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REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Selected ideas for improving field operations (E/4792)

Addendum

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

1. The Secretary-General has read with great interest Mr. Macy's "Report on selected ideas for improving field operations". Mr. Macy's comments and suggestions concern a number of significant elements which are basic to the technical co-operation processes of the United Nations system. These elements have also been the object of a thorough examination during the course of the UNDP Capacity Study, whose findings and recommendations are being considered by the Governing Council of the UNDP, as well as by the members of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board. Mr. Macy's comments and suggestions should prove a useful asset in this context.
2. The Secretary-General fully agrees with Mr. Macy's observation that "there are continuing opportunities to assist the Governments of developing countries to improve their over-all economic planning and programming. Such improvements should not only strengthen the Governments' development efforts, but provide a strong basis for identifying priority areas for United Nations technical assistance." In the light of its responsibilities for fields of activity which are basic to the planning and programming processes, the United Nations has devoted considerable and increasing attention to assisting Governments in planning and programming. While the Secretary-General supports Mr. Macy's recommendations that the planning and programming capabilities at the sectoral or technical ministry level must be strengthened and that the agencies concerned should provide the necessary assistance towards that end, he believes that it represents

only part of the effort which should be made. The capability of technical ministries is but one ingredient in the "mix" which is required. It is important that the planning and programming ability of both the technical ministries and the central planning bodies is strengthened.

3. In the field of planning and plan implementation the substantial experience gained to date by the United Nations has clearly shown that such basic assistance can best be provided on an interdisciplinary basis by experts who have intimate knowledge of the country and its problems and who are able to follow on a regular basis the progress being made. The UNDP Governing Council at its January 1970 session welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative in offering such services in the form of interdisciplinary development advisory teams, organized on a continuous basis, each responsible for a small cluster of countries. The actual size of the area which can be covered by each team would depend on the size and complexity of the countries involved, as well as their interrelationship. In any case, the number of countries covered by each team must be small enough to permit the team to give each country the continuous custom-made assistance it requires.

4. In broad terms, the function of these teams will be to provide the Governments they are serving with diagnosis, advice and assistance covering all aspects of the development planning and plan implementation process; to assist the Governments in defining their targets for the Second United Nations Development Decade; to assist the Governments and the UNDP resident representatives concerned in identifying and programming the countries' external technical co-operation needs and identifying possible sources of assistance; and to assist the Governments in formulating policies and programmes in relation to those set out by regional and subregional intergovernmental organs. It is envisaged that each team would be composed of six to eight full-time senior experts, possessing among them the basic skills necessary to carry out the above-mentioned functions, who would be supplemented as required by short-term experts. As the Secretary-General announced to the Governing Council, it is his intention to establish three teams in 1970 and an additional six teams in 1971.

5. The Secretary-General has read with great attention the observations and comments of Mr. Macy on the various aspects of counterpart training and fellowships. He believes that in the final analysis the most significant benefit of technical co-operation is the development of human resources and thus he fully

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appreciates the need to incorporate the training component more sensitively into the total development programme. With this in mind he has initiated, in co-operation with the UNDP and other organizations, a comprehensive study on training. The purpose of this study is to provide better means for assisting Governments to identify more sharply their training needs and to establish how and where these could best be provided. It is hoped that this study will also bring to light practical lessons which will be useful on a broad scale for planning training opportunities in a concerted manner and for improving the instruments for fulfilling these needs both in pedagogical and substantive terms.

6. On the question of equipment the Secretary-General shares Mr. Macy's concern. He believes that this is a subject which requires a comprehensive study, including the possibility of establishing a centralized purchasing system, as appropriate.

Mr. Macy's comments and recommendations pertaining to modern management methods, including reporting and network analysis are most pertinent. Both these matters will receive careful consideration in the context of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Capacity Study, as finally approved by Governments of Member States and the Governing Council.

Comments of the Executive Director of UNICEF

7. "Although the Inspector's report is addressed to the technical assistance programmes of the United Nations and the specialized agencies rather than to UNICEF, some of his observations are relevant to the UNICEF experience.

8. "As regards 'Planning and control' (E/4792, paras. 8-21), our experience generally confirms Mr. Macy's observations concerning the need for more effective liaison at the country level between those concerned with planning and with project preparation and execution. Partly for this reason, we are now helping to finance, on request, country conferences bringing together planners, senior administrators and professional people concerned especially with children. Although it is too early to judge the effectiveness of such conferences in full, initial results are promising and additional countries are requesting such assistance. We also share Mr. Macy's appreciation of the difficulties of 'horizontal co-ordination' (E/4792, para. 20). Because of its across-the-board interest in all the needs of children, UNICEF has been asked to help countries develop multisectoral projects,

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and is ready to continue this service. We are inclined to feel, however, that the future lies more with country or sub-country programmes of a multidisciplinary nature implemented along more or less the usual sectoral lines, as Mr. Macy suggests.

9. "On the subject of training (E/4792, paras. 24-44), it has been UNICEF's practice for many years to focus its aid on training within the developing countries and only exceptionally to provide fellowships for training abroad. This type of training is very much 'country identified' since it is not training as an end in itself but training for specific programme activities within the assisted country. For this purpose UNICEF has been able to provide not only equipment and supplies for training purposes but also honoraria for teaching staff and stipends for trainees. On the whole, we have found this an effective way to help countries build up their own institutions.
10. "On the subject of equipment (E/4792, paras. 45-49), we find ourselves in full agreement with Mr. Macy's cautioning against the provision of expensive and sophisticated equipment and also against the provision of equipment for purely balance-of-payment reasons. One measure which UNICEF has taken to guard against overly sophisticated equipment has been the preparation of what we call 'guide lists' related to major types of programmes in which we set down basic and adequate types of equipment to serve specific functions. These lists also help us to simplify our procurement programme.
11. "The establishment of maintenance and repair facilities (E/4792, para. 50) for vehicles and technical equipment has preoccupied UNICEF for many years. At Headquarters and at our regional office we have staff who are specifically responsible for helping the countries to create such maintenance facilities. This is not easy to do and we are far from satisfied with what we have been able to achieve. Nevertheless, many countries have gone a long way with help from UNICEF to create maintenance organizations.
12. "We have also read with interest Mr. Macy's remarks on the need for more centralized procurement within the United Nations family (E/4792, para. 55). The advantages of more co-ordinated procurement seem obvious and we fully support this suggestion. Pending further developments in brining about some kind of centralized procurement, UNICEF is prepared to make available its services to other agencies for the type of supplies we normally handle.

