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BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1972

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Note by the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has received from the Secretary-General the comments by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on the "Report on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs" by Mr. Robert M. Macy, a member of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/8446, annex II). The Committee transmits them herewith to the General Assembly.

COMMENTS BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. The Administrator has studied Mr. Macy's report with great interest and care in so far as it relates to the relationship of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He wishes to make the following comments, which have particular reference to section II of the report, entitled "Co-ordinating role".

(a) Programme co-ordination at the country level  
(A/8446, annex II, paras. 30-32)

2. Under this heading, Mr. Macy predicts an increasing need on the part of Governments for advice on the programming of all their external aid, and he makes the specific suggestion that some of the United Nations planning advisers at present assigned to developing countries should be appointed to Resident Representatives' offices on the same basis as the existing UNDP/FAO and UNDP/UNIDO appointments.

3. The Administrator is aware that a need for planning advice, whether to Governments or Resident Representatives or both, as a basis for the country programming of UNDP assistance already exists in a number of countries. The need is likely to increase as UNDP country programming becomes more sophisticated and also better co-ordinated with the programming of other external aid inputs. The magnitude and nature of the need for advice will vary from country to country and from time to time, and may be expected to be most pronounced in the case of the least developed of the developing countries.

4. Competent and acceptable planning expertise is known to be in short supply. The Administrator is naturally concerned that the best expertise that is available from any feasible source should be obtained when needed, whether for the purposes of the UNDP country programming as such or as technical assistance to Governments in a broader sense. For programming purposes, he can at present draw on the following sources:

(a) The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office

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at Beirut, under whose auspices the interregional and regional planning advisers and the first of the new development advisory teams are functioning;

(b) Existing country planning advisers provided under technical assistance, on an ad hoc basis, where appropriate;

(c) The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, through its country economic survey missions, where appropriate or, in selected countries, through advisers whom the Bank has agreed to provide on an ad hoc basis;

(d) The specialized agencies, in the case of sectoral planning advice;

(e) Outside consultants as required.

5. The Administrator is conscious of the desirability of better co-ordination of the use of existing resources in this field and foresees a likely need for the development, in pace with the increasing demand for advisory services, of more systematic arrangements with the United Nations in particular. He is ready to explore further with the Under-Secretary-General the means of establishing such arrangements between UNDP, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional economic commissions, including the possibility of attaching planning advisers to the offices of Resident Representatives in selected countries or for groups of countries.

(b) Country profiles (A/8446, annex II, paras. 37-40)

6. With the introduction of the "country approach" to the programming of technical assistance, Mr. Macy foresees a greater need for carefully prepared profiles of each developing country, and proposes that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should assemble these profiles.

7. At the outset of the new country programming system, the Administrator recognized that it would be essential that there should be available to all the participants in UNDP programming in each country - the Government, UNDP, the participating organizations and, where appropriate, other assistance programmes - a common set of basic background data. He considered that, for practical reasons, this data should initially be assembled within the country and be so structured as to permit the Resident Representative to accept responsibility for preparing it, in collaboration with the Government, in the form of a background paper.

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8. This background paper would contain, according to a broadly conceived format, the data required to give the participants an adequate understanding of:

(a) The country's over-all economic and social situation and its possibilities of and constraints on development; its sectoral objectives and priorities, the main development activities being undertaken or planned in order to achieve them, the needs for external assistance arising from them and the domestic and external inputs required and available; and

(b) The existing role of the United Nations system in general and the UNDP in particular, and the adequacy, effectiveness and relevance of that role in the perspective of the development objectives, priorities and needs of the country, over-all and by sectors.

9. It is important to note, however, that the Resident Representatives have been advised that the preparation of the background paper does not necessarily call for independent research and/or an independent analysis of the country's development situation on the part of the Resident Representatives or the United Nations system as a whole. The background paper should reflect the Government's view of the country's development situation, and should provide an assessment of its over-all technical assistance and pre-investment needs. It may also include appropriate conclusions and recommendations arising from external economic surveys, sectoral and/or intersectoral studies and the like. In addition, however, it will include an objective evaluation or assessment of ongoing and recently completed activities supported by UNDP.

10. The Administrator is aware that, as the information requirements become more sophisticated and as the need develops on the part of Governments for "country profiles" as a basis for identifying all their external assistance requirements and for other purposes - for example, as a basis for the reviews of progress in the Second United Nations Development Decade - greater professional support for the Resident Representatives in this matter will become necessary. He regards this as another area in which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, among others, can be of assistance and he will consult the Under-Secretary-General accordingly.