exchange of views on the readaptation of the "intergovernmental machinery".

To facilitate dialogue and at the same time accelerate this maturing process, it may, however, be worth-while considering the possibility of holding informal meetings in the form, for example, of working parties of members of the various intergovernmental or tripartite governing bodies - an interesting possibility to which we have already drawn attention in paragraph 68 above (chapter IV). In a matter which is so recent and so difficult to translate into practice, and which brings into play entirely new concepts, it is extremely important that all the members of the many governing bodies which are called upon to take decisions should be able to consider questions from the same angle, use the same vocabulary and give words the same meaning. The efforts to promote harmonization at present being made by the secretariats are likely to suffer from the existing divergencies of interpretation. The only practical and effective method of solving these difficulties is to discuss them directly. No doubt the proposed meetings of programme planning officers from the secretariats of the organizations of the United Nations system, meetings which have been recommended by ACC in its report of 25 April 1973 (document E/5289 (part I), paragraph 44), and the next of which is due to take place in March 1974, ought to facilitate the

harmonization of methods and help to bring the views of the various organizations closer together. For the reasons just stated, however, only fragmentary results are likely to be obtained in this way. Moreover, there are two specific problems which direct meetings between members of the governing bodies would help to solve. The first is that of harmonizing the presentation of programme budgets among the organizations as a whole, and the second is that of harmonizing the procedures for the definition of problems, priorities and objectives in the United Nations itself:

As regards the first problem, the report suggested in paragraph 30 above might much more easily result in decisions if its consideration by the governing bodies of the various organizations was preceded by the meeting of a working party of a few representatives from the governing bodies of the organizations and, for the United Nations, from CPC and ACABQ. It might be an informal meeting of the Chairmen of these various bodies, but other formulae could of course be considered, such as the designation by each governing body of three representatives, including its chairman, or any other form of representation.

The second problem, that of procedures for the definition of problems, priorities and objectives, could be quite easily dealt with in those organizations that have an Executive Board or Council, since the bodies in question have full competence to consider all aspects of such procedures. In this respect, however, the United Nations is an exception. In the interests of a rational preparation of the work of the Economic and Social Council and of the Second and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly on these matters, I therefore feel that the possibility of arranging a joint meeting of CPC and ACABQ for the purpose might well be considered.

As regards these two types of working parties, there do not appear to be any insurmountable legal obstacles in the way of holding a joint meeting of representatives of delegations (members of CPC or of the governing bodies of the various agencies), representatives of employers' and workers' organizations (in the case of the ILO) and of experts acting in an individual capacity (members of ACABQ), since the meetings would be held for the purpose, not of taking decisions, but of shedding light on problems which the governing bodies of the organizations, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly would then be able to pronounce on with a better knowledge of the facts. Lastly, it is important to make it clear that such occasional and informal meetings would in no way prejudice any solutions that might be considered for the problem of the "intergovernmental machinery". There can be no

doubt, on the other hand, that they would provide an opportunity for interesting exchanges of views on this subject and thus increase the chances of finding a solution.

166. Nature of the measures to be considered for starting the second stage in the construction of a programming system

The action to be taken for starting the second stage in the construction of a programming system, if the methodological proposals in this report were accepted, would seem to fall under the following four headings:

- choice of the period to be covered by the next medium-term plans of the five organizations;
- types of instructions to be sent to the substantive divisions of the secretariats;
- studies to be undertaken;
- establishment of a time-table for preparing the second stage.

167. Selection of a common period for the next medium-term plans of the five organizations

According to the time-tables in force at the moment of writing, the next medium-term plans of the five organizations should be submitted for the period 1978/1983 by WHO and the ILO, for 1976/1981 by FAO, for 1976/1979 by the United Nations and for 1977/1982 by UNESCO. As has already been seen, there is no unity of doctrine in the organizations regarding these documents, nor is the importance attached to the operation the same in each organization. For at least two of them, it is a purely formal exercise which must in no way affect the orientation of their activities. In other organizations, on the contrary, a deeply probing review is already under way. All that has been said in this report is designed to obtain not only a harmonization of methods but also a series of profound changes in the conception of programmes of activities, changes which presuppose an important preparatory phase.<sup>1/</sup> It is therefore advisable:

- that all the organizations should adopt a harmonized time-table of work and the same types of preliminary reports;
- that to facilitate this they should choose the same period for their next plans.

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<sup>1/</sup> An "inter-agency prior consultation" procedure on the subject of programmes and plans at present exists, but it does not yet seem to have led to any searching exchanges of views on the contents of, or on the interrelations between, the programmes themselves.

The choice of the period 1978/1983 would seem convenient, because the four years from 1974 to 1977 could then be used for preparatory work which might include (besides the harmonization of programme budgets) the launching of the country studies, the consolidated reports suggested for the various levels, the preparation, in particular, of the "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives" and, lastly, a series of methodological, experimental or organizational experimental studies. The choice of the period 1978/1983 would not give rise to any difficult problems except for UNESCO, whose biennial programme budgeting and six-year medium-term planning cycles begin with odd-numbered years. These difficulties, however, do not appear to be insurmountable and it is highly desirable that UNESCO should have the same programming periods as all the other big organizations.