13. "Mr. Macy has also drawn attention to the need for adapting the form of United Nations aid to the level of development of a country and has proposed that three or four semi-developed countries should be selected for a study of the future role of United Nations aid (E/4792, recommendation 2). Here also we find ourselves in full agreement. For several years UNICEF has been trying to take what we call 'the country approach' in working out our assistance programme in order to adapt our aid to the particular situation in each country."

Comments of the Administrator of UNDP

14. "The Administrator has taken note of the various ideas put forward by the Inspector in this Report with great interest. While recognizing that a number of the comments and proposals made by Mr. Macy are of relevance to the Programme, the Administrator believes that it would be preferable to withhold his comments at the present time in view of impending discussions by the Inter-Agency Consultative Board and the Governing Council on the Capacity Study."



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REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Selected ideas for improving field operations

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE
AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

1. The report by Mr. R.M. Macy, a member of the Joint Inspection Unit, dated October 1969, on selected ideas for improving field operations (E/4792), was received by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from the Secretary-General, together with his own observations (E/4792/Add.1), in April 1970. In accordance with the procedure outlined in the Committee's seventh report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session (A/7738), the two papers under reference were immediately transmitted to the Economic and Social Council secretariat for issuance as Council documents (E/4792 and Add.1).
2. Mr. Macy's report analyses some of the major difficulties encountered by the organizations in the United Nations system in their field operations, and the Committee believes that it deserves most careful consideration both by the competent intergovernmental organs and within the Secretariats, in conjunction with other studies of United Nations technical co-operation, in particular the Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System (DP/5).
3. In his report the Inspector lays stress on the need for a close relationship between the recipient Government and the executing agency if a technical co-operation project is to be crowned with success. This co-operation will naturally take different forms depending on the stage of development reached by the recipient country, but, as the Inspector states in his report, the most successful projects are usually those that were started by the country itself, and are thus strongly identified with the Government, rather than with a United Nations agency (E/4792, paras. 42-43); in this way they have good prospects for a stable future, whereas projects which are strongly identified with an agency or, a fortiori, with individual experts often end in failure. In the Advisory Committee's opinion, this conclusion is further evidence of the undesirability of project "salesmanship" by individual agencies.

4. Mr. Macy's report is based mainly on visits of inspection to several of the more advanced among the developing countries, where local trained personnel are available. In the circumstances, it is disturbing to read in his report that "the United Nations expert continues to draft nearly all project proposals and operating plans by himself instead of working with local experts as a team; and in many, perhaps most, cases to implement the projects with a minimum of counterpart training. This - the Inspector stresses - is not the way to help a developing country to become truly independent and self-reliant" (E/4792, para. 4). The Inspector goes on to express the view that "this situation will continue until real progress is made in strengthening the technical ministry as an institution to plan and control its own programmes and its foreign assistance projects"; so far, he observes, "the various United Nations executing agencies have not been very effective in helping technical ministries of developing countries to strengthen their capabilities to plan and carry out technical assistance activities". The Inspector's conclusion is that "what is needed is additional institution building within the technical ministries themselves, which will eventually open the door to such improvements as joint preparation of project requests and work programmes, a decrease in the time required to clear names or to get a fellowship programme under way, the timely appointment of suitable counterparts, joint evaluation of projects, better mobilization of internal resources to support a given project, and so on" (E/4792, para. 6). In this context the Inspector advocates the establishment within the technical ministries of units for programming and control of the ministries' technical assistance activities; in his view, country representatives of United Nations agencies who have an office right in the technical ministry can often help sell the idea of better planning and controls. In connexion with the above, the Advisory Committee would recall that some specialized agencies have had a tradition of very close co-operation with the counterpart technical ministries in the developing countries; to achieve maximum impact such co-operation between specialized agencies and technical ministries must be integrated in the country's over-all developing endeavours.

5. In his comments the Secretary-General states that the capability of technical ministries is but one ingredient of the optimum "mix", and that it is important to strengthen the planning and programming ability of both the technical ministries and the central planning bodies (E/4792/Add.1, para. 2). In his view, basic assistance in planning and plan implementation can best be provided on an interdisciplinary basis by experts who have intimate knowledge of the country and its problems and who are able to follow on a regular basis the progress being made: to that end the Secretary-General intends to establish three such interdisciplinary teams in 1970 and an additional six teams in 1971.

6. While the proposed teams should undoubtedly be useful, especially in the least developed countries, the concept still remains to be tested in practice. In this connexion it is relevant to recall that in Mr. Macy's view "continued close relationships with planning ministries is essential for achieving certain objectives, but is not an alternative to promotion of technical assistance planning and control of individual projects in technical ministries" (E/4792, para. 19). He recommends the establishment at the headquarters of the specialized agencies of organizational units on a geographical basis which would extend the

necessary help to the technical ministries. In this context it is noteworthy that the Capacity Study also recommends that the UNDP establish Regional Bureaux. ^{1/}

7. The United Nations executing agency being only one of the members of the partnership, cannot, on its own, ensure the success of a technical co-operation project. Indeed, the fate of the project, its ultimate success or failure, is largely in the hands of the other partner -- the Government of the recipient country. If the competent Minister is not able to assign to it high calibre staff and suitable counterparts, if a project is not genuinely "adopted" by the recipient country, it will remain a foreign implant and will not survive for long after the expatriate experts have gone home, however well-planned and competently launched it might have been.

8. Naturally, the pattern of Government involvement will vary from country to country. Mr. Macy's observations are based mainly on his study of the situation in the more advanced among the developing countries, where suitable counterparts can be made available; indeed, in his recommendation 2 he expresses the view that three or four such countries should be selected for a special study in depth of agencies' future role in such areas. But, as Sir Leonard Scopes points out in his inspection report on Malawi (E/4818), in other developing countries the manpower to take over from United Nations experts "is still simply not generally available". In such countries the United Nations experts will have to assume the major burden for a longer period of time, while particular emphasis is given to training.

