

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

OBSERVATIONS ON THE WORK OF THE OFFICE OF
TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN COLOMBIA
(JIU/REP/70/2-1) by Sir Leonard Scopes

Comments of the Secretary-General and the
Administrator of UNDP

(Report by the Secretary-General)

1. The Secretary-General transmits herewith to the Advisory Committee a report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Observations on the work of the Office of Technical Co-operation in Colombia" (JIU/REP/70/2-1), prepared by Sir Leonard Scopes. The Secretary-General's comments, and those of the Administrator of UNDP, follow:
2. The Secretary-General has read with interest Sir Leonard Scopes' report on "Institute of General Administration, Bogota" (UNDP/SF Project COL-19 Phase I) and "Institute of General and Financial Administration" (UNDP/SF Project COL-38 Phase II). He recognizes the necessity to accomplish during Phase II what it was not possible adequately to complete during Phase I. At the same time it should be mentioned that the results achieved in Phase I were of appreciable benefit to the country.
3. The task of building a complex organization such as that envisaged is dependent upon many factors, involves various participating partners, and the output is so varied that it is difficult to apply a single test to measure results. Project COL-19 (Phase I) was executed over a period of almost five years and a very substantial in-service training programme was carried out. There were about 8,000 hours of instruction in more than 70 courses. 137 students completed post-graduate courses in general administration and financial administration and a recent survey shows that most of them are currently government employees enjoying high positions.

The library was enriched with more than 2,000 volumes and the publication department edited 187 textbooks, class notes, case studies, etc. In addition, many man-months of advisory services were provided to a Presidential Commission on major administrative reforms in Colombia.

4. The Secretary-General greatly appreciates Sir Leonard's suggestions concerning project COL-38 (Phase II) and fully shares his view that institution building rather than "student production" should be the prime target of the project. He agrees with Sir Leonard's recommendation that the Project Manager should include information in his periodic reports on the steps taken to that end, especially on the training of counterparts. At the same time it should be pointed out that, at times, in Phase I there was insufficient national teaching staff to carry out the Institute's programme and had the UN experts not engaged in teaching, the Institute might not have been able to function satisfactorily. The training programme of the Institute was intended also to produce from among its students some of its future teaching staff, and in the course of "student production", some of the brighter students became available after graduation to join as members of the teaching staff. The Institute now has a substantial element of local teaching staff.

5. The Secretary-General has noted the comments on the need for replacement of the old vehicle and the advisability of providing training to local personnel on keeping the equipment in good working order. The Project Manager will be instructed to report on the state of repair of the various items of equipment.

6. He agrees that it is necessary to train or otherwise upgrade a large number of civil servants on a lower level so as to provide support for the middle and top level officers being trained at the Institute.

7. The Secretary-General has been aware of the causes of the Institute's difficulties, including poor management, which had reflected on this project.

This knowledge has led him to urge that the Government assume certain additional obligations in Phase II, such as competitive salaries for the staff, more careful selection of fellows, better career advancement for those who completed fellowships, and special treatment for graduate students.

8. Despite the crises that are so often inevitable in "institution-building", the Secretary-General believes that the United Nations assistance to this project has helped the Institute to survive its own serious crises and provided the basis for renewal of leadership and determination for the period ahead. Notwithstanding the many difficulties, the Secretary-General is confident that if the new experts are of high calibre, - and every effort is being made to that end - satisfactory performance of COL-38 along the lines specified in Sir Leonard's report will result.

Comments of the Administrator of UNDP

9. The Administrator has duly taken note of the report and generally agrees with the recommendations on Page 5. He expects that the Office of Technical Co-operation will take all necessary steps to ensure that the objectives of the projects (COL-19 Phase I and COL-38 Phase II) are achieved in closer collaboration with project personnel of the Government of Colombia.