168. Instructions which could be contemplated immediately

If the proposals contained in the present report were accepted, it would not be essential to carry out additional research before deciding to begin the country studies or even to prepare the various consolidated documents suggested. It will be for the programming services which already exist in most of the organizations<sup>1/</sup> to formulate the necessary draft instructions, but it should be understood that all the services to which these instructions are to be addressed should take part also in formulating them, for the system to be worked out is an extremely complex one that will include an agreement on methodology, the establishment of time-tables and, above all, a sharing out of work, after agreement with UNDP, among resident representatives, regional services and the substantive divisions themselves at the headquarters of the organizations. It should also be borne in mind that the difficulties of preparing country studies will probably vary considerably from one division to another. Lastly, since the preparation of country studies will naturally be followed by that of consolidated documents, it might be advisable to undertake the preparation of the latter documents as soon as possible, directly the first country studies are available, so as to pin-point the difficulties and define the resultant requirements as regards the actual conception of country studies and the lacunae discovered in the collection of basic data. A permanent dialogue should therefore be initiated, as far as possible in an ordered manner, among the various recipients; and it is from this dialogue that a body of doctrine may gradually emerge.

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<sup>1/</sup> These services are still embryonic in some of them, and the backwardness of the United Nations in this respect seems particularly unfortunate.

169. Studies to be undertaken

It has been suggested that, besides the fundamental work of preparing the country studies and the consolidated reports that are essential for their utilization, methodological or experimental studies should be undertaken, as well as studies on broadening the conception of the International Development Strategy. The preparatory period proposed in paragraph 67 above should provide an opportunity for carrying out the more important of these activities. In particular, a decision could be taken to start very soon:

the study on the harmonization of programme budgets (approximate time-limit of one year; to be undertaken by the programming services of the big organizations and of UNDP; a co-ordinator should be appointed); and also

the experimental in-depth studies and diagnoses for a number of volunteering countries (negotiations among the organizations and with the countries concerned, secondment of specialists, supplementary financing of field missions from extra-budgetary funds, definition of a common methodology; to be undertaken in each organization by the heads of big substantive departments; a time-limit of two years may be considered (see paragraph 154 above);

the studies on analogies and typologies (paragraph 155 above; organization of multidisciplinary teams to be formed for dealing with certain topics selected on an experimental basis; time-limits varying according to topic; to be undertaken by the heads of big substantive departments);

a special report on the possibility of enlarging the International Development Strategy for the 1980s could also be prepared by an interagency team which would be instructed to consult Governments on the subject (paragraphs 159 to 161 above);

lastly, provision might also be made for studies intended specifically for the preparatory period but not yet mentioned in this report, particularly as regards methods of quantifying objectives in relation to the evaluation studies already undertaken (this work could be entrusted to consultants), as well as experimental studies on the formulation of alternative solutions in certain carefully selected fields to provide models for later use in connexion with the "proposed medium-term intermediate stages" as a whole. On this second point also, it might be advisable to employ outside consultants.

170. Selection of a time-table for the preparatory work

This vast scheme of preparatory work - country studies, consolidated reports, methodological or experimental studies - cannot be undertaken haphazardly. Nor is it possible, in view of the considerable number of officials from the secretariats of the various organizations who will be taking part, and the supervision that will have to be exercised by the governing bodies over the progress of the operations as a whole, to lay down a strict programme for the preparatory work right at the beginning of 1974. It would on the other hand be advisable to lay down from the start a number of principles, to designate those who will be involved and, above all, to devise a procedure for continuous surveillance and adjustment of the various operations. In this connexion, the meetings of programme planning officers recommended by ACC in its report of 25 April 1973 should as far as possible be held at regular intervals, every six months for example, and a co-ordinator should be appointed so that as soon as possible a fairly precise time-table can be prepared and observed.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

171. The first stage

The need for a more rational and clearer presentation of the activities of the international organizations has led to the gradual adoption of programming and planning methods in the course of a development which began very early (in some cases as far back as 1945). This movement has speeded up considerably in the last few years, which have been marked by the adoption of two-year programme budgets by the United Nations and WHO, the general use of medium-term outline plans, and the introduction of country programming by UNDP. Now, at the end of 1973, there is reason to believe that an important stage has been reached; but before these efforts to achieve clarification, better adaptation of means to ends and the attainment of greater effectiveness are continued, it seems necessary to sum the situation up.

172. Programme budgets

On balance, experience with the two-year programme budgets has been fairly satisfactory. Despite the differences between the five organizations in methods of presentation and the failure to establish really clear-cut objectives and plans of work, the design and presentation of this kind of document do come close to satisfying the basic requirements of the organizations' governing bodies. The organization that still has furthest to go in this direction is certainly the United Nations, which has just submitted its first programme budget. There is reason to believe, however, that decisive improvements can soon be made and methods of presentation harmonized. It is recommended that the five organizations concerned should embark upon this task without delay and that, in particular:



the greatest importance should be attached to the description of the plans of work corresponding to each programme or sub-programme; and identical criteria, quantified as far as possible, should be adopted for establishing the results to be obtained in research, training, the promotion of ideas and standards, technical co-operation, etc.;

an exact description should be given of the way in which extra-budgetary funds are used in relation to the organizations' regular programmes; and their combined use should be explained in an annex setting forth the organizations' programmes of activities by country;

the terminology, presentation of manning tables, principal annexes, etc., should be harmonized.