9. The question of training is discussed at length in Mr. Macy's report (E/4792, paras. 24-36). Among the problems identified by Mr. Macy in this area are the lack of status reports on the training of counterparts; a semi-automatic extension of training projects; inadequate use of local training facilities (this observation would apply more particularly to the more advanced among the developing countries); the frustrations often experienced by persons from developing countries on their return home after training abroad; and ways to improve training at the site. Mr. Macy also discusses the role of the OPAS programme in helping to promote training in least-developed areas; he suggests that in such areas potential counterparts be released for necessary basic training. In this connexion it may be recalled that in his report Sir Leonard Scopes states that the Government of Malawi feels that United Nations demands for counterparts, managers, etc., acts as a brake on the country's progress.

10. In his comments the Secretary-General indicates that he has initiated, in co-operation with the UNDP and other organizations, a comprehensive study on training. The Advisory Committee hopes that the results of this study will be made available without undue delay. In this connexion, the observations of the Executive Director of UNICEF (E/4792/Add.1, para. 9) on the Fund's long-standing practice to focus its aid on training within the developing countries themselves, and the advantages of this approach, would seem to indicate that other organizations could benefit from a study of UNICEF's approach to the problem under discussion.

^{1/} DP/5, vol. II, chap. VII, para. 91.

11. While acknowledging that procedures have been tightened during the past couple of years, Mr. Macy indicates that a substantial number of Regular Programme and Technical Assistance projects are "almost automatically" extended at termination dates. The Inspector does not recommend any corrective action on this point, beyond indicating that improved field reports to Headquarters during the life of the project would reveal significant deviations from work schedules, and point to proposed corrective action. Such an approach would presuppose the existence of a schedule but, as Mr. Macy states in his report (E/4792, para. 69), most of the Regular Programme and Technical Assistance projects examined by him lacked even an agreed elementary work plan to serve as a basis for control over implementation; in particular, almost never was there a time-phased work programme. The steps urged by the Inspector would obviate or, as the case may be, explain the need for extending a project beyond the initially stipulated termination date.

12. The Advisory Committee believes that where it is proposed that a particular project be extended more than once, even closer scrutiny by the Executive Head and the competent intergovernmental organ is called for, perhaps on the basis of separate reports to the latter.

13. The note by the Secretary-General does not include any comments on the problem of the automatic or semi-automatic extension of projects.

14. In discussing equipment and supplies the Inspector indicates that, particularly in the more advanced among the developing countries, as the need for United Nations experts starts to decline there is mounting pressure for projects almost wholly oriented towards the importation of machinery - sometimes of an unnecessarily sophisticated type. He quotes general agreement among agency officials that equipment should not be provided primarily for balance-of-payments reasons; however, he found considerable support for increasing the percentage that equipment represented in the total cost of a project. In his comments the Executive Director of UNICEF expresses full agreement with the Inspector's cautioning against the provision of expensive and sophisticated equipment and also against the provision of equipment for purely balance-of-payments reasons. In the Advisory Committee's opinion, the nature of the equipment supplied under technical co-operation arrangements will have to be decided upon on a case-by-case basis; while consideration of economy will naturally have to be borne in mind, situations are bound to arise when the provision of sophisticated equipment will be more advantageous. As regards the complex problem of centralized procurement, the Advisory Committee agrees with the Inspector's suggestion (E/4792, para. 56) that it is desirable that a broad study of the whole problem be carried out so as to arrive at a workable proposal based on the situation existing in the developing countries.

15. In section F of his report the Inspector makes a plea for the introduction of modern management methods, and in particular for the use of network analysis during the planning period preceding the submission of the proposal to UNDP (or other financing organization).

16. Mr. Macy also calls for better use being made of physical facilities existing in the recipient country - such as buildings, maintenance and repair facilities.

17. The note by the Secretary-General (E/4792/Add.1) does not deal with these and other questions raised by Mr. Macy in his report, partly because the Administrator of UNDP has withheld his comments in view of the discussions on the Capacity Study by the Governing Council and in the Inter-Agency Consultative Board, and partly because many of these questions are of greater relevance to the work of the technical specialized agencies than to that of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Bearing in mind the value of the Inspector's recommendations, the Advisory Committee trusts that further observations by the Executive Heads will be made available in due course to the Economic and Social Council.



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Selected ideas for improving field operations

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

1. The Director-General has studied with great interest the observations and recommendations in Mr. Macy's report on "Selected Ideas for Improving Field Operations". The author himself indicated (para. 2) that the recently issued "Capacity Study" is related to his observations. In fact the Capacity Study goes beyond questions of country programming and deals also with "Operations". Consequently some of the author's observations on broad issues, of a macro-organizational or functional character, will be receiving attention by Governments and by the specialized agencies on the basis of the "Capacity Study" and of the Pearson Commission's Report on "Partners in Development". The Director-General's comments on Mr. Macy's report are given in the following paragraphs.

2. The Director-General welcomes with satisfaction the emphasis in Recommendation No. 1 on the importance of strengthening the capability of the relevant technical ministries. This is fully in accord with the Director-General's policy which, while recognizing the importance of co-ordination at the country level and of the co-ordinating role of the UNDP Resident Representative in development assistance, aims to promote the mutual strengthening of the technical ministries and the specialized agencies' capability to provide the required technical advice and assistance in their respective socio-economic sectors. In the same context, the Director-General also notes with appreciation the statement in paragraph 16 of the report that "Country Representatives of the UN Agencies who have an office right in the technical ministry can often help sell the idea of better planning and controls". This is, in fact, the official FAO policy, which is also reflected in the FAO/UNDP Agreement whereby the Senior Agricultural Advisers/Country Representatives have a dual but complementary function, namely:

- (i) to advise through the UNDP Resident Representative on matters concerning the broad "agricultural development plans";
- (ii) to provide direct advice to, and liaison with the appropriate technical ministries, in the formulation and implementation of programmes which fall within the broad "agricultural" sector.

3. The Director-General appreciates the importance of training for agricultural planners. This need is fully recognized by FAO. Courses have been organized by FAO over the past six years for government officials from both the planning ministries and the technical ministries concerned with agricultural development. The courses are of three types:

- (i) International courses at FAO headquarters of six weeks' duration;
- (ii) National courses of about four weeks' duration;
- (iii) Regional courses of about four weeks' duration.

