



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5049/Add.1
12 July 1971

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Observations on the work of the Office of Technical
Co-operation of the United Nations in Burma
(JIU/REP/71/1-2)

Addendum

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE
ADMINISTRATOR OF UNDP

1. The observations made by the Inspector, Sir Leonard A. Scopes, were found to be very useful, and a number of his suggestions for improvement have been taken up with the authorities in Burma. The following comments are offered in regard to certain specific suggestions and recommendations contained in the report.
2. The Position of technical assistance experts: The Inspector's report points out that, in Burma, technical assistance experts often have to carry out executive rather than purely advisory functions. While agreeing with this observation, it should be appreciated that both the Government and United Nations Office of Technical Co-operation consider it essential that the Burmese counterpart engineers be fully involved in working out designs and preparing constructive drawings so that qualified Burmese engineers may be able to take responsibility for the designs before the execution stage. Thus they will be able to amend and improve the construction drawings when actual field data vary from those assumed data on which the designs for construction drawings were originally based. Moreover, only in this manner will the Burmese engineers concerned be able to develop the ability and the confidence to design similar projects in the future on their own, after the United Nations advisers have left. The Government officials concerned have indicated that the primary task of United Nations experts in Burma should be to train their Burmese counterparts.

3. Lack of co-ordination: In the past, because of the somewhat compartmentalized nature of the administrative machinery in Burma, the United Nations Office of Technical Co-operation found it necessary to consider government requests in the water resources field (which are co-ordinated and channelled through the Ministry of National Planning) on a project-by-project basis. However, in February 1971, upon the advice of the United Nations, the Government has set up a co-ordination committee, composed of representatives of all departments concerned with United Nations assisted projects, under the Ministry of National Planning. The United Nations has also stressed the desirability of establishing a single authority responsible for all water resources, at least for the collection and compilation of data, for keeping a record of existing uses and future demands for water and for keeping the co-ordination committee fully informed so that it may allocate water resources on a rational and systematic basis. This may result in the establishment of a water management department. Regarding another aspect of co-ordination, i.e., the use of United Nations equipment in the Soil Mechanics Laboratory established for the Three-Reservoir Project for all the United Nations projects, the Irrigation Department is making arrangements for joint inspection of the facilities available in the Soil Mechanics Laboratory, after which it will submit specific proposals for common use of the facility.

4. The Three-Reservoir Project (UN/BUR/68/2): Since the project's inception, the scope of United Nations assistance has been broadened to include provision for equipment, ~~a small subcontract arrangement and other required financial provisions for spare parts and local repairs.~~ Office accommodation and other facilities for the experts have improved considerably. There is now an agreed programme of work and, in general, the Ministry concerned is satisfied with the work of our technical assistance experts.

5. Design of Hydro-Electric Projects (UN/BUR/68/5): One United Nations engineer is serving in this project under the jurisdiction of the Electricity Supply Board of the Ministry of Industry, which has under consideration several hydro-electric projects. The Electricity Supply Board is making reconnaissance surveys to decide upon two projects, for which they propose to call for tenders for the preparation of construction drawings after necessary feasibility studies. One of the two projects under consideration for feasibility study

is in the Sittang Valley. If the Sittang Valley project is decided upon after examination of the alternative feasibility studies, the Government officials concerned have indicated that steps will be taken for effective co-ordination of the various projects involved. It has been agreed that there should be periodic meetings of the co-ordination committee to ensure demarcation of responsibilities.