These measures would be a decisive step forward in inter-agency co-operation and in relations between the agencies and UNDP, as well as towards obtaining a conspectus of the activities of the five principal organizations in the United Nations system. They should be the subject of a joint report by the programming services of the five organizations and UNDP, and should not require more than two years to be put into force.

### 173. Medium-term plans

So far as concerns medium-term planning, on the other hand, it is clear from a review of the existing documentation that a satisfactory method of presentation, or even of defining the type of exercise to be undertaken, is still very far from having been found. The main difficulty, which none of the organizations has succeeded in overcoming, seems to be that of linking the general objectives established at the world level with the proposed practical activities, whether studies and research, publications and symposia, or operational projects, whose contribution to the solution of the problems tackled is obviously very marginal. There are extremely wide conceptual differences between the various experiments that have been carried out, whether as regards the degree of definition of the problems to be solved, the preciseness with which the general objectives are formulated, or the inclusion or exclusion of information on the financial evaluation of the means to be applied. The organizations are obviously still hesitating between the establishment of real six-year programme budgets and the drafting of a few pages indicating in vague terms the broad tenor of the programmes. Hence they have not yet decided what form these medium-term plans should take or what place should be given to them.

174. The reactions of the governing bodies

The reactions of the intergovernmental (or tripartite)<sup>1/</sup> committees of the different organizations bear out the foregoing remarks; programme budgets have been adopted in general but there is thought to be room for improvement, and there are very serious misgivings on the subject of medium-term planning. WHO has decided to embark on highly detailed preparatory work, which means that it will be several years before the first plan can be submitted, while the General Conference of UNESCO has decided to stagger the preparation of its next medium-term plan over four years, first asking the Secretariat to submit an analysis of the principal world problems. The Conference of FAO, which faces insurmountable difficulties in defining its priorities, for want of any real control over the use of the extra-budgetary funds which account for more than three-quarters of its activities as an organization basically geared to the work of technical co-operation, has reduced the planning exercise to a short statement on objectives. CPC and ACABQ for their part have unequivocally expressed their doubts about the current notion of the planning exercise entertained by the United Nations Secretariat. Lastly, the ILO Governing Body is continuing with its third planning experiment, at the same time asking itself a number of fundamental questions.

175. Country programming

The country programming venture which has been pursued by UNDP quite independently of the organizations' medium-term programming exercises has not yielded really satisfactory results either. Despite the strenuous efforts made, no rational and coherent link seems to have been established between the analytical diagnosis of the economic and social situation in each country and the list of projects drawn up within the limits of the appropriations made for it (the "indicative planning figure"). Most of the countries concerned have themselves drawn attention to the deceptiveness of these attempts.

176. Programme content

An examination of the content of the five organizations' programmes will reveal the full complexity of the problem of programming such a varied body of activities.

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<sup>1/</sup> In the case of the ILO.

The stages of advancement reached in defining the problems which the international community undertakes to deal with through the different organizations are very unequal. While broad agreement seems to have been attained fairly easily on health problems, thus enabling WHO to establish its priorities and objectives without undue difficulty, agreement on socio-cultural and political plans is much harder to realize in the other organizations' fields of action, whether they relate to education, science, labour, industry or agriculture. A quick glance at the programmes as a whole brings out the following main points:

the differences existing between the "profiles" of the different organizations,<sup>1/</sup> notably the primary concern with technical co-operation in FAO, WHO and UNIDO; the efforts to strike a balance between operational and traditional activities in UNESCO and the ILO; the pre-eminently research-office characteristics of UNCTAD and the secretariats of the United Nations regional economic commissions; and, lastly, the rather pronounced compartmentalization in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs of technical co-operation activities, study and research activities aimed essentially at the definition of a general framework of principles and methods, and the launching of new activities;

the importance of technical co-operation compared with other kinds of activity - out of a total of just over \$930 million annually available<sup>2/</sup> to the five organizations, the sum accounted for by programmable social and economic activities is about \$650 million, three-quarters of which (\$500 million) are for technical co-operation activities and the remaining quarter is roughly halved between, on the one hand, general studies and research on the international framework of economic and social principles and methods and, on the other hand, specific studies and activities oriented towards technical co-operation in the broad sense;

the marked stability in the distribution of funds to technical co-operation activities, health being ranked first with 25 per cent, followed by agriculture with 20 per cent, and at a considerable distance, by education (general and scientific) and industry, with 10 per cent each; the structure of the existing system for establishing priorities in the apportionment of funds among the

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<sup>1/</sup> Including relatively autonomous bodies such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, the regional economic commissions, etc.

<sup>2/</sup> Figures for 1974.

organizations, or even within each of them, has not been changed for some years save in a few respects and then only to a very slight extent;

the predominance and wide dispersion of "studies and research" among the "other activities" in the regular programmes of the organizations;

the well-known tendency of work programmes towards proliferation and continuous expansion is still raising serious problems, owing to the organizations' limited capacity.