The Syllabus of these courses includes training in project formulation appraisal and evaluation as well as general development planning which help to develop technical assistance planning competence within the Agricultural Ministries. Moreover, FAO maintains strong links of collaboration with Regional Economic Planning Institutes. FAO also participates in the training of technical assistance officers from developing countries, organized by UNITAR.

4. There is much merit in the question raised in paragraph 20 concerning multi-disciplinary projects. The desirability is recognized of "breaking-up" complex multi-sectorial or multi-disciplinary projects into separate autonomous operations, whenever this is feasible, without discouraging the trend towards more "integrated" projects. The application of this dual objective is under continuous study in FAO itself and by FAO in association with a UNDP Inter-Agency Working Party which is examining ways and means for improving the machinery for inter-agency collaboration in the execution of individual projects. The planned appointment of the Senior Agricultural Advisers/Country Representatives in fifty-five countries during 1970 will also contribute towards the desired co-ordination and integration between projects at the country level.

5. The Director-General endorses the observation in paragraph 25. It is true that the current UNDP instructions regarding half-yearly "progress reports" and the preparation of "statistical supplements" for UNDP headquarters, do not contain requirements on specific reporting regarding on-the-site training of counterparts. Ways and means are currently being studied for making good the existing deficiency as part of FAO's efforts to introduce improved management techniques. In fact, it is planned that the field monitoring system which FAO hopes to introduce in the near future, will make provision for recording the status of counterpart personnel, including their training at the site.

6. The Director-General feels that the observations in paragraph 26 probably reflect past rather than current experience. It is believed that under the Country Programming procedures the machinery for approval of TA projects has now been closely geared to, and it is dependent on, the Governments' own priorities or wishes. Under the present system of country targets UNDP will only consider projects which the Government itself wishes to include as a charge against its target. It is envisaged that "repeated extensions" of the type referred to by Inspector Macy will gradually disappear with the strengthening of the Governments' TA programme planning of their "target" allocation in relation to their real priority needs. Similarly, with regard to SF projects, the Director-General's efforts are directed towards an organizational structure and procedures whereby the Organization's capacity is strengthened for assisting Governments to identify and select SF projects on the basis of their own priority needs and possibilities. At the same time the Director-General recognizes the need for integrated planning at the country level and acknowledges the role of the UNDP Resident Representative as the senior United Nations officer within the country, whose duty it is to see that the various requests of projects do fit into an effective whole. In this connexion also, it should be noted that the availability of the Senior Agricultural Advisers/Country Representatives can be expected to provide needed assistance in effective TA programming at the country level.

7. The Director-General agrees with the emphasis placed in the report on the importance of the training aspects of UNDP projects. Over the past years FAO has devoted considerable attention to the need for introducing new methods and techniques for improving the efficacy of training generally and training of counterparts at the site as suggested in paragraphs 31 and 32. Various proposals have been put forward by FAO to UNDP headquarters in the past. One such proposal was the establishment of United Nations procedures for pre-project training at the site. This is now made possible by means of the recently expanded UNDP Revolving Fund which provides for pre-project activities including the selection and training of counterparts.

8. As regards the point made in paragraph 32, the Director-General cannot support a general condemnation of "one-expert projects". It is evident that under certain circumstances the provision of single experts under the UNDP/(TA) Programme can and do make a valuable contribution towards institution building. In addition, there are many cases where individual experts have proved most valuable in the preparation of projects as well as in follow-up activities. Many instances can be quoted of the positive contribution which individual experts can make under special circumstances either before, during or after "multi-expert" project implementation. Success will be greatly dependent on the nature of the governmental backstopping, not only by means of single counterparts but on the existence of an organizational structure within the department of the Government which can fully utilize the expert advice and the possibility to provide technical training. It is worth noting that during the recent FAO Conference several member nations indicated that too little attention was now being given to supplying individual experts who the countries insisted could be most useful. The strengthening of the UNDP Resident Representative's office and the provision of a Senior Agricultural Adviser/Country Representative will also ensure that the individual expert is not left to operate independently but is associated with the over-all development assistance effort in the country.

9. The Director-General also finds no evidence to support the observation in paragraph 27. The point of view expressed in this paragraph that a lack of job opportunities for himself elsewhere may cause the expert's training of local counterpart staff to suffer, is believed to be somewhat theoretical. If this tendency has occurred, it is considered that it is not an experience of significant dimensions.

10. The point made in paragraph 31 that good experts may not be efficient trainers is a subject to which FAO has been giving considerable attention. A proposal has been made to UNDP headquarters that consideration should be given to the setting up of procedures for the appointment of special training experts as part of the foreign personnel component in SF projects. The Director-General agrees that this is a matter of considerable importance and FAO will continue to give its support in this direction.

11. The Director-General agrees with the views expressed in paragraph 49 that attention should be focused on helping "the Government mobilise its own resources for manufacturing equipment for UN sponsored projects and only import equipment after it was determined that locally made equipment was not available". Considering, however, that most individual projects normally require a limited number of pieces of certain equipment for their execution, there are numerous practical difficulties in the developing of local production of equipment to meet the variety of requirements. Most of the equipment needed for SF projects involves standard mass-produced items and laying the foundations for local production is an undertaking of considerable magnitude. Wherever possible, however, it is felt that efforts should be made to assist developing Governments to establish the means for local maintenance of equipment.

12. Regarding paragraphs 53 and 54, the Director-General feels that in the light of FAO's experience there is evidence that where project personnel have been authorized to order spare parts directly from manufacturers or suppliers, satisfactory results have been obtained. Cases in point can be cited from projects executed by FAO in a number of countries.

13. As regards paragraph 56, the lack of inter-agency standardization of equipment bought for recipient Governments is not seen as a great problem. In view of the nature of their respective subject-matter activities, agencies normally purchase different kinds of equipment for a variety of needs. The Director-General agrees, however, that standardization should be attempted whenever possible with particular reference to vehicles, typewriters, laboratory equipment, which are of common use for different projects by the various agencies.

14. The idea expressed in paragraph 57, etc. about "labour intensive technology" is spectacular and interesting. In giving further consideration to the detailed application of this proposal, attention would need to be given to the importance of avoiding possible unfavourable reaction on the part of developing countries against what might be held to be an attempt to institutionalize "lower level" technology in a particular country.