6. UNDP/SF MU River Irrigation Survey (BURMA-5): The United Nations, as executing agency, had endorsed the Government's request and had instructed the subcontractor to include hydroelectric development in the final design of the Thapanzeik Dam. Useful lessons have been drawn from experience with this project, particularly with regard to the need for involving the Government in periodic reviews of contractors' field operations.
7. UNDP/SF Development of the Sittang River Valley (BURMA-13): While delays of a few weeks have occurred in the delivery of project equipment, they have not caused any serious interruption in project operations. However, adequate follow-up action has been taken to improve the situation. As regards using the services offered by the UNICEF organization for the maintenance and repair of the project vehicles which, in accordance with the Plan of Operation, are the responsibility of the Government's Irrigation Department, the Irrigation Department has now entrusted this work to UNICEF. The new Sittang project headquarters have been provided by the Government with better accommodation. Efforts are being made to relax the stringent control regulations for United Nations experts visiting project sites. The contract for Feasibility studies and Final Designs has been signed, and the subcontractor's team is expected to start field work early in April 1971. There will be sufficient work to perform before and during the ensuing monsoon season. The staff of the project's pilot farms will be increased by the Government as and when required. Finally, it may be noted that network analysis techniques have been introduced for better planning and management control of project operations.

Comments of the Administrator, UNDP

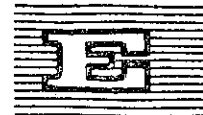
8. The Administrator wishes to refer to the report's recommendations about the necessity for improved co-ordination, particularly in the field of water resources development. The types of institutional co-ordination suggested in

/...

the report are certainly worth exploring with the Government. It may well be that there are alternative types of institutional arrangements that the Government will wish to undertake. Or, the development of a step-by-step approach in the Burmese context may be necessary. He is very much aware of this co-ordination problem and to this end, UNDP proposes to send to Burma a Consultant, if possible within this month, so that discussions can be held with the Government on this matter.

9. The Administrator agrees that the new country programming procedures might provide a good opportunity to achieve the desired rationalization. He would like to point out, however, that country programming in Burma cannot take place until next year at the earliest, according to the latest information we have received from the Resident Representative.

10. With regard to the day-to-day problems of projects implementation, it is understood that the executing agency (OTC) has sent a representative recently to Burma in order to make an on-the-spot assessment. UNDP hopes to receive a copy of his report and will be glad to discuss with OTC the situation in regard to implementation.



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/5049/Add.2
13 July 1971

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Observations on the work of the Office of Technical
Co-operation of the United Nations in Burma
(JIU/REP/71/1-2)

Addendum

OBSERVATIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE
AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report by Inspector Sir Leonard A. Scopes of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Observations on the work of the Office of Technical Co-operation of the United Nations in Burma", along with the related comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (E/5049 and Add.1). The Inspector visited Burma in November 1970 and his report, dated January 1971, was transmitted to the Advisory Committee on 29 March. The Committee has issued the report and the accompanying comments to the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with established procedure.
2. The report is valuable for its frank analysis of a number of concrete difficulties besetting United Nations technical assistance activities in Burma. The Committee believes that the Inspector has correctly identified many problems which are not confined to Burma but have been singled out in earlier reports by the Joint Inspection Unit - in particular the difficulties encountered in training counterparts, the co-ordination of technical assistance inputs, the delivery of project equipment, etc. The regular recurrence of such themes in inspection reports is clear evidence that inadequacies persist, and suggests that more vigorous corrective action is required. The Advisory Committee is however pleased to note that in his comments the Secretary-General has specifically replied to all but a few of the recommendations summarized by the inspector at 71-14147

/...

the end of his report. His replies suggest that the points which the inspector has raised have been recognized and that where the difficulties are attributable to the United Nations some remedial measures have been taken.

3. The comments of the Administrator of UNDP are confined to three paragraphs, two of which deal with the broad question of co-ordination of water resources development raised by the inspector, while the third expresses the Administrator's willingness to discuss project implementation in Burma with the Office of Technical Co-operation. The Advisory Committee would have welcomed more precise and detailed comments by the Administrator on this inspection report; it trusts that when the report comes before the Governing Council of UNDP the Administrator will provide that body with additional material, including information on the outcome of the consultant's visit mentioned in paragraph 8 of document E/5049/Add.1, and of any discussions between UNDP and representatives of the Office of Technical Co-operation.

4. The Advisory Committee suggests that consideration of inspectors' reports would be simplified if both the Secretary-General and the Administrator clearly responded in their comments to each of the specific recommendations listed in summary form in each report.