177. The "descriptive estimates" (devis préalables)

The choice of problems, priorities and objectives cannot be made in a logical sequence by the governing bodies except in the rare instances in which a broad basis of agreement has existed for some time. In most cases a correct choice of problems, priorities and objectives can be made only if they are considered together in the light of "descriptive estimates" prepared by the secretariats and giving, for each of the substantive divisions' fields of competence, a very precise account of the situation and its development prospects, existing problems, the real possibilities of taking effective steps to solve them, and the estimated cost of the different measures that come into consideration. The estimates should conclude with "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives" at various possible levels of action.

178. A new pattern of relationships between policy-making committees and secretariats

Through the systematic use of such estimates, it should be possible, for the purposes of a better definition of problems, priorities and objectives, to change the present pattern of relationships between the secretariats and the intergovernmental (or tripartite in the case of the ILO) committees which govern the various organizations. The introduction of medium-term planning should lead to the replacement of the present three-step pattern (adoption of resolutions, establishment of work programmes, adoption of budgets) by a slightly more complex pattern which would first of all establish a clear distinction between, on the one hand, determining the order of magnitude of the medium-term appropriation limits "enveloppes financières" and, on the other hand, drawing up the contents of programmes. If the appropriations available are determined in advance and independently of the programmes, a procedure for defining priorities can be brought into play. It might consist of selecting from a series of numbered proposals, together representing an expenditure far greater than the amount of the appropriations provided for, the ones which should be maintained, curtailed or eliminated. This would result in a five-step pattern (determination of

appropriations for the planning period; proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives; selection of problems, priorities and objectives leading to a plan; programme budget; evaluation) which would be much more satisfactory both in theory and in practice.

179. A system of complementary decisions

The existence of different decision-making processes in the matter of technical co-operation nevertheless complicates to some extent the pattern proposed above, for it would appear essential to establish a certain degree of complementarity between, on the one hand, the decisions or recommendations of the governing bodies of the organizations and the Governing Council of UNDP and, on the other hand, the recommendations of the regional committees and decisions taken at the world level. This presupposes the establishment by the secretariats of an information and documentation system capable of providing the governing bodies with all the data they need for the formation of coherent decisions. In other words, the governing bodies of the organizations, the Governing Council of UNDP and the regional committees should have at their disposal consolidated descriptive documents containing all the data on technical co-operation problems, so that they can take decisions in their respective areas of competence and make recommendations on related and neighbouring areas. A precise time-table should also be drawn up to facilitate communication of the recommendations or decisions in good time to the bodies concerned. The importance to be attached in these procedures to recommendations at the regional level on problems, priorities and objectives cannot be overemphasized. The volume of work to be undertaken and the length of the joint time-table for medium-term plan preparation and country programming would seem to indicate the need for the establishment of fixed-horizon plans, for an effort of such scope cannot be repeated too often.

180. To reduce "marginality"

A mere adjustment of procedures will not, however, be sufficient to solve the problems resulting from the marginality of operational activities in connexion with technical co-operation, and from the inadequacies noted in carrying out the resolutions and recommendations of the international organizations' governing bodies. By making it necessary to relate precisely-defined objectives to the means required for attaining them, the programming and planning exercises have in fact revealed the weaknesses inherent in the methods themselves. To fit the means to the ends, it seems undesirable to lower one's sights, and unrealistic to aim at swelling the available

means. It seems indispensable, on the contrary, to find out how to modernize the hitherto elementary methods of technical co-operation, reduce the present dispersal of research activities and, lastly, establish some degree of complementarity between the two types of activity.

181. Re-orientation of technical co-operation activities

The re-orientation of technical co-operation activities towards increased efficiency and closer adaptation to the capacity and function of the international organizations cannot be undertaken in an empirical fashion. Only through a rigorous method, based on a thorough knowledge of the economic and social situations in all the countries concerned and on efforts to discover any analogies that may exist between problems, will it be possible to discern the specialized areas of activity which may be appropriate for the international organizations and, at the same time, to obtain maximum effectiveness. This method, necessarily based on "country studies", is the same as that which will enable the secretariats to prepare the "descriptive estimates" which will make it possible to exercise rational choices, in other words the "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives" referred to above.

182. The "country studies"

The country studies could actually serve three purposes:

to facilitate the dissemination of better economic and social information through the publication of descriptive parts from the in-depth sectoral country studies and from consolidated studies (all sectors combined) for each country;

to help in the preparation, for countries whose Governments so request, of technical diagnoses by economic and social sector;

basically to provide the necessary raw material for the work of consolidation whose purpose it is to permit the distribution to the governing bodies of the organizations and UNDP of the information essential in the process of establishing medium-term plans and country programmes; and to contribute to the research which should lead to a new conception of technical co-operation by the international organizations and to a more precise definition of the international framework of principles and methods.