15. The Director-General notes with satisfaction the appreciation expressed in paragraph 61 etc. of the "expanding interest and use of modern management techniques in the various agencies". Considerable efforts are being made to improve FAO's performances, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. In addition to the introduction of improved-management techniques, including the use of network analysis ~~from the planning stage onwards~~, FAO is also developing a methodology for the collection and analysis of quantitative data which can provide the means both for project management control and for policy formulation. The Director-General agrees with the note of caution expressed concerning the adoption of cost-benefit analysis "in order to avoid expensive and theoretical exercises". The services of outside experts management consulting advice have been retained by FAO with particular reference to parallel and complementary schemes, mainly:

- (i) the introduction and use of network analysis for project planning and control;
- (ii) the establishment of an over-all FAO computer system plan. The Director-General is giving top priority to the introduction of improved management techniques at all levels of the Organization as speedily as feasible.

16. As regards paragraph 64, ~~it is agreed that the need for receiving early information on all details of government plans, participation etc., cannot be overestimated.~~ It is important that efforts in this direction should not take place to the detriment of a reasonably rapid processing of a project request. The present trend toward a simplification of UNDP procedures from the request stage has been given consistent support by FAO. The recently introduced procedures whereby a simple "Letter of Intent" is sufficient as a first request from a Government, is considered to represent a welcome simplification and a speeding up of operations. In paragraph 64 (g) the approach to planning and implementation of SF projects as described is at variance with established UNDP procedures. For some time past it has been already possible for the agencies to recruit a project manager designate for a particular project at a time when the project was adopted by IACB, i.e. approximately three months prior to Governing Council approval of the same project. Under the recently introduced UNDP procedures for activities to be financed under the "expanded" Revolving Fund, it is now possible for agencies to obtain UNDP approval even at an earlier date, namely from the time when UNDP headquarters have identified the validity of a project for submission to

a subsequent Governing Council for approval. The Director-General considers that this represents a progressive improvement towards simpler procedures and speedier project implementation.

17. The Director-General wishes to express appreciation to the author for the valuable observations contained in his report. Many of the ideas expressed are being implemented by FAO or are being further explored. Further consideration will continue to be given to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's field operations in the light of the discussions which will be taking place by specialized agencies on the Capacity Study and in the light of FAO's own experience.



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COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF WMO

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Recommendation 1 on "technical assistance planning and control" suggests, in the first instance, that "responsibility should be assigned in headquarters on a geographical basis for strengthening the capability of relevant technical ministries to plan and control their activities". This seems particularly important and is fully supported. In fact, such responsibilities are assigned on a geographical basis at WMO headquarters.

As regards paragraph (a) of the recommendation concerning "discussions on the importance of the planning and control of technical assistance with ministry representatives in the field and at headquarters", arrangements have always been made by WMO for such discussions through meetings at WMO headquarters, visits to the country concerned by the officers of the appropriate WMO operational section and, in addition, by correspondence.

The recommendation of paragraph (b) concerning the "training of technical assistance planners at headquarters" cannot be accomplished at the headquarters of WMO at the present time but, as a substitute, the officers and experts concerned are trained while doing the job and, in addition, receive comprehensive briefings on all aspects of the situation.

With respect to the "joint preparation of technical assistance project proposals and plans of operation and work programmes" specified in paragraph (c), such joint preparation is always effected whenever a country requests advice on SF, Regular or TA projects.

Paragraph (d) of the recommendation which refers to "more specific guidance on such matters to regional offices and country representatives" does not apply to WMO which does not have either regional offices or country representatives. However, the WMO Regional Officers for Africa and for Latin America (who are based in Geneva) are kept fully informed on technical assistance being planned in any of the countries in their areas of interest.

Paragraph (e) of the recommendation relates to the "recruitment of United Nations experts for such purposes", i.e., for the geographical sections to be established at the headquarters. In a technical organization like WMO, it might be difficult to find such experts with the required meteorological background. In this connexion, due consideration will be given in the future to recruiting experts who already have experience in the field as project managers or are otherwise qualified in project planning.

The recommendation of paragraph (f) concerning "initiation of research as necessary to fill gaps in necessary know-how for technical assistance planning" is supported and it is noted with satisfaction that the UNDP has recently admitted a project on basic research which is of interest to the majority of developing countries.

Recommendation 2 on the "future role of agencies in semi-developed countries" recommends that three of four semi-developed countries should be selected for a special study in depth of an agency's future role in such areas. Such a study would be worth-while and it will be suggested that WMO could participate and co-operate in any such study.

As regards the suggestion contained in the recommendation that it might be appropriate to anticipate an early termination of nearly all United Nations projects in some semi-developed countries, it is felt that such a measure would be appropriate only if the achievements of the United Nations projects have been integrated thoroughly in the work of the national technical authority. If this goal were realized, it would then be feasible to envisage other forms of assistance such as long-term programmes for assisting technical ministries to keep up with the latest developments in their disciplines. This could be accomplished by sending short-term consultants to visit the country and help the technical ministries follow up the achievements of the terminated projects.

Recommendation 3 concerning "modern management method" proposes that "the service at headquarters which has central responsibility for improving management practices should be assigned responsibility for action on (a) field reports, (b) internal mobilization of resources, (c) maintenance of equipment, (d) procurement standards, (e) network planning and (f) control of projects".

The desirability of the modern management methods specified in the recommendation is supported and, as far as possible, the secretariat of WMO has implemented these or similar practices.

As regards paragraph (a) of the recommendation dealing with the "strengthening of the usefulness of field reports to headquarters through inclusion of (i) status of counterpart and fellowship training oriented to implications for time-phased replacement of agency experts, (ii) identification of all equipment above a specified value not in use with explanation for non-use and (iii) significant deviations from work schedule of projects, together with proposals for corrective action", it is agreed that the elements suggested for inclusion are vital to the usefulness of field reports. This practice is, in principle, followed by WMO in the preparation of field reports although not in the specific forms given in the recommendation.

In connexion with paragraph (b) of the recommendation dealing with the "internal mobilization of resources" and proposing the "introduction of much more flexibility into the preparation and implementation of plans of operation to facilitate a choice between (i) constructing new buildings or using present structures, (ii) training counterparts at the site, or elsewhere in the country, or abroad and (iii) procurement of equipment within the country or abroad", it is felt that the new format for these plans recently introduced by the UNDP has, in fact, greatly increased their flexibility.

As regards paragraph (c) on the "maintenance of equipment" which recommends "encouraging the technical ministries to develop a plan for mobilizing the country's internal resources for maintaining equipment in the field and offering to help them", it is the standard practice in WMO assistance projects to aid in developing plans for the maintenance of field equipment.

Paragraph (d) concerns "procurement standards" and recommends "encouraging technical ministries to (i) establish procurement standards designed to control the number of different models of equipment imported and (ii) develop a broad list of items for which it is feasible to restrict imports to the level of sophistication of items currently being manufactured in semi-developed countries".

In so far as the establishment of procurement standards is concerned, this part of the recommendation is already implemented by WMO. Standardization of equipment is encouraged and, when procuring equipment for SF and TA projects, a final decision on the make of equipment to be procured is taken only after determining what make of equipment already exists in the country. Because of the high level of sophistication of meteorological equipment, it does not seem feasible to develop the list of items called for in sub-paragraph (ii), the import of which could be restricted.

Paragraph (e) is concerned with "network planning" and recommends "adopting the use of network analysis in preparing SF proposals for approval". The techniques of network analysis have not yet been implemented by WMO in view of the compact nature of the WMO projects which could, therefore, be managed without the use of network analysis. Ways in which WMO could take advantage of these methods is presently being studied.

Paragraph (f) relates to "control of projects" and recommends that every project should have in writing a specific objective, a time-phased work plan and a meaningful termination date. As regards SF projects, WMO presently follows the procedures recommended. In the case of TA projects, experts initially prepare a detailed work plan for the duration of their mission in agreement with their counterparts. Periodic reports by the experts indicate the actual extent to which the work plan is being fulfilled and, in the event that there are significant deviations from the detailed work plan, the experts are asked to indicate the reasons for the deviations in order that corrective action can be taken. These arrangements for control of TA projects are not, however, as effective as control procedures in Special Fund projects.

Recommendation 4 on "country-identified projects" suggests that "where alternatives exist, strong preference should be given to the selection of country-identified projects, that is to say projects which usually were started before a United Nations agency came into the picture to help". In practice, suitable alternatives to planned SF and TA projects in the field of meteorology do not normally exist. Implementation of the recommendation would, therefore, be difficult.

~~Recommendation 5 on "spare parts" proposes that "procurement by field~~ offices of spare parts available in the recipient country should be authorized up to a specified amount per item, but procurement by field offices direct from manufacturers outside the country should be authorized only after careful field tests justifying such action". The present WMO practice is to authorize the local procurement of spare parts and items of equipment in some cases as a matter of urgency and economy, when they are available. Availability of spare parts for sophisticated meteorological equipment is greatly restricted and the normal WMO practice is for these parts to be procured directly from the headquarters.

Recommendation 6 concerning "project recommendations" suggests that "before a project is terminated, the major recommendations should be discussed by the senior project expert with government officials, and an attempt should be made to get commitments if possible for favourable action". This is considered to be a very useful recommendation which would have beneficial effects if it were possible to implement it fully. In the case of WMO assistance projects, recommendations of the WMO expert are discussed with his counterpart and the Permanent Representative with WMO of the recipient country who is an official of the central governmental administration concerned.

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COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ICAO

General

1. Of necessity, the observations and recommendations in the report are in general terms and are not addressed to specific agencies. However, the suggested corrective measures are not equally applicable to all agencies. The comments that follow concentrate on the recommendations contained in pages 33 to 36 of the report.

Technical assistance planning and control

2. Strengthening the capability of the technical ministries to plan and control their activities is desirable. Many departments of civil aviation would benefit from a programme to that effect and ICAO will study how best this could be achieved, with due regard to the cost involved, and bearing in mind recommendations (a), (b), (e) and (f). Regarding (c), all ICAO SF and TA projects have been prepared jointly with the governments. (ICAO has no programme in the field under its regular budget.) Regarding (d), we are constantly trying to improve the guidance given to our Regional Offices and TA country missions for preparation of those projects.

Future role of agencies in semi-developed countries

3. ICAO would be ready to participate in depth in the studies referred to in this recommendation. However, it would seem that the initiative to start such study in any particular country should rest with the Government and, in particular, with its "technical assistance co-ordinating authority" which would be in a better position than the technical ministry to ensure that the required financial backing and official recognition would be given to any long-term programme evolved from discussions between an agency and the corresponding technical ministry.

Modern management methods

4. The points recommended in (a) are already part of the ICAO field reporting system, with the exception of that relating to fellowship training (in (i)). Detailed reports on fellowship training are not requested from field missions because they do not know the progress made by the fellow while in training abroad. The institutions where training takes place report directly to Headquarters.

5. Regarding (b), the flexibility exists to permit Governments to make a choice in respect to most suitable utilization of their resources, during the discussions that precede finalization of plans of operation. For instance, out of nine SF projects, completely new buildings have been erected only in five cases, new buildings have been added to the ones already existing in another case and existing structures have been utilized in three cases. On-the-job training of counterparts at the site is done as part of TA and SF projects and is completed abroad, through fellowships, as required. Very seldom there are aeronautical institutions in the recipient country able to provide the required complement of

training. Procurement of aeronautical equipment within the assisted country is almost impossible for obvious reasons; however, it is possible to procure some non-technical material if available in the country, with due regard to cost and quality.

6. As to (c), maintenance of supplied equipment has always been assured by the Government through its own services, sometimes with some additional assistance provided by ICAO. We have found no difficulties in this connexion.

7. Regarding (d), it should be recognized that it is difficult for a Government administration to establish procurement standards and to apply them consistently to every major purchase made. There is little that ICAO can do in the recommended direction, but we will continue to act accordingly when opportunity arises.

8. In regard to (e), network planning, the SF projects undertaken by ICAO do not lend themselves easily to network analysis and the effort involved in doing so would not be justified. The plans of operation for those projects contain detailed time schedules and work programmes that are sufficient for the control of the projects.