183. Information system and consolidated documents

The genuine information system which should thus be devised for the governing bodies of the organizations and of UNDP should comprise two series of documents which would be fed into two circuits. The first circuit should comprise the documents intended:

for the regional committees (especially the consolidated economic and social sectoral studies for each region);

for the governing body of each organization (recommendations of the regional committees' summaries of decisions on appropriation limits and, in particular, proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives for the substantive divisions<sup>1/</sup>);

for the Governing Council of UNDP (especially the reports of the regional offices of UNDP on the technical co-operation policy recommended after consultation with governments).

Through exchanges between the governing bodies of recommendations and information on decisions taken, it would be possible to draw up a final general programme of technical co-operation for the United Nations system, which might be broken down into country programmes and also integrated by sections in the organizations' medium-term plans.

184. In-depth studies and efforts to find analogies

The second circuit to be followed by these country studies is intended to provide a scientific basis for the re-orientation of the technical co-operation activities of the international organizations with a view to greater effectiveness. It should comprise:

firstly, experimental in-depth studies and diagnoses for a number of volunteering countries, undertaken for methodological purposes and at the same time with a view to making a fundamental contribution to the development of the countries concerned;

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<sup>1/</sup> The possible content of these "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives", which are of fundamental importance for the preparation of the plans of the organizations, is described in paragraphs 156 and 157 of the report under the following titles: general description of the situation; historical background, existing methodology and effectiveness thresholds; consideration of long-term strategy; definition of the various types of possible objectives and sharing of responsibilities.

secondly, studies undertaken by teams of specialists of any analogies that may exist between the economic and social problems of the various countries, the establishment of typologies, and the formulation of appropriate solutions.

185. Indicative World Plan by sector and Ten-year Regional Indicative Plans

The decision-making pattern proposed for technical-co-operation activities financed from extra-budgetary funds, is usable, mutatis mutandis, for a large number of other activities financed from the organizations' regular programmes. Study and research activities aimed at the definition at the world level of a general framework of principles and methods in economic and social matters should be given special treatment, however. This type of research, directed towards the most general problems, is becoming increasingly important in the programmes of all the large organizations; in addition, through systematization of the regional approach to questions of this type, it might be possible to achieve a degree of definition much closer to the preoccupations of national planners. In these circumstances, it would not seem unreasonable to consider using the framework for the preparation of the International Development Strategy for the 1980s as a guiding structure for these activities as a whole, with each organization being given the responsibility for preparing Indicative World Plans for the economic and social sectors within its competence, and the regional committees the responsibility for preparing Ten-year Regional Indicative Plans. All these documents would be designed for integration in the Strategy.

186. Convergence

The re-orientations proposed above as regards technical co-operation and as regards studies and research would make it possible to achieve a better convergence of these two categories of activity, for the common basis provided by the country studies would necessitate complementarity between the activities of the various secretariats and between the recommendations and decisions of the various governing bodies; and the important role allocated to the regional level would also have its effect.

187. Informal working meetings

On the whole, the investigations and attempts at solutions contained in this report suggest that there is no urgent need to solve the problem of modifying the "intergovernmental machinery"<sup>1/</sup> in order to ensure the coherent operation of the

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<sup>1/</sup> Cf. footnote at the beginning of chapter IX.



planning and programming system. It is essential on the other hand to speed up work on the dual series of questions which are thus put to the United Nations itself and to the United Nations system as a whole. It would seem that a step in that direction might be taken through the organization of informal working meetings, on the one hand of representatives of the governing bodies of the various organizations,<sup>1/</sup> on problems of harmonizing the presentation of programme budgets, and, on the other hand, of all the members of ACABQ and CPC, on the procedures for defining problems, priorities and objectives for the United Nations.

188. The second stage

The launching of the second stage in the construction of a programming system, if the methodological proposals contained in this report were retained, might comprise:

the selection of a common period for the medium-term plans of the five organizations (the period 1978-1983 would seem to be the most convenient);

the use of the preparatory period 1974-1977 for doing the fundamental preliminary work (country studies and consolidated documents) and for carrying out a number of methodological or experimental studies, all these activities to be conducted according to an exact time-table.

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<sup>1/</sup> And, in the case of the United Nations, of ACABQ and CPC.

II. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

[These eight recommendations are addressed to the five organizations and to UNDP] 1/

189. Recommendation No.I

Harmonization of programme budget presentation

On the basis of the suggestions contained in paragraphs 33 and 34 of the report, it is recommended that:

the necessary work should be undertaken to improve programme budget presentation;

interagency negotiations should be conducted for the purpose of harmonizing the presentation of these documents.

In particular, a report should be prepared jointly by the secretariats of the organizations and UNDP and submitted, if possible before the end of 1974, to their governing bodies (and, in the case of the United Nations, to ACABQ and CPC). In the case of UNDP, this recommendation concerns the administrative budget.

190. Recommendation No.II

Country studies

- (1) "Country studies" which fulfil the prerequisites of preciseness, uniformity and continuous bringing-up-to-date described in paragraph 149 of the report should be systematically undertaken in the five organizations and UNDP, for all of the economic and social sectors within their particular fields of competence, and used as the basis for a system of information indispensable to the governing bodies in taking their programme decisions.
- (2) Negotiations should be undertaken with a view to arriving at an apportionment of the preparatory work among the various echelons - local (resident representatives), regional and central - in each organization, among the organizations themselves, and in UNDP. A time-table should also be

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1/ See on this subject the concluding remarks (para. 197).

prepared, specifying the dates for publication of the various preparatory documents and for transmittal to the departments responsible for the work of consolidation.

- (3) The documents to be prepared should include:

country studies by economic and social sector exhibiting the very high degree of precision required for the work of consolidation and for the programming exercises;

consolidated country studies (for all sectors combined), giving a general view of the economic and social sectors in each country.

- (4) In agreement with the countries concerned, a system should be worked out for publishing the descriptive portions of the sectoral and consolidated country studies.
- (5) Special arrangements should be studied for keeping all the documents regularly and systematically up to date.
- (6) An information system should be developed so that the results of this work are at all times available to and usable by all departments in the secretariats of the organizations and UNDP and the members of the competent governing bodies.

191. Recommendation No. III

Consolidated country studies and "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives"

- (1) Documents consolidating the sectoral country studies should be prepared for submission to the governing bodies of the organizations and UNDP, and to the regional committees or councils. In paragraph 153 of the report will be found a list of such documents, which should include consolidated papers by economic and social sector for each region, the "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives" for the substantive departments, the reports of the UNDP Regional Bureaux, etc.
- (2) The documents termed "proposed medium-term intermediate-stage objectives" should be prepared on the basis of the suggestions contained in paragraphs 156 and 157 of the report.

192. Recommendation No.IV

Introduction of a new system of information and decision-making in connexion with appropriation limits and programme content (relationship between medium-term plans, programme budgets and country programming)

- (1) The competent governing bodies of the five organizations and UNDP should consider to what extent or in what form it would be possible to determine in advance, prior to considering programme content, the order of magnitude of the appropriation limits within which programme proposals could be made for the period of implementation of the plans (cf. paragraph 125 of the report).
- (2) A definite time-table should be drawn up jointly to enable the secretariats to prepare the necessary documents in due course and the governing bodies to exchange recommendations or inform each other of their respective decisions (cf. paragraphs 134-136 and 139 of the report).

193. Recommendation No.V

Studies regarding a new conception of the technical co-operation of the international organizations

Studies should be undertaken to determine what types of technical co-operation might be both most effective and most consistent with the aims and specific character of each of the international organizations. They should include:

experimental in-depth studies and diagnoses for a number of volunteering countries, undertaken jointly by the five organizations with the assistance of UNDP (cf. paragraph 154 of the report); and

consolidated studies designed to bring out any similarities between the types of problem encountered in the various countries and to devise solutions which the international organizations could adopt for meeting the most widespread and urgent needs thus revealed (cf. paragraph 155 of the report).

194. Recommendation No.VI

Comprehensive reorientation of studies and on the international framework of principles and methods. Review of the conception of the International Development Strategy for the 1980s

On the basis of the proposals and suggestions contained in paragraphs 159 to 161 of the report, a joint study should be carried out for submission to the Economic and

Social Council and to the governing bodies of the five organizations and UNDP, indicating what possibilities would be afforded, for a reorientation of research on the international framework of principles and methods, by the use of the International Development Strategy for the 1980s and the insertion in that document of Indicative World Plans by main economic and social sector and of Ten-Year Regional Indicative Plans.

195. Recommendation No.VII (cf. paragraphs 164 and 165 of the report)

Organization of informal working meetings between representatives of the various governing bodies to facilitate the study of two specific problems and permit a direct dialogue on the possibility of reorganizing the "intergovernmental machinery" 1/

It is suggested that it might be useful - for the study of two specific problems, and to permit a direct dialogue on the possibilities of reorganizing the "intergovernmental machinery" - to arrange informal meetings:

between representatives of all the governing bodies of the five organizations and UNDP to consider, among other things, a report on the harmonization of programme budget presentation;

between all the members of ACABQ and CPC to consider, so far as the United Nations itself is concerned, the procedures for defining problems, priorities and objectives.

196. Recommendation No.VIII

Selection of a common period for the medium-term plans of the five organizations, and adoption of a time-table for the preparatory work

- (1) Negotiations should be initiated among the five organizations to harmonize the dates and the duration of the period selected for their next medium-term plans (and, in the case of UNDP, of the country programming period). The most convenient period might well be 1978-1983.
- (2) UNESCO should consider the possibility and desirability of adopting periods beginning with even years for its programme budgets and plans, as in the other organizations.

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1/ See the footnote to the title of chapter IX.

- (3) The preparatory period which should result from such a choice<sup>1/</sup> should be sufficiently long to allow for the completion of important work, including in particular:
- (a) the preparation of the first set of sectoral country studies (cf. recommendation No.II);
  - (b) the preparation of the consolidated documents referred to in recommendation No.III;
  - (c) the methodological and experimental studies concerning the reorientation of technical co-operation (recommendation No.V) and the reorientation of studies and research (recommendation No.VI);
  - (d) the first trying-out of the system for preparing medium-term plans and a general programme of technical co-operation in accordance with a definite time-table to be drawn up in conformity with recommendation No.IV.