9. Finally, regarding (f), control of projects, current instructions from UNDP and ICAO's own approach to the control of projects are in the direction recommended in the report. We have applied it during the past years to all SF projects and are now introducing it for TA projects. Conversion of experts into OPAS personnel cannot be decided upon by ICAO but by the Government concerned.

Country-identified projects

10. This recommendation seems to be directed to Governments rather than to the agencies since projects are selected by the Governments, probably with due consideration to the countries' needs.

Spare parts

11. Only on rare occasions, ICAO field missions are authorized to purchase non-specialized low-cost items locally. They do not procure spare parts directly from manufacturers outside the country; such purchases are done by Headquarters.

Project recommendations

12. The ideas contained in this recommendation are already being implemented by UNDP and ICAO.



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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

1. The Director-General considers that the report, which is restricted to suggesting ways and means of strengthening United Nations technical assistance activities after the Governments concerned have established priority, is based on sound observations of, and keen insight into the key problems encountered in the field.

2. The Inspector's findings led to a number of recommendations for concrete action under the following headings to which the Director-General addresses himself in the present observations:

1. Technical Assistance Planning and Control.
2. Future Role of Agencies in Semi-developed Countries.
3. Modern Management Methods.
4. Country-identified Projects.
5. Spare Parts.
6. Project Recommendations.

Technical Assistance Planning and Control

3. The Director-General shares the views of the Inspector that the technical ministries play a vital role in planning and control of technical assistance projects. UNESCO has endeavoured to assist technical ministries in this dual role by co-ordination of UNESCO actions at Headquarters through regional units concerned with general relations with each country and by a limited system of field representation, as well as by the visits of officials from Headquarters or short-term experts engaged for specific purposes.

4. It is the intention of the Director-General to take into consideration the Inspector's recommendation as he reviews the modality for making UNESCO's action more effective with the technical ministries of the Member States. Some adjustments in this regard will be incorporated in his draft programme and budget for 1971-1972.

Assistance to Semi-developed Countries

5. The Director-General agrees with the Inspector that the way agencies co-operate with the "semi-developed" countries in the matter of technical assistance needs particular consideration. In fact such activities are never uniform in their substance or techniques but adapt themselves to the situations of a given country, the technical assistance rendered by agencies being in the final analysis always in response to the expressed request of the Government concerned. Country programming functioning in its true sense should result in requests for projects which are best suited to the degree of development of different countries.

6. The Director-General is willing to co-operate with an appropriate United Nations body in the study suggested by the Inspector in a selected few "semi-developed countries", it being understood that the criteria for the selection

must be established by an appropriate intergovernmental body and that the countries falling under the criteria respond favourably to the idea.

Modern Management Methods

7. The Director-General notes with satisfaction that the Inspector recommends modern management methods which can be applied in the amelioration of field operations in various ways. The secretariat of UNESCO has been preparing itself for the introduction of modern management techniques including the use of a computer. An experiment of applying the PERT (Programme Evaluation and Review Technique) system involving network planning is under way in a few selected Special Fund projects with a view to its general application to various projects under all programmes.

8. It is anticipated that the modern management techniques referred to above will:

(a) improve the manner of preparing reports and their use as to the status of counterpart training, non-utilization of equipment if any, and significant deviations from work schedules and proposal for corrective action thereto;

(b) contribute to the introduction of more flexibility in the preparation and implementation of plans of operations with a view to internal mobilization of resources;

(c) provide a better basis to assist the technical ministries to develop a plan for mobilizing the countries' resources for maintaining equipment;

(d) provide basis for establishing information regarding the various models of equipment supplied by UNESCO to be used in controlling further equipment to be imported;

(e) verify the experimental results on the usefulness of applying network planning not only in the planning stage but also for the purpose of controlling execution of projects;

(f) expand the utilization of time-phased work plan for projects under all programmes.

Country-identified Projects

9. The Director-General agrees with the recommendation of the Inspector that the task is to work out co-operative arrangements for country-identified projects rather than to offer agency-inspired plans for co-operation. It is gratifying that agencies are more and more requested to assist Member States in the development and elaboration of sectoral programmes with over-all country development plans. UNESCO has recent experience of participating in so-called integrated programming in Indonesia, Lebanon and Tunisia.

Spare Parts

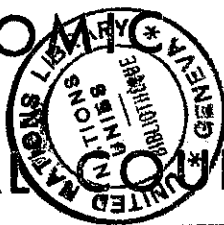
10. It is a current practice with UNESCO that local purchases of spare parts are authorized up to \$25 per purchase. This limitation is now under review for a possible substantial increase. The recommendation of the Inspector as to the study on the advantages and disadvantages of direct procurement by field offices of spare parts from manufacturers outside the country is being taken into consideration in this review.

Project Recommendations

11. The Director-General considers that UNESCO has been reasonably successful in assuring that adequate consideration is given to implementation of project recommendations. The Secretariat provides a careful briefing to experts with a view to ensuring that their recommendations are discussed thoroughly with key government officials before they leave the country. It makes a special effort to make available the reports of the experts to the Governments with a minimum delay.



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DECISION TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL OF ICAO

The Council has considered the report and the useful recommendations contained therein. It has noted and it endorses the comments of the Secretary-General on those parts of the recommendations which are already fulfilled by ICAO and on those which may be fulfilled under certain conditions. In regard to the latter, ICAO is willing to take the appropriate steps.



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COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ILO

1. This report, 1/ which is appended to the present paper, was prepared by Mr. Robert Macy of the Joint Inspection Unit. It offers comments of concern to some or all of the organizations in the United Nations system whose activities include field operations. The Director-General notes that many of the points raised by Mr. Macy are also dealt with in the Capacity Study, and these will no doubt be reviewed during the further discussions on the Capacity Study by the IACB and the UNDP Governing Council. The Director-General's comments deal with the various recommendations set out in the final section of the report; these comments, however, are subject to further observations in the light of the outcome of the discussions mentioned above.
2. The Director-General agrees in principle with recommendation 1 for agencies to assist in strengthening the capability of relevant technical ministries to plan and control technical co-operation activities carried out in the developing countries. The Director-General, while agreeing on the emphasis placed on this matter in the report, would go further by suggesting that parallel action should be undertaken at other government levels, and in particular at the national planning level. This would, of course, only become possible if the United Nations family of organizations undertook to assist further the public administration systems of the countries concerned. In this respect, the ILO has a programme aimed at improving the capacity of ministries of labour to participate in policy-making at the national level and to implement effectively the policies that have been decided. The ILO, in addition, trains competent professional national staff to accomplish their tasks and favours the suggestion that technical ministries should be offered every opportunity to contribute towards the setting up of national policy concerning technical co-operation activities. Furthermore, the decentralization process being undertaken by the

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ILO is in fact designed to bring ILO expertise as near as possible to the government ministries concerned. The building up of the ILO infra-structure of financial, administrative, personnel, relations and technical services in the field, so as to permit a decentralization of functions and responsibilities and closer contact with our experts and with the needs, problems and conditions of member States, is being actively pursued.