197. Concluding remarks

The aim of the above recommendations is the establishment of principles, a fairly precise definition of the main features of the solutions which seem to me to be desirable, the tightening up of working methods and the streamlining of activities as a whole. This is certainly not an easy task: it will probably sometimes be considered too ambitious, the outcome of an analysis more logical than practical, in short, something too remote from the international organizations' shifting and complex reality and from their capacity to perform. The question will also be asked in some quarters, to what extent such efforts will be backed by the political will of the member States.

The observations I am prompted to make by such considerations are the following:

The purpose of a report like this is above all to propose an outline that may serve as a basis for work in the secretariats and policy-making committees which will lead to definitive solutions. If it is to have any consistency or render the services that may rightly be expected of it, if it is to provoke

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<sup>1/</sup> If the plan were to commence in 1978, the preparatory period would cover four years, i.e. 1974-1977 inclusive.

specific and really useful reactions, such an outline must be somewhat categorical and must even have a certain rigidity.

It matters relatively little if more time than was anticipated is needed for carrying out the recommendations which may be approved, or if not everything can be done at once: the main thing here is not to keep to a time-table, but to define and adopt an action programme that can mobilize energetic support.

The internal coherence which has been sought in the general plan here proposed in no way implies that these recommendations form an indivisible whole. On the contrary, I believe that the implementation, even partial, of any one of them should make for progress in the international organizations' performance and efficiency; that in turn would strengthen the member States' confidence in these organizations, thus initiating a cumulative beneficial process.

A final point which I would like to stress is that adoption of the methods here proposed should not involve additional expenditure: the "country studies" in particular should not constitute a kind of complementary activity - on the contrary, they should be carried out in most of the organizations by means of a redeployment (which I consider absolutely indispensable) of the substantive divisions' present activities.

ANNEXES

- I - STAGES IN THE ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING SYSTEM IN FOUR AGENCIES,  
THE UNITED NATIONS AND UNDP
  
- II - COMPARISON OF THE DEGREE OF PRECISION WITH WHICH THE OBJECTIVES ARE STATED  
IN THE THREE PROGRAMME BUDGETS OF UNESCO, THE ILO AND FAO



## ANNEX I

## STAGES IN THE ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING SYSTEM IN FOUR AGENCIES, THE UNITED NATIONS AND UNDP

ORGANIZATION	ADOPTION OF PROGRAMME BUDGETING	ADOPTION OF BIENNIAL BUDGET	MEDIUM-TERM PLAN OR COUNTRY PROGRAMMING
<u>UNESCO</u>	<p><u>1951</u> General Conference, 6th session, resolution 12.1</p> <p>1953-1954</p> <p>7.C/5: Draft programme and budget for 1953-1954</p>	<p><u>1951</u> General Conference, 6th session, resolution 43.15</p> <p>1953-1954</p> <p>7.C/5</p>	<p><u>1968</u> General Conference, 15th session resolution 33.1 of 16 November 1968</p> <p><u>1970</u> General Conference, 16th session, resolution 42 of 14 November 1970</p> <p>1971-1976</p> <p>16.C/4: Long-term outline plan for 1971-1976, followed by document 17.C/4: Draft medium-term outline plan for 1973-1978.</p>
<u>FAO</u>	<p><u>1952</u> 16th session of the Executive Council (Nov. 1952), approval of the Director-General's proposals</p> <p>1953</p> <p>Programme of work and budget for 1953</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In 1969, at the 15th session of the General Conference, a new type of presentation by programme was adopted. The first document of this type is C.71/3: "Programme of work and budget for 1972-1973".</p>	<p><u>1957</u> General Conference, 9th session, resolution 57/57</p> <p>1958-1959</p> <p>Programme of work and budget for 1958-1959</p>	<p><u>1969</u> General Conference, resolution 9/69 of 27 November 1969</p> <p>1972-1977</p> <p>C.71/5: Medium-term plan for the period 1972-1977, followed by C.73/10 (August 1973): "Medium-term objectives".</p>
<u>ILO</u>	<p><u>1966</u> General Conference, 50th session, approval of the report of the Director-General</p> <p>1967</p> <p>Programme and budget for the year 1967</p>	<p><u>1968</u> General Conference, resolution 13 of 2 June 1968</p> <p>1970-1971</p> <p>Programme and budget for the biennium 1970-1971</p>	<p><u>1970</u> Consideration of the first document by the Governing Body</p> <p>1972-1977</p> <p>GB/180/FA/6/4, 180th session, Geneva, May-June 1970, Draft long-term plan for the period 1972-1977; followed by document GB/185/FA/13/16, 185th session, Geneva, February-March 1972, Draft long-term plan for the period 1974-1979.</p>

ANNEX I (continued)