3. The Director-General has noted with interest the Inspector's reference in the above recommendation to the "initiation of research as necessary to fill in gaps in necessary know-how for technical assistance planning". The question of introducing labour-intensive technology is cited, in particular, together with a specific reference to the ILO's work in this field (paragraphs 57-60). Its importance with respect to the development process and levels of employment has been a subject of constant research by the ILO, not only with respect to industry, but also with respect to the role that labour-intensive methods could play in rural development. In this connexion, the ILO has produced some noteworthy documentation, for example a paper entitled "Progressive Technologies for Developing Countries" which was prepared in connexion with a review of ILO research undertaken for the World Employment Programme, and "Towards the Synthesis of Economic Growth and Social Justice" which was published in the November 1969 issue of the International Labour Review.

4. Mr. Macy's recommendation 2 concerning the future role of agencies in semi-developed countries has been noted by the Director-General, and in particular the suggestion that certain semi-developed countries should be selected for a special study in depth of an agency's future role therein. The ILO has adopted an approach along these lines within the framework of its World Employment Programme whereby certain countries at different stages of development are to be selected for country pioneer projects. These projects are designed to help countries define the size and nature of their unemployment and underemployment problems and their capacities to provide work and training facilities. The ILO teams, whose members will be drawn not only from the ILO but from other international and regional organizations as well, will also assist Governments in formulating long-term plans, including targets for productive work and training for different groups of the population such as young workers, rural workers, etc. In addition to recommending on action required by the countries themselves, these teams will seek to identify the nature of assistance that might be provided by the ILO, by the other organizations and by bilateral aid on the employment creation plan. The first such country pioneer project has already commenced in Colombia.

5. Recommendation 3 suggests that the service at headquarters which has responsibility for improving management practices be assigned responsibility to develop action intended; to strengthen the usefulness of field reports; to encourage the drafting of more flexible Plans of Operation; to improve the maintenance of equipment; to develop improved procurement standards in countries; to adopt network planning in relation to Special Fund requests and to improve control of projects. The Director-General agrees on the use of most of the detailed techniques covered under the separate parts of this recommendation and would note that current ILO practice in fact conforms to many of the procedures advocated in the report.

6. With reference to recommendation 3 (a) - Field Reports - the revised reporting system on Special Fund projects introduced by the UNDP provides for

better identification of problems relating to counterpart and fellowship training, equipment, and deviations from work schedule of projects. A revision of the reporting procedures applying to non-Special Fund projects (UNDP/TA component, Regular Programme, Funds in Trust) is being undertaken by the ILO on similar lines. Furthermore, the mid-project reviews and other project reviews conducted by the UNDP with the agencies represent an important follow-up measure to field reports.

7. Mr. Macy's recommendation 3 (b) - Internal Mobilization of Resources to Introduce More Flexibility in the Preparation and Implementation of Plans of Operation - is welcome, and the Director-General would like to stress that ILO thinking is consistent with this suggestion.

8. Mr. Macy's recommendation 3 (c) - Maintenance of Equipment - aimed at encouraging technical ministries to develop plans to improve the maintenance of equipment in their field, is supported by the Director-General. In this connexion, it may be noted that it is ILO practice to establish maintenance and repair facilities for vehicles, machinery and scientific equipment on most large projects.

9. Mr. Macy's recommendation 3 (d) - Procurement Standards - which seeks to encourage the establishment of procurement standards by technical ministries to control the number of models of equipment imported and the sophistication of this equipment, is sound. In the selection of equipment for projects the ILO attempts to ensure that these principles are met as far as possible.

10. With regard to recommendation 3 (e), which advocates the use of network analysis (as described in paragraphs 64 and 68 of the report) as a planning technique in preparing Special Fund proposals, the Director-General wishes to note that a simpler form of this technique is used by the ILO to plan and control all Special Fund projects. ILO projects have not yet been so complex as to require the use of the "Critical Path Method" of network planning, described in the report. However, in those instances where a project is of a sufficient size and of such a character as to render inadequate the use of simpler, manual planning techniques, he would support the use of the form of network analysis advocated by the Inspector.

11. Mr. Macy's recommendation 3 (f) - Control of Projects - whereby every project should state the specific objective and time-phased work plan in relation to expert help, equipment, fellowships, counterparts, etc., is noted and the Director-General is in complete agreement. ILO projects are executed in the manner described in this recommendation.

12. On recommendation 4 - Country-Identified Projects - which suggests that strong preference be given to the selection of country-identified projects, the Director-General agrees with the Inspector's point of view. The ILO has always laid emphasis on this aspect of project development. However, there are certain exceptional cases where a completely new venture is required. In such cases the ILO tries its utmost to find a way of integrating the new activities into an existing structure, but where none exists a new body might have to be created.

13. Recommendation 5 - Spare Parts - deals with procurement procedures for equipment spare parts and suggests that these be purchased locally, or, if necessary, outside the country only after "careful field tests" justify this action. The ILO authorizes the purchase of spare parts, locally, when these are available in the country. The authority to purchase equipment spare parts outside the country is retained by ILO headquarters.

14. Finally, as to recommendation 6 - Project Recommendations - suggesting that upon termination of a project the expert should discuss major recommendations with government officials, the Director-General is in agreement with Mr. Macy and he would like to stress that this is provided for in the revised procedures for the UNDP/SF reporting system. Similar provisions exist in respect of non-Special Fund projects and these are being further refined and streamlined.

15. Submitted for information and observations.