ORGANIZATION	ADOPTION OF PROGRAMME BUDGETING	ADOPTION OF BIENNIAL BUDGET	MEDIUM-TERM PLAN OR COUNTRY PROGRAMMING
<p><u>WHO</u></p> <p>Date of decision</p> <p>First period concerned</p> <p>Name of document</p>	<p><u>1972</u> World Health Assembly, resolution WHA 25.23</p> <p>1975</p> <p>Programme and budget estimates for 1975 (in preparation)</p>	<p><u>1972</u> World Health Assembly, resolution WHA 25.24</p> <p>1973</p> <p>WHA/26/27 (amendment of the Constitution) and WHA/26/38: beginning of the biennial budget for 1976/1977 (but WHA will approve the appropriations each year)</p>	<p><u>Note:</u> No decision seems to have been taken concerning the adoption of a genuine medium-term plan, but WHO has been producing since 1952 "General programmes of work for a specific period" (article 28 (g) of the Constitution of WHO). Five such programmes have so far been considered: 1952-1956; 1957-1961; 1962-1966; 1967-1971 and 1973-1977.</p>
<p><u>United Nations</u></p> <p>Date of decision</p> <p>First period concerned</p> <p>Name of document</p>	<p><u>1972</u> General Assembly resolution 3043 (XXVII) of 19 December 1972</p> <p>1974-1975</p> <p>Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975</p>	<p><u>1972</u> General Assembly resolution 3043 (XXVII) of 19 December 1972</p> <p>1974-1975</p> <p>Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975</p>	<p><u>1972</u> The part of the same resolution relating to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1429) and the ACABQ report (A/8739)</p> <p>1974-1977</p> <p>A/9006/Add.1 - Medium-term plan for the period 1974-1977.</p>
<p><u>UNDP</u></p> <p>Date of decision</p> <p>First period concerned</p> <p>Name of document</p>	<p><u>1971</u> Part III of the administrative budget of UNDP has presented expenditure by objective (as well as by kind, in part II) since 1972 (Governing Council, June 1971, E/5043/Rev.1, para. 207).</p>	<p>The administrative budget of UNDP continues to be presented on an annual basis.</p>	<p><u>1970</u> Governing Council, 10th session, 30 June 1970, adoption of the "Consensus", in particular paragraphs 2-20, and the United Nations General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970.</p> <p>Period 1972-1976</p> <p>Application to 35 countries in 1972 and to 47 countries in 1973 (82 documents, 1 per country).</p>

ANNEX II

COMPARISON OF THE DEGREE OF PRECISION WITH WHICH THE OBJECTIVES ARE STATED  
IN THE THREE PROGRAMME BUDGETS OF UNESCO, THE ILO AND FAO

1. Statement of relationships between the immediate objectives of the work plan and

Medium-term prospects:

UNESCO : Generally not in the budget.

ILO : Yes, broadly speaking.

FAO : A special paragraph is devoted to it in each sub-programme.

Most recent accomplishments (preceding financial period):

UNESCO : Sporadically

ILO : Fairly frequently.

FAO : A special paragraph in each sub-programme is devoted to accomplishments in the preceding period.

ANNEX II (continued)

2. Nature of the particulars supplied concerning the objectives of the work plan

Activities	UNESCO	ILO	FAO
<u>Studies and research</u>			
Purpose	Yes, in a fairly precise way; titles of publications, subjects of studies.	Yes, explanations of objectives (rarely titles).	Yes, in a very summary way.
For whom intended	Yes, often; member States, conference working papers, publications etc.	Sometimes, not systematically.	Sometimes, not systematically.
Number of copies of documents publishing the results	No.	No.	No.
Time allowed for completion	Yes, often.	Resources in man/hours indicated but no specific time-limits.	No, duration taken to be the period covered by the budget.
Countries or regions concerned	Yes, in most cases.	Yes, where appropriate.	Yes, where appropriate.
<u>Training activities</u>			
Purpose	Yes.	It is extremely difficult to find any particulars of training activities in the budget.	Yes.
Training level	Not very precise.	-	No, save as implied by the definition.
Terminal date or duration	Seldom.	-	No.
Nature of the beneficiaries	Vague or not indicated.	-	No, e.g. organization of a seminar, without further details.
Number of beneficiaries (or results)	No, with a few rare exceptions.	-	No.

ANNEX II (continued)

Activities	UNESCO	ILO	FAO
<u>Communication, or promotion of ideas</u>			
Subject	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Means of circulation or communication	Usually indicated.	Information given.	Information given.
Kind of public aimed at (where appropriate)	Yes, in the case of publications indication of the categories of the public (A B <sup>1</sup> B <sup>2</sup> B <sup>3</sup> ) in an annex.	Yes, in a general, rather vague, way.	No.
Size of this public, where appropriate	No.	No.	No.
Number of copies of publications	No.	No.	No.
<u>Field activities</u>			
Number of projects (per programme or sub-programme)	Yes.	Indication of an order of magnitude for the budget as a whole in para. 535 (major programme 100). <u>1/</u>	Yes.
Titles (or aims) of projects	Yes, very often.	No.	No.
Number of experts per project	Yes, usually	No.	Yes, by group of projects under a given sub-programme.
Terminal dates	Yes, generally.	No.	No.
Countries or regions	Yes)	No.	Sometimes.
Information supplied on regular-programme activities	Yes) of the same kind	Yes, in theory.	Yes) of the same kind
Information supplied on extra-budgetary programme activities	Yes)	No.	Yes)

1/ The reasons for the systematically negative attitude of the ILO in this respect are given in an explanatory note preceding the budget (para. 55